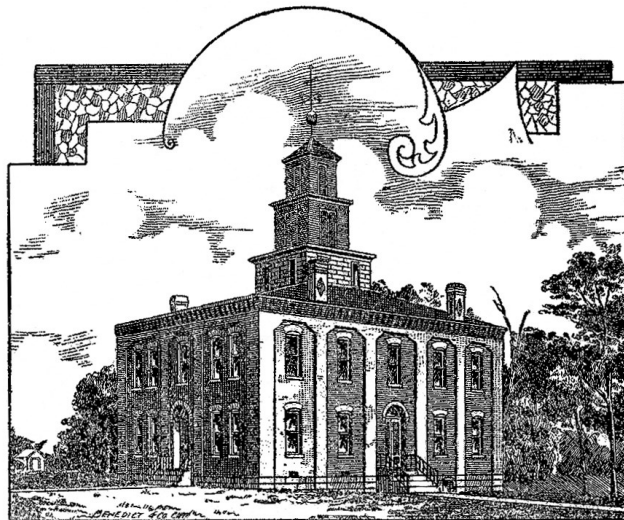


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EDITOR'S NOTES

Research highlighted in the spring 2015 issue of the *JLAS* tackles a number of pressing problems in both higher education and public K-12th grade schools. John Day examines present community college leadership responses to the looming crisis of vast retirement of community college administrators coupled with booming community college growth. Mike Bendicson offers a provocative idea for reforming urban schools by applying the lessons learned from the Surge military strategy during the Iraqi War. Returning to higher education, Sinha Neelu makes a strong case for the practicality of the liberal arts within our more technology driven world. More specifically, she describes how her school helps liberal arts students “explore ways to increase versatility . . . by making them active creators of technology.” Addressing the growing use of statistical assessment in all levels of education, Patricia Swails demonstrates how teaching statistics to educators “backwards within a research design component produces greater content retention.” Scooter Pegram, recent recipient of the Indiana Academy of the Social Science’s prestigious George C. Roberts award for scholarship, demonstrates in his innovative research how, through the medium of French rap, “female artists are provided agency and a socially expressive pedagogical space where they educate listeners and denounce patriarchal and misogynistic attitudes by encouraging social justice and raising awareness of issues that relate to the experience of women of colour in France.” In the journal’s final article, Joel Munoz offers important research regarding how Heritage Spanish speaking students might be better helped with improving their literacy skills.

Randy Mills, Editor
Journal for the Liberal Arts and Sciences

Illinois Community College Administrators' Views Regarding the Present Retirement Crisis in the Community College System: A Descriptive Study

John Day
Wabash Valley College

Abstract

The combination of an increased demand for community college education and an extensive retirement boom has already combined to create a critical need for preparation and on-going training for a new generation of leaders at the community college level. Unfortunately, there seems to be little research on the topic of just how to implement an effective training process for potential new leaders. This study is grounded in the belief that input from current working-in-the-trenches community college administrators is essential as an initial step in addressing the crisis. The study specifically sought to know what particular areas of training present community college leaders perceived to be the most critical areas for a new corps of community college leaders.

Introduction

American community colleges presently find themselves playing an important and rapidly growing role in American higher education. This role has attracted a considerable amount of recent research regarding effective community college leadership. One of the most respected inquiries was a ten year study by the American Association of Community Colleges (Six Competencies, 2006). Their research produced six core competencies critical for effective leadership in the American community college in the twenty-first century and included the following areas: organizational strategy, resource management, communication, collaboration, community college advocacy and professionalism.

While these competencies offer a compelling and comprehensive framework for today's community college leadership, they fail to address a very specific problem now looming for the American community college system. The Core Competencies do not provide sufficient specificity necessary to design and implement a curriculum that can be used to train the next generation of leaders in American Community colleges.

In 2011, Phillippe & Mullin estimated the growth in American community college enrollment at approximately three percent per year. Some estimates of growth, such as those suggested by Assid, Goldberg, & Schneider (2011), indicated that by 2018, sixty-two percent of all jobs in the American economy will require some form of post-secondary education and that community colleges will play a major role this process. Such growth problems for community colleges would likely not be seen as an unpleasant situation if not for another intertwined dilemma.

Knotted with the tremendous growth dynamic is a second major issue for community colleges—the large wave of Baby Boom-generation retirements. Researchers such as Cooper & Pagatto, 2003; Dohm & Shniper, 2007 and 2011; Lewis & Cho, 2011; and Mayer, 2011 have all sounded an alarm that the community college system will be critically challenged by the wave of retirements in management and leadership positions. Amey, VanDerLinden, & Brown (2002) observed in particular how American community colleges were “experiencing the beginning of unprecedented faculty, staff, and administrative turnover, without a clear sense of emergent replacements” (p. 573). More disturbing yet, recent research indicated that the vast number of retirements in the community college system was beginning to deplete the leadership ranks faster than they could be replaced (Amey & VanDerLinden, 2002; Bisbee, 2007; Murray, 2010; Skinner, 2010).

The Critical Need for Training

At the heart of the problem of mass retirements in the American community college system stands the issue of effective training for the next generation of leadership. Many leaders in education have argued that the combination of an increased demand for community college education and the extensive retirement boom has combined to create a critical

need for preparation and on-going training for a new generation of leaders at the community college level (Amey, VanDerLinden, & Brown, 2002; Boggs, 2011; Campbell, Syed, & Morris, 2010; Dennison, 2010; Ebers, Conover, & Samuels, 2010). Riggs (2009), for example, studied the challenges faced by the leadership structure of the American community college system and concluded, "There are problems at both ends of the leadership continuum, with too few qualified individuals entering the community college administrative career ladder and large numbers at or near the top of the career ladder leaving" (p.30).

Unfortunately, there seems to be little research on the topic of just how to implement an effective training process for potential new leaders on a real nuts and bolts basis. This study is grounded in the belief that input from current working-in-the-trenches community college administrators concerning the issues involving the need for training future community college leaders and administrators is essential as an initial step in addressing the crisis. More specifically, it would be helpful to understand what particular areas of training these present leaders perceive to be the most critical areas for a new corps of community college leaders.

Research Focus

This study was designed to establish a preliminary body of data gleaned from a specific group of current community college leaders and administrators that might provide an empirical foundation for developing an effective training curriculum for new community college leaders in light of the explosion of retirements. The study specifically focused on the perceptions of Illinois community college leaders and administrators regarding their beliefs about the primary areas of need for training a new corps of leaders and administrators. Illinois community colleges offer a solid sample for such a study. In general, community colleges in the Illinois community college system were not found to be markedly different from community colleges nationwide (see Illinois Community College Fact Sheet, 2012 and Community College Fact Sheet, 2012). The only major exception involved differences in their respective dependence on tax revenue sources. The state of Illinois clearly relies more heavily on local and federal tax revenues than the national average.

The use of tuition and fees along with local tax revenues comprise approximately 55.7% of the total revenue sources for Illinois community colleges compared to the national average of about 43.3%. Otherwise, in terms of general mission and day to day operation, the Illinois community college system mirrored other state systems.

Research Design

Two groups participated in this study. The first group consisted of selected leaders and managers at four community colleges in southern Illinois that were a part of the Illinois Eastern Community Colleges system. The research began with qualitative interviews. The purpose of the interviews was to establish a data set from which a quantitative survey could be constructed. The qualitative sample included eight persons; four persons were in strategic-level leadership positions and four were in administrative/management positions. The qualitative data collection process focused on the participants' perception of the essential subject matter necessary for training new and existent leaders in community colleges.

A researcher-designed quantitative survey was constructed based on the qualitative data. The survey used a Likert-scale response system to measure the respondents' perception of the need for and possible content of training for new and existent leaders in community colleges in the state of Illinois. The quantitative survey instrument was also reviewed by seven persons in order to establish content validity. The survey was then sent to 1604 people identified by the Illinois Council of Community College Administrators (ICCCA) as leaders and administrators in the Illinois community college system. The group included strategic-level leaders (Presidents, Vice-Presidents, Provosts, CEO, etc.) and management-level administrators (Dean, Assistant Deans, managers, and supervisors).

The total number of responses completed and received in the quantitative survey was 597. Twenty-six respondents identified themselves as "President." Eighty-two respondents identified themselves as "Vice-President." One hundred fifty respondents identified themselves as "Dean." Fifty respondents identified themselves as "Assistant Dean." One hundred nine

respondents identified themselves as “Supervisor.” Seventy-three respondents identified themselves as “Manager.” One hundred seven respondents identified themselves as “Other.”

Question #5 on the survey asked the respondents if they believed leadership training for new and existent management and leadership positions at community colleges was necessary. Seventeen people responded in the negative and 580 responded in the positive. The 580 affirmative responses were used in further quantitative analysis of data.

The data were organized and an analysis was conducted using IBM[®] SPSS, version 19 software. The Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) function was used to make simultaneous comparisons of the means between the seven self-identified positional groups noted above. A two-tailed ANOVA was used to analyze group data at the $p = .05$ level of significance.

Data Analysis

Question #4 on the quantitative survey listed 12 possible options for training. The twelve options included:

- ICCB rules and regulations;
- interpersonal relationships with subordinate;;
- management of academic programs;
- financial aid rules and regulations;
- organizational financial management and accounting issues,
- development of one’s own “management style”;
- resource allocation;
- self-organization skills;
- human resources rules and regulations;
- community engagement;
- collective bargaining; and,
- communication skills.

The survey then asked, “Which of the following would you recommend as areas of training for new managers and leaders in community colleges in Illinois? Please select your top 3.” This question was answered by all 597 respondents.

There were three interesting clusters of responses to question #4. First, 33% (7 of 21) of the responses indicated a

preference for training regarding the rules and regulations of the governing body for community colleges in the state of Illinois, the Illinois Community College Board (ICCB). This option was ranked as the top choice by every category of respondents except the "President" category which ranked it as a second priority. Second, 28.5% (6 of 21) indicated a priority for training in issues pertaining to financial management and accounting in community colleges. The third cluster, 28.5% (6 of 21), indicated a need for training in issues pertaining to human resources rules and regulations.

Taken as an aggregate, these three issues represent 90.47% of the training needs identified in this question. These data were, to a large extent, consistent with the responses to questions 2 and 3 from the quantitative survey that indicated "ICCB Rules and Regulations" and "Financial Management and Accounting Issues" as being two of the three issues identified most frequently as those with which managers and leaders were least comfortable when they took office.

Questions 6 through 14 from the quantitative survey asked respondents to rate their preference on a Likert Scale. The two highest categories endorsed by the data from the aggregated responses were "Human Capital Management" and "State Policy." A total of 93.0% of all respondents rated training for new and/or existent managers and leaders in community colleges on the topic of "Human Capital Management" from "Important" to "Extremely Important." A total of 89.1% of all respondents rated training for new and/or existent managers and leaders in community colleges on the topic of "State Policy" from "Important" to "Extremely Important."

A closer examination of the data identified the following as possible topics for training: "Ethics," "Finance/Accounting/Grant Skills," "Human Resources Issues," "Leadership Theory," and "Organizational Skills." When the ratings for "Important" to "Extremely Important" were totaled for these topics, the totals ranged from a high of 86.2% on the topic of "Ethics"; a rating of 83.5% on the topic of "Finance/Accounting/Grant Skills"; a rating of 82.8% on the topic of "Human Resources Issues"; a rating of 76.3% on the topic of "Leadership Theory"; and, 72.6% on the topic of "Organizational Skills."

Interpretation of Data

Three questions emerged from the data. The first question was whether or not there was any significant variation between any single category of respondents (President, Vice-President, etc.) compared to the aggregated data from question 4 in the quantitative survey. The top five rated topics from question #4 were, in descending order:

- (a) Human Capital Management,
- (b) State Policy,
- (c) Ethics,
- (d) Finance/Accounting/Grants, and
- (e) Human Resources.

Of the seven categories of respondents, five also rated these as their top five choices. The five categories of respondents whose ratings corresponded with these five choices were those who identified themselves as President, Vice-President, Dean, Supervisor, and Manager respectively.

Two categories of respondents, Assistant Dean and Other, rated (a) Human Capital Management, (b) State Policy, (c) Ethics, (c) Finance/Accounting/Grants, and (e) Leadership Theory as their top five choices. Both categories of respondents rated Human Resources as their number six choice. In both categories, the percentage point difference between their number five choice, Leadership Theory, and their number six choice, Human Resources, was two percentage points or less. Thus, the variation noted did not seem significant.

The second question was whether or not any topics may be considered important for new and existent managers and leaders in community colleges. Based on a review of the descriptive data, a clear coalescence of opinion emerged around at least four possible needs for training new and existent leaders and managers in community colleges. Four training needs emerged as the top tier: (a) Human Capital Management, (b) State Policy, (c) Ethics, and (d) Finance/Accounting/Grants. The data would also suggest a second tier that would include Human Resources and Leadership Theory.

The third question was whether or not it seemed that there may be a clear coalescence of opinion around any possible topics for training that should not be considered. The three

issues that were consistently rated lowest in all tables by all respondents were Organizational Skills, Time Management and Balancing One's Personal and Professional Lives.

Conclusion

The data gathered in this study clearly indicated that the current leadership team in the Illinois Community College system strongly endorsed the concept that systematic training will definitely be needed for emerging generation of leadership in community colleges. More importantly, community college leaders in this study believed that training and preparation should focus on the following topics and in the following order of importance: (a) Human Capital Management, (b) State Policy, (c) Ethics, (d) Finance/Accounting/Grants; (e) Human Resources; and, (f) Leadership Theory.

It is important to note that this study defined the top choice, Human Capital Management, in the survey as "the strategic management of employees and all labor-related issues that impact an organization's strategic and operational objectives, including: employment of people, development of resources, and the utilization, maintenance, and compensation of their services aligned with the job and organizational requirements in order to ensure that they stay happy and productive." This definition recognized the crucial role of effective leadership in the nurturing and development of human beings in the process of delivering services in community colleges. This is an emphasis that transcends the management of the day-to-day processes and goes to the very heart of the success of any organization—the reality that it is people that determine the success of any organization. The identification of ethics as a major component for training focus is also consistent with the essential ethical underpinning of many modern leadership theories. One could easily argue that for a system in the midst of a major transformation, ethical leadership that develops and empowers the incredible potential of the human imagination will be critical for its success.

This study serves as an initial step in defining more precisely what will be needed for training the next generation of leaders in Illinois and in other American community colleges. As previous research has noted, the crisis regarding the need for preparing

the next corps of leaders in American community colleges is already here. The data presented in this study would serve to address the specific subject matter for inclusion in such a curriculum. Furthermore, future researchers may want to examine the correlation between the data discovered in this study and the AACC Six Core Competencies (Competencies, 2012). Such an examination may produce suggestions for a curriculum based in solid empirical data that could garner wide recognition and acceptance.

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Possible Linkages between Counterinsurgency Strategies and Urban Education Reform

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"Scholars are virtually unanimous in their judgment that conventional forces often lose unconventional wars because they lack a conceptual understanding of the war they are fighting."

Lt. Colonel Mathew Moten
*Chief of Military History
West Point*

Abstract

This work examined the question of whether the military concept of counterinsurgency, as it was applied in the Iraqi War, might be used as a way to begin to effectively improve urban schools. More specifically, the focus of this paper concerns the success of the shift in military strategy and tactics in Iraq beginning in 2007 and what lessons could be applied to real and lasting reform in urban education in the United States today.

Introduction

A common perception exists today that many urban schools are failing to meet the needs of its students (Comer, 2004; Haynes, 2009; Lorion, 1998; Milam, Furr-Holden & Leaf 2010; Weber, 2010). There exists plenty of ammunition to support this perception. The 2009 National Assessment of Educational Progress, known as the nation's report card, indicated, for example, stagnating test scores for most urban schools. Specifically, the report noted that overall, urban schools scored far below the national averages in fourth and eighth grade testing in the key area of reading. In this same vein, Professor Richard

J. Murnane of the Harvard School of Education reported, "Dropout rates in many urban high schools exceed 50 percent" (in Balfanz and Legters, 2004, p. 2).

Academics were not the only areas where urban schools fell short. An exhaustive report by the National Center for Education Statistics entitled "Urban Schools: The Challenge of Location and Poverty" (1996) provided a list of many other obstacles with which urban schools struggled.

From the view of city school administrators, the challenges of educating today's urban youth are daunting, with more and more students presenting problems such as 'poverty, limited- English proficiency, family instability, discrimination, disability, malnutrition, and poor health.' Lack of parental support and unsafe communities are also cited as detrimental to urban students. Urban schools themselves are often portrayed as decaying and crowded facilities that are inadequately staffed with overworked teachers lacking the basic tools of teaching, who must function under poor leadership in an overly bureaucratic and anonymous environment. (p.3)

So what, if anything can be done to address this national pressing problem? This work seeks to examine the question of how the military concept of counterinsurgency, as it was applied in the Iraqi War, might be used as a way to begin to effectively improve urban schools. More specifically, the focus of this paper concerns the success of the shift in military strategy and tactics in Iraq beginning in 2007 and what lessons could be applied to real and lasting reform in urban education in the United States today.

COIN

A person could have looked at the Iraq war, and most urban education in the United States, in 2004 and not been faulted for viewing both as colossal failures. Both problems were massive, amorphous, complex and dangerous. Neither displayed clear paths toward resolution or even improvement. Further examination, however, may demonstrate that the two seemingly different problems could have very similar solutions.

The 2007 shift in the Iraq War has been termed “The Surge” because up to 30,000 additional military personnel were sent to Iraq, in a short time period, with the understanding that they would not stay indefinitely (Petreaus, 2008; Ricks, 2010; Schreiner, 2012). However, it is important to clarify that the Surge was not just an increase in troop strength. It was not simply adding more troops to perpetuate what was not working already. Kilcullen (2010) pointed out how the project involved a shift in strategy and tactics called counterinsurgency (COIN). COIN called for

- more targeted offensive (kinetic) operations;
- a much greater focus on protecting the population;
- the building of alliances; and
- the repairing of infrastructure at the neighborhood level.

Like the war in Iraq, the significance of the problem with urban education in America, without sounding too melodramatic, is as basic as it is serious. In both poorer urban school setting and war zones, it is often a world of survival. The significance of this article is not found in drawing some kind of moral equivalency between combat and urban schools. Such a direct comparison would be insulting to both groups. The big take away is that the military strategy did “succeed” in Iraq in many ways and that the dynamics of that success may be applicable to the urban school setting.

Like public education in the United States, the United States military is massive, hierarchical, tradition bound, and slow to change. Both have budgets in the billions of dollars and employee millions of people. They both have the power to affect, positively or negatively, the lives of millions of people. COIN in Iraq presented a picture of a massive, and uncharacteristic, pivot performed by the United States military. COIN in Iraq is as much a lesson in leadership and change theory as it is about the specifics of the change itself. One could argue that urban public education in the United States must demonstrate a pivot of similar dimensions to also be successful. Perhaps the most important portion of this work is that one could also argue that leaders in both the military and education worlds have often placed the cart before the horse in terms of problem

solving. Political leaders clamored for democracy in Iraq, for example, without first providing security, jobs, electricity and running water (Bush, 2010; Chandrasekaran, 2006; Couch, 2008; Gant, 2009; Schultheis, 2005; Robinson, 2008). In this same manner, education reformers have often called for higher literacy rates and higher standardized test scores without first creating safe pathways for students to and from school, sanitary cafeteria conditions, violence free buildings, and roofs that did not leak (Berliner, 2006; Bramwell, 2010; Curwin, 2010; Lantieri and Patti, 1996; Weber, 2010). Persons that served in both locations, Iraq and Urban schools, have offered first-hand accounts of this ineffective dynamic.

An examination of recent violence in the city of Chicago, Illinois, helped further the comparison between military problems and urban school problems.

How many of you know a friend or relative who has been shot at?" This was the opening question asked by a newspaper reporter to a class of second graders at a Chicago public school. Most hands in the room were raised. The Chicago Sun Times newspaper conducted a survey of 500 Chicago Public Schools fifth through eighth graders. Nearly 75% stated they heard gunshots in their neighborhood. At least half knew at least one person that was shot at. More than 33% have been shown a gun or know someone that has been shot to death. "If you ask kids living in Sarajevo during the war or living in the Gaza Strip the same questions you asked these kids you'd get very similar answers. These are very much what kids report in situations of war zone. (Golab, et al., 2008)

The *Huffington Post* expanded on a story originally published by the *Chicago Tribune*.

While fatalities from gun violence are down this year among Chicago Public School students, the number of young people shot during the 2011-12 academic year is up nearly 22 percent from last year, the highest number of students wounded by firearms in the last four years. The *Chicago Tribune* reports that before the school year ended on June

15, 24 students had been fatally shot and 319 students were wounded by gunfire. That's four fewer fatalities than the 2010-11 school year, according to police data obtained by the newspaper. That spike mirrors a rise in homicides and gun-related violence across the city, where the murder rate this year has nearly doubled the number of U.S. troops killed in Afghanistan over the same period. (Huffington Post, 2012, June 26)

Harste (2005) used a University of Michigan Center for Urban Education website to further clarify this topic.

Urban students are faced with many extraneous factors that other students, specifically the majority of suburban students, do not need to worry about on a daily basis. Students in urban schools are expected to focus on acquiring skills to help them lead a more prosperous life, while at the same time they are faced with many distractions. The horrendous conditions of the school, such as leaking roofs and sewage problems, are not conducive to learning. Also, urban students live in crime-infested neighborhoods with violence on the streets. Problems outside the classroom that affects students learning tends to have a great impact in the classroom in urban schools. These problems directly affect student's motivation, which then has an unequivocal effect on their achievement. Therefore, unlike suburban students who attend schools in a safe and pleasant environment, where learning is the only priority; learning is not the primary concern for urban students. (p. 61)

Paul Tough, in his book, *How Children Succeed*, interviewed many people who were invested in the urban environment. His book provided important elements concerning the negative psychological impact of poverty and violence.

- Dr. Burke Harris, a primary-care pediatrician in a rough neighborhood in San Francisco, found many of her patients to be traumatized, depressed, and anxious. The commonality amongst her patients was the violence and chaos in their homes and in their neighborhoods.

The children suffered panic attacks, eating disorders, and suicidal behaviors. Harris stated that “she felt less like a primary-care pediatrician and more like a battlefield surgeon, patching up her patients and sending them back to war.” (Tough, 9).

- Vincent Felitti, the head of the department of preventative medicine for the giant health maintenance organization Kaiser-Permanente, conducted an expansive study about adverse childhood experiences (ACE) in the 1990's. He found that childhood trauma was rather common and the negative adult outcomes were significant. (Tough, 10)
- The ACE study connected well with the fields of neuroendocrinology (the study of how hormones interact with the brain) and stress physiology (the study of how stress affects the body). It found that humans were adapted to deal with acute stress, but not prolonged stress. (Tough,12)
- The human body regulates stress using a system called the HPA (hypothalamic-pituitary-adrenal) axis. HPA causes heart rates to rise, glucose levels to rise, neurotransmitters to activate, and inflammatory proteins to surge through the blood stream. Overloading this system, especially in infancy and childhood, with prolonged stress can overload the HPA axis and cause long lasting negative effects- physical, psychological, and neurological. (Tough,13)
- Further study found that the higher the ACE score (stress events over time) the more problems children had in school related to learning and behavior. The biological explanation for this was the negative effect stress had on the part of the human brain called the prefrontal cortex. The prefrontal cortex regulates emotion and learning. Children growing up in stressful environments found it harder to concentrate, sit still, remember facts, and regulate emotional outbursts. (Tough,17)
- Executive functions are a specific set of higher order mental abilities found in the prefrontal cortex. In particular, executive functions refer to the ability of

persons to deal with confusing and unpredictable information and situations. Stress, poverty, and violence can adversely affect executive function. Executive function is critical to learning and self-control. (Tough, 19)

- The prefrontal cortex, unlike other parts of the brain, stays malleable into early adulthood. Executive function therefore, unlike one's inherent intelligence and intellectual capacity, can be improved through reducing stress and trauma. This presents unique prospects for improving a child's success in school. In effect, improving and stabilizing a child's environment could have an incredibly positive impact on their school performance. Not doing so would make strictly pedagogical approaches largely ineffective. (Tough, 21)
- Tough provided some direct advice for producing brave, curious and prudent adults, "...ensure that when he is an infant, his hypothalamic-pituitary-adrenal axis functions well. And how do you do that? It is not magic. First, as much as possible, you protect him from serious trauma and chronic stress; then even more important, you provide him with a secure, nurturing relationship with at least one parent and ideally two. That's not the whole secret of success, but it is a big, big, part of it." (182)

Post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) is a disorder most commonly associated with military combat veterans but it could also be applied to other persons experiencing acts of severe or prolonged violence. Violence can occur anywhere, but persons living in urban environments must sustain much higher levels of violence than their suburban or rural counterparts. (United States Census Bureau, 2012) The National Institute of Health addressed PTSD in youth, specifically. It also explained violence and trauma more generally and its' effect on school performance.

The prevalence of trauma exposure among youth is a major public health concern, with a third of adolescents nationally reporting that they have been in a physical fight in the past twelve months and 9% having been threatened or injured with a weapon on school property. Studies have documented the

broad range of negative sequel of trauma exposure for youth, including posttraumatic stress disorder (PTSD), other anxiety problems, depressive symptoms, and dissociation. In addition, decreased IQ and reading ability, lower grade-point average (GPA), more days of school absence, and decreased rates of high school graduation have been associated with exposure to traumatic events. Evidence suggests that youth exposed to trauma have decreased social competence and increased rates of peer rejection. Therefore, students who have experienced a traumatic event are at increased risk for academic, social, and emotional problems as a result of these experiences. Schools can be an ideal setting for mental health professionals to intervene with traumatized students, by supporting both their trauma-related psychological problems and their ability to learn in the classroom.

Solutions existed for both the worlds of urban education and war-torn Iraq. Connecting the two worlds would necessitate some creative thinking and the use of metaphor. The metaphor “waging peace” was one common to both urban schools and counterinsurgency in Iraq. Both Schultheis (2005) in his book, *Waging Peace: a Special Operations Team's Battle to Rebuild Iraq* and Lantieri and Patti (1996) in their book, *Waging Peace in Our Schools*, shared the idea that violence reduction was an active process. Retired Marine Corp General Anthony Zinni, in his book, *The Battle for Peace*, (2006) stressed that peace was not a human default position. It required as much work as war itself. Zinni helped bring the concept and value of peace from the abstract to the real world.

I've been on the front lines of enough wars and seen enough violence to know that true peace is *not* passive, *not* a state of passivity. It is *not* a state of tranquility or of calm. It is not an absence of disturbance. It is not an absence of any kind. It's a presence, an action. You've got to make it happen. You've got to work at it all the time. You can't just float or tread water; you've got to swim. Nor is peace the natural state of a society, a society's default position. It's not a state of nature—an Eden of pleasure and plenty on some lush, tropical island. It's a human construct; just as an education

system is a human construct.... just as war is a human construct (p. 211).

According to Slavin (2005) schools and government agencies need to realize that if students' basic needs are not met then learning will suffer. This is often the case in urban schools. (University of Michigan, Urban Education Website) According to Maslow's hierarchy of needs individuals have both deficiency and growth needs. Deficiency needs are basic needs for a person's physical and psychological welfare. Growth needs, on the other hand, include the need for knowing, appreciating and understanding, these needs can never fully be satisfied Growth needs cannot be pursued until all the basic needs of an individual are met. (Slavin, 2005)

The Center for the Study and Prevention of Violence at the University of Colorado at Boulder (2011) had produced several fact sheets on school violence. Their work provided a framework and justification for urban school reform.

- The effects of exposure to violence in schools may spread to others within the school setting. This spread or "contagion" changes the school setting in ways that negatively alter school interactions and interfere with the school's capacity to achieve its educational and social goals.
- Widespread concern about violence within a school may reduce the quality of teaching, disrupt classroom discipline, limit teachers' availability to students before or after the school day, and reduce students' motivation to attend school and/or willingness to participate in extracurricular activities.
- Participation in formal networks such as neighborhood associations, schools, and churches tends to be lower in disorganized communities.
- A basic sense of safety is critical for the healthy psychological development of a child.
- The three key youth serving community institutions that need to collaborate to help children experiencing or committing violence include: public schools, mental health services, and police departments.

- Research indicates that traditional “turf boundaries” of social institutions can be overcome when a shared frame of reference is applied. This type of collaboration has great potential for improving the lives of American children.

Counterinsurgency Strategies and Urban Education Reform

All counterinsurgency methods were not relevant to education reform. Some were clearly militaristic in nature and had no proper place in our world of educating children. Others dealing with security and organization, however, certainly had more relevance. The following of Kilcullen’s (2010) ideas on counterinsurgency could likely be best adapted to improving struggling school settings.

Know your turf.

“Know the people, the topography, economy, history, religion and culture. Know every village, road, field, population group, tribal leader and ancient grievance. Your task is to become the world expert on your district” (Kilcullen, p. 29). This idea, as carried out on a single building principal in an urban school setting seems amazingly daunting. By using a team approach, however, it could become much more realistic. A misunderstanding of a particular urban culture would undoubtedly lead to the failure of any meaningful initiative. Warren (2005) provided a solid example of collaboration and networking in a school community “More principals have become willing to collaborate because they understand that many of the problems in urban schools cannot be solved without improvements in the conditions of the communities surrounding those schools” (p. 5).

Organize for inter-agency operations.

“Almost everything in counterinsurgency is inter-agency. And everything important—from policing to intelligence to civil-military operations to trash collection—will involve your company working with civilian actors and local indigenous partners you cannot control, but whose success is essential for yours” (Kilcullen, p. 32). In the urban school setting, this point has a lot to do with looking at students as individuals. It was not enough to simply

meet with local social service agencies. Particular services must be made available and facilitated for specific students. CCNX (City Connects to Students/ Boston) was an example of this in practice.

Traci Walker Griffith, principal of Boston's John Eliot K-8 school, a CCNX school, recalled a male student who seemed so sleepy in class he had a hard time keeping his eyes open. Fearing learning or attention-deficit problems, the teacher requested an intervention. The mother took him to a pediatrician and found he was anemic. "Now he's in third grade and he's reading at grade level," says Griffith. "For me, it's looking at what's around a student, and all possible things that could help" (in Chase, 2011, p. 1).

This point tied in well with the earlier point about proper diagnoses. If abandoned houses and garbage filled sidewalks and lots are blight on the school neighborhood, then major agencies and resources will be needed to fix the situation. School sponsored neighborhood clean-ups were nice, but without heavy equipment and construction crews the impact would be slight and fleeting. The building principal should not have to coordinate this, but with the proper resources he or she could do so.

Find a political/cultural advisor.

"Someone with people skills and a "feel" for the environment will do better than a political science graduate" (Kilcullen, 2010, p. 33). The One Church-One School initiative in this researcher's former school corporation was a good example of this concept in action. Local religious leaders have tremendous power and influence, which could be used to help or hurt a school administrator. A new principal would be well served by presenting a new initiative to a veteran teacher, local business leader or local pastor before mandating it. The administrator might find out that the idea failed miserably when tried before. The administrator might discover that the new initiative would empower some and alienate others.

Train the squad leaders—then trust them.

"Counterinsurgency is a squad and platoon leader's war, and often a private soldier's war. Ruthlessly replace leaders who do

not make the grade. But once people are trained, and you have a shared operational “diagnosis,” you must trust them. We talk about this, but few company or platoon leaders really trust their people” (Kilcullen, 2010, p. 33). This is where a team approach could really help urban school administrators. One weakness that has crippled public education in the United States concerned the tremendous effort involved in removing ineffective teachers (Rhee, 2012). A team of retired educators, like a Special Forces “A” team, could be used to evaluate staff and make recommendations for promotions and terminations. The team could build an airtight case and not simply come in and tell overworked building principals to do it themselves.

Rank is nothing: talent is everything.

“Not everyone is good at counterinsurgency. Many people don’t understand the concept, and some who do can’t execute it. It is difficult, and in a conventional force only a few people will master it. Anyone can learn the basics, but a few “naturals” do exist. Learn how to spot these people and put them into positions where they can make a difference. Rank matters far less than talent—a few good men led by a smart junior non-commissioned officer can succeed in counterinsurgency, where hundreds of well-armed soldiers under a mediocre senior officer will fail” (Kilcullen, 2010, p. 34). The education world, like the military, is hierarchical. However, competent people need to have the freedom and resources to accomplish their mission without micromanagement. They should also be removed if they did not accomplish their mission. It was also important to note that a very effective administrator at a high performing suburban school might be lost at a struggling urban school. The reverse could also be true (Weber, 2010; Rhee, 2012).

Have a game plan.

This is sometimes called “operational design.” One approach is to identify basic stages in your operation: e.g. “establish dominance, build local networks, and marginalize the enemy.” Make sure you can easily transition between phases, both forward and backward in case of setbacks. Just as the insurgent can adapt his activity to yours, you must have a simple enough plan to survive setbacks without collapsing. “This plan is

the ‘solution’ that matches the shared ‘diagnosis’ you developed earlier—it must be simple, and known to everyone” (Kilcullen, 2010, p. 34).

Prepare for handover from Day One.

“Believe it or not, you will not resolve the insurgency on your watch. Your tour will end, and your successors will need your corporate knowledge. Start handover folders, in every platoon and specialist squad, from day one—ideally, you would have inherited these from your predecessors, but if not you must start them. The folders should include lessons learned, details about the population, village and patrol reports, undated maps, photographs—anything that will help newcomers master the environment. Computerized databases are fine, but keep good back-ups and ensure you have hard copy of key artifacts and documents. This is boring, tedious and essential. Over time, you will create a corporate memory that keeps your people alive” (Kilcullen, 2010, p. 36).

Urban schools have often fallen short in the above area of operational design and handover. Turnover for building administrators was high and continuity was often lacking (Hull, 2012). Superintendents had an average tenure of three years (Pascopella, 2011). Plans often changed with each superintendent. Goals and methods were established but did not always include a comprehensive and systematic plan on how to accomplish them. Furthermore, the goals often did not have the buy in of many stakeholders.

The U.S. Army Special Forces offered a possible solution to this problem. “Unlike the top-down army, about 80 percent of all the Special Forces’ operations are proposed by the teams; the higher echelons then help them develop the concept or steer them away if it is not a worthwhile project” (Robinson, 2004, p. 186).

Be there.

“The most fundamental rule of counterinsurgency is to be there. This demands a residential approach—living in your sector, in close proximity to the population, rather than raiding into the area from remote, secure bases. Movement on foot, sleeping in local villages, night patrolling: all these seem more

dangerous than they are. They establish links with the local, who see you as real people they can trust and do business with, not as aliens who descend from an armored box. Driving around in an armored convoy—day tripping like a tourist in hell—degrades situational awareness makes you a target and is ultimately more dangerous” (Kilcullen, 2010, p. 35). Educators did not need to live in the same community that their students live in order to be effective and compassionate. Proximity and a local home address can certainly elevate one’s credibility and accessibility however (Darling-Hammond, 1997). Technology in the form of texting and virtual commuting could help, but there was no substitute for boots on the ground.

Build trusted networks.

“Once you have settled into your sector, your key task is to build trusted networks. This is the true meaning of the phrase ‘hearts and minds,’ which comprises two separate components. ‘Hearts’ means persuading people their best interests are served by your success; ‘Minds’ means convincing them that you can protect them and that resisting you is pointless. Note that neither concept has to do with whether people like you” (Kilcullen, 2010, p. 37).

Along the same above lines, Warren (2005) wrote about the value of networks in K-12 education, noting several elements. Networks could help in terms of building safety and capacity. “Metal detectors were not needed when students and parents could be counted on to alert the school to impending trouble. Readily available mental health and medical services could improve student attendance rates and behavior. All too often, principals and teachers in urban schools see the families from which their students come as part of the problem they face as educators. But in schools where community organizations are involved in this new approach, they have helped foster “social capital”—networks of relationships based on trust—and have helped parents develop as community leaders” (Warren, 2005, p.2).

Small is beautiful.

“Keep programs small: this makes them cheap, sustainable, low-key and (importantly) recoverable if they fail” (Kilcullen,

2010, p. 37). Building a new elementary school across town did little to improve the lives of the 800 students in this administrator's former school. However, finding \$900.00 to pay a private contractor to remove 26 truckloads of garbage from the sidewalk near this administrator's school did improve the quality of life for many stakeholders.

Conclusion

This research found numerous areas where COIN could be applied in urban educational settings.

- Data could be better applied if responded to more rapidly. Armies, and even police departments, are looking at data daily and moving resources accordingly. Schools may look at student data quarterly and may move resources and staff annually. This is not a call for the more frequent testing of students but rather to use data already available (attendance, grades, suspensions, etc.) to quickly move resources depending on student and school needs, more quickly (Dickey, 2009).
- Significant violence and poverty mitigation and infrastructure improvement strategies should be applied based on the needs of the given community. In the case of Iraq, COIN was not pushed onto small unit leaders as a massive, "one size fits all" directive from the General ranks. Rather, a solid outline of expectations, resources, and strategies were provided and could be modified and implemented based on the needs of a given area of operations (Ricks, 2010; Schultheis, 2005).
- The Green Zone geographical security approach could be used for neighborhood schools. The Green Zone in Baghdad was a very secure part of the city where diplomats, military leadership, and Iraqi leadership could lead and manage the country in relative safety. This took care of Maslow's first requirement of security so the leadership could focus on higher order thinking and doing. The school and grounds could be placed in Green Zone with requisite resources. The area could be increased to ring 500 yards, or more, from the school property. Within this zone abandoned buildings and

garbage would not be tolerated and better escorting of students (walking school bus) would be provided (Chandrasekaran, 2006).

- The Special Forces “A” Team model could also be applied to struggling urban schools. This would involve small groups of educators with solid experience and expertise who would serve at a struggling school for a period of time. They would provide training, but equally important would be the actual completion of necessary tasks that an overworked school administrator was having trouble completing. Tasks like evaluating staff, firing staff, hiring staff, mentoring staff, teaching staff, building afterschool programs, building violence prevention programs, building community support, building inter-agency partnerships and providing security were all areas that were vital in urban areas, but an overwhelmed building administrator might have trouble completing in total (Ricks, 2006; Ricks, 2010; Robinson, 2004).

This researcher was not surprised to find commonalities between the worlds of education and the military in terms of violence mitigation. Furthermore, this researcher did not intend to simply venerate the military and castigate urban public education. The reality was that both organizations do outstanding work in very difficult circumstances and there exists ample room to praise and criticize each group. Simply to call for the adoption of a paramilitary posture in urban education, or worse to expect the military to take over the job of public educators, would be foolhardy. Instead, this researcher wanted to examine areas where a COIN approach could be applied to urban education and what the implication of such a relationship could be.

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Our Liberal Arts Majors Get IT (Information Technology)

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Abstract

On one hand there is an ongoing debate on the value of a Liberal Arts education and on the other hand employers recognize the importance of liberal education and the liberal arts. While employers agree that, regardless of their major, every college student should acquire broad knowledge in the liberal arts and sciences; they often complain that liberal arts graduates are digitally challenged lacking basic workplace proficiencies (21st century skills) and thus not ready for the workplace. Is there a way our education system can close the gap between what students learn in college and the expectations of the job markets? We use an innovative approach - a new course in mobile application development for our liberal arts (non-science) students which not only provides value to their education but also enhances their technology skills and makes them digitally ready as desired by the employers. Majors linked to occupations have better employment prospects and graduates who make technology (creators) are better off than those who simply use technology (consumers). We explore ways to increase versatility of our liberal arts students by making them active creators of technology so that they can gain a strong foothold in the job market.

Introduction

Liberal Arts Education can be revitalized and enhanced with technology and one of the ways to increase versatility of our liberal arts students is to make them digitally proficient so that they can gain a strong foothold in the job market. We offer a liberal arts degree with a side of FRIES (Further Revelations with Information and Evolving Systems) through a Mobile Apps

Development course which enables our graduates to become creators of technology. This paper discusses the methodology and the challenges associated with offering such a course for our liberal arts students.

Literature Review: The Value of a Liberal Arts Degree

Employers place a higher priority on forms of learning that emphasize students' active development and application of intellectual and practical skills (Hart Research Associates, 2013). More than 75% of employers say they want colleges to place more emphasis on helping students develop key learning outcomes: critical thinking, complex problem-solving, written and oral communication, and applied knowledge in real-world settings.

A report from the Georgetown Center on Education and the Workforce (Carnevale, Cheah, & Strohl, 2012) answers a profound question that many people are asking in the aftermath of the current economic downturn. Is college still worth it? Much attention has been devoted to the 9 percent unemployment among recent college graduates, leading some to conclude that college is no longer worth it. Carnevale and Cheah (2013) argue that college remains the best alternative for young workers with one caveat: Not all majors are created equal. Some majors offer substantially better employment prospects than others. Findings from this study include: Choice of major substantially affects employment prospects and earnings; People who make technology are better off than people who simply use technology; In general, majors that are linked to occupations have better employment prospects than majors focused on general skills.

Lovell (2013) also explores a similar question: Is a liberal arts degree worth it? She argues that a liberal arts degree prepares students for creative thinking, leading to innovation and problem solving, which is so vital in this dynamic global economy. Amidst skepticism over the value a liberal arts college degree in a weak job market with rising college costs and increasing levels of student debts, Suipano (2014) reveals that everyone questions the return of investment. Foroohar (2013) alerts us about how our young college graduates are performing jobs that are way beneath their education training, thereby suffering from high rates of "mal-employment," which rose by 9.3

percent points (from 2000-2010) for college graduates between 20-24 years of age. She shares an interesting insight into the vigorous ongoing debate about liberal arts degrees in a world where the majority of new jobs require science, technology and math skills.

Skills Gap

While employers value a four-year college degree, more than half had trouble finding recent graduates qualified to fill positions. These graduates lack basic workplace proficiencies: adaptability, communication skills, and the ability to solve complex problems (Fischer, 2013). Colleges are not adequately preparing students in written and oral communication, decision-making, and analytical & research skills. Based on an exhaustive report (OECD, 2013) Porter (2013) claims the skill level of the American labor force has fallen dangerously behind its peers around the world. The OECD report assesses literacy, mathematical, and problem-solving skills in people aged 16 to 65 in 22 advanced nations of the OECD and Russia and Cyprus. Perez-Pana (2013) (also based on this OECD report) cautions that American adults lag well behind their counterparts in most other developed countries in the mathematical and technical skills needed for a modern workplace. He cites a statement from Arne Duncan, the education secretary, saying that the findings “show our education system hasn’t done enough to help Americans compete - or position our country to lead - in a global economy that demands increasingly higher skills.”

Pannapacker (2013), director of the digital liberal arts program at Hope College in Holland, MI points out that employers “want liberal-arts graduates who are not digitally challenged.” He discusses ways to “close the gap between what our students are learning and the expectations of the job markets in their fields” by reforming undergraduate education to include an experiential-education program; an unusual combination of coursework connected to internships relevant to the students’ career aspirations. Paraphrasing Frederick Buechner, he proffers to help students match their passions to the world’s needs instead of abandoning liberal arts education altogether. So, what are the skills our liberal arts graduates should hone?

21st Century Skills

The advent of Information and Communications Technology (ICT) has made manufacturing and other low-skill tasks in the services sector highly automated; diminishing the need for routine cognitive and craft skills. Today in addition to the “occupation-specific” or “domain-dependent” skills, employers are also demanding:

- “generic” skills such as information-processing skills (including literacy, numeracy and problem solving skills) and
- “soft” skills such as interpersonal communication, self-management, and the ability to learn new skills.

The Partnership for 21st Century Skills (2011) , P21, has developed a Framework for 21st Century Learning. In this framework, P21, the national leader advocating 21st century readiness for all students, describes the skills, knowledge and expertise students must master to succeed in work and life. Figure A1 represents this as a blend of content knowledge, specific skills, expertise and literacies. In this figure, the “rainbow” represents the “21st century student outcomes” and includes not only the 3Rs (the core subjects) and the 4Cs (Critical Thinking, Communications, Collaboration and Creativity) but also the Information, Media & Technology skills (the “generic” skills) and Life and Career skills (“the “soft” skills). The gray “shadows” on the bottom of Figure A1 represent the critical systems necessary to ensure student mastery of 21st century skills. With the right curriculum and instruction in an appropriate Learning Environment we educators can facilitate our students to master these 21st century skills using tools currently at our disposal - contemporary devices, as a way to enrich our students’ generic and soft skills..

Mobile Learning

Sales of hand-held devices (smartphones and tablets) are exploding. These on-line, social, and increasingly mobile computing devices offer visual, tactile and personal experiences as never before. These devices are ubiquitous and the growth in mobile phone subscribers worldwide has gone up substantially (Sanou, 2013) from under a billion in 2000 to nearly 7 billion

(more than 95% of our current world population!). For the first time in history, a majority of people can afford to buy personal ICT in the form of mobile devices, in particular mobile phones (Vosloo, 2012). Mobile devices in our education landscape are drastically changing the ways we teach and learn. These devices are digital, portable and provide multimedia capabilities to access the Internet. Our students today are “Digital Natives” – a term coined by Prensky (2009) – “native speakers” of the digital language of: computers, video games and the Internet. To speak the language of these “natives” and to engage them we plan to use an innovative approach - mobile application development, so that they can experience mobile technology as creators of technology, not just consumers.

The traditional classrooms (chalk and blackboard) of yesterday are shrinking into the palms of our hands today. Mobile technology impacts learning that takes place outside the “traditional classroom” and has the power to transform education. Mobile Learning represents a profound shift in the way education is delivered and received. It is not just distance learning with mobile technology but a union of ICT and education where technology-enabled learning solutions are available to learners anytime, anywhere. UNESCO (Vosloo, 2012) believes that this unification has great potential to facilitate knowledge dissemination, improve learning and assist the development of more efficient education services. As prices of mobile devices and connectivity continue to plummet, Mobile Learning can extend educational opportunities to marginalized groups; increase education quality; and reduce inequalities based on gender, class, race, age and disabilities (Vosloo, 2012).

Challenges

Aside from the immense benefits, Mobile Learning is burdened with several challenges. Negative perceptions around the use of mobile devices (especially phones) in educational settings; safety, security and privacy concerns; and lack of training opportunities for educators to incorporate mobile learning in their classrooms further thwart innovation. To address these challenges and to overcome the skills gap in our students we designed a new course for our liberal arts students which not only provides value to their education but also enhances their

technology skills and makes them digitally ready as desired by the employers.

Mobile “Apps” (Applications) Development

A new course, Mobile Apps Development, was offered for the first time in the Fall semester of 2013 for students (from various liberal arts disciplines) without any knowledge of computer programming or any experience with creating technology. This course taps into modern technology developments for mobile devices (such as smartphones and tablets) and engages students in a way more relevant to their own digital lives – which is being online, social and highly mobile.

Computational Thinking and GRADE with App Inventor

Computational thinking, which falls under the realm of the 4Cs as well as the generic and soft skills, is recognized as a key skill set for all 21st century learners. An App (or Application) is a self-contained program or piece of software designed to fulfill a particular purpose. In January 2011, the American Dialect Society (ADS, 2011) named “App” the word of the year for 2010 and defined it as an abbreviated form of application, a software program for a computer or phone operating system. Using App Inventor (MIT, 2012) our students acquire computational skills as they learn to “program” their mobile devices without any programming! App Inventor (originally provided by Google and now maintained by the Massachusetts Institute of Technology) is an open source, Web-based program development tool that even beginners with no prior programming experience can use to create mobile apps (with fun and excitement). Students use this visual “blocks” language (Figure A2) to build all kinds of apps – game apps, text processing apps, location aware apps, web-enabled apps, broadcast hubs, quizzes, and utility apps (such as locate your car/phone/keys, etc.). They begin with simple apps – the first one being a “warm-up app”. Next, we teach some programming concepts and students progress towards more complex and difficult and finally we transition them to “real-world” apps which are useful to others. We encourage students to spend considerable amount of time in Algorithm development – write pseudo code in English language before even trying to program their apps. This helps them to think about the

functionality of their apps and try out some of the features (by hand) they intend to design before they actually implement the code.

During this course our students gain an insight into **GRADE**:

- **Generalization** - realize that a solution to a problem may be used to solve a whole range of related problems.
- **Reuse and Pattern Recognition** - appreciate that a new problem is likely to be related to other problems they have already solved.
- **Abstraction** - see a problem and its solution at many levels of detail.
- **Decomposition** - understand that solving a large problem involves breaking it down into a set of smaller problems.
- **Exciting Algorithm Development** - think about tasks as a series of steps.

Building Apps

Our students realize that programming is everywhere and has become a part of many jobs and thus are curious to explore computing with mobile devices. GRADE helps them gain practical skills, foster creativity, entrepreneurship, idea formulation and acquire problem solving skills. Apps are created by working with:

- The App Inventor Designer (Figure A3) – where the app components are selected which creates the graphical user interface, and
- The App Inventor Blocks Editor (Figure A4) – where programs are assembled visually (fitting pieces together like a puzzle) into program blocks that specify how the components should behave.

In order to test their apps students used actual devices (smartphones and tablets) or the App Emulator which is software that runs on the computer and behaves just like a phone. The course runs for an entire semester (15 weeks) with several outcome assessments throughout.

Results and Analysis: Assessment Strategies

Assessment is one of the most effective communication tools for individualized interaction with students and we used

various assessment strategies throughout this course in order to increase their motivation level. Assessment is important for us as educators, for our students as learners, and also for the society at large. Cumulative assessments (course grade) play a significant societal role in terms of how students are judged professionally by others, especially since in this course they are creating apps for other consumers. Every week we offered a 5 to 15-minute Quiz to test our students understanding of the previous material. This helped us shape our next few lectures to re-iterate topics which were unclear or muddled. Regular exams were also given and some students did very well on the “Theory behind programming” and “Practical Visual App Design” too. We also encouraged students to write their own Apps based on their particular majors. For example students from Hotel Restaurant Management created apps with a restaurant theme using various building blocks from App Inventor. Creating such major specific apps enabled students in the class to learn something new from another major.

App Competition

Our students looked forward to the final week of the semester when they presented their final projects as part of an Apps Competition. The students had been working on their apps from concept to the final product from the first day of class when we announced the competition. Throughout the 15-week semester our students worked on the various aspects of their final project – algorithm development, block diagrams, write-up about the need for their app in the real world, documentation guiding users how to use their apps (“user manuals”) and presenting their apps to an audience of judges and other students. The students published all the documentation and the actual app itself on their web pages (which they learned to make during this course) so that anyone could download their app and try it out. The process of documentation, graphics, multimedia, presentation, publishing and maintaining their websites reinforced their soft skills and the process of building their actual app enhanced their generic skills.

Holistic Learning

In this course we tried to use a holistic learning, teaching and assessment approach, which will be the topic of our future research paper. Hiles (2013) builds up on Aristotle's quote – "The whole is greater than the sum of its parts," and presents a four-quadrant criteria for holistic assessment. She rightfully asserts that we educators have a limited insight into the whole of student life experience and are unable to intervene efficiently or effectively when students are falling behind or indeed failing. Our students often lack a repository for the entirety of their knowledge and achievements. By using Electronic portfolios students can chronicle their app development process and achieve many of the 21st century skills along the way.

Electronic portfolios

In order to enhance and improve the learning experience of our students, we incorporate tools for appropriate criticism in a timely manner including electronic portfolios. Students publish their apps as well as a write-up for users to download on various devices. For obtaining feedback throughout the semester, we used a variety of surveys (start-semester, mid-semester, and, end-semester). The results we collected are discussed below.

Results

Figure A5 presents the results of a Pre-Course Student Survey we conducted to understand how our digital natives use technology (computers and mobile devices). It is not surprising to observe that all our students use computers and mobile devices every day for communication, entertainment and social networking. Almost 67% use them couple times a week to do coursework and 40% to do creative projects. Figure A6 shows that more than 90% use the Internet browsers daily whereas more than 80% never write programs. Then, our surveys explored the relationship between computing skills and job/career goals and Figure A7 clearly shows that more than 70% believe that computing skills are essential for procuring jobs and achieving career goals. When we tried to understand the relationship between computer science and problem solving, we were surprised to learn that only 50% used computer science to solve problems (Figure A8) but were elated to note that using

computer science to solve problems appeals to more than 60%. Finally, from the Post-Course Student Survey in Figure A9 we discovered that everyone in the class agreed or strongly agreed that this course increased their knowledge of programming, the course content was simple, easy to understand, computer science was interesting, and they gained practical knowledge from this course. A partial sample of the Pre-Course Student Survey is shown in Figure A10.

Conclusions and Future Work

This research explores ways to increase the versatility of our liberal arts students so that they can gain a strong foothold in the job market and become active creators of technology rather than just being passive consumers of technology. The employers today are indeed demanding students with a well-rounded liberal arts education who are “digitally ready” to jump into their workplace responsibilities. Using mobile technologies in this initial offering of our Mobile Apps Development course we have been able to help our liberal arts students evolve from “consumers” to “creators” of technology and gain computational thinking skills at the same time. Interactions with various assessment tools and maintaining electronic portfolios also gives our liberal students an edge so that they can be comfortably “digitally ready” to enter into the workplace. For the future we wish to incorporate experiential learning into our course so students can team up with local businesses/employers to gain more hands-on training while trying to design an app for these folks based on the specific industry they are involved with. Another area of our future research is targeted towards Holistic Teaching, Learning and Assessment (HTLA). In conclusion, we embarked to offer a liberal arts degree with a side of FRIES and our Liberal Arts Majors Get IT!

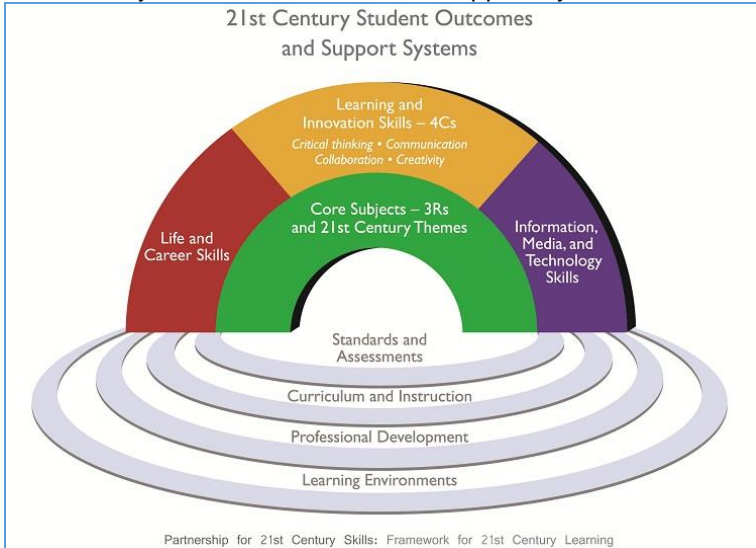
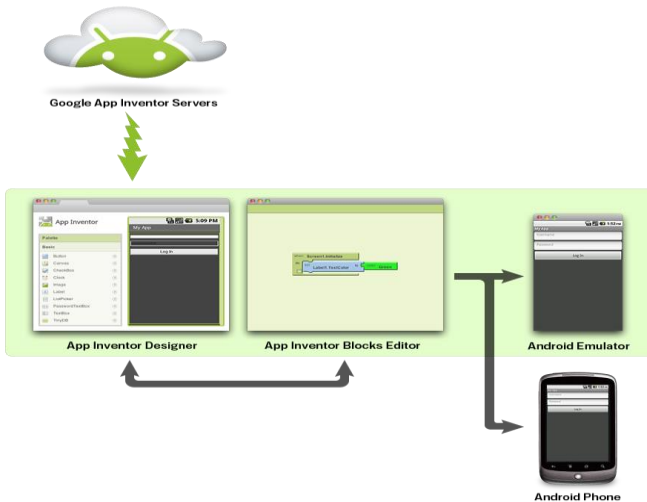
Figure A1**21st Century Student Outcomes and Support Systems****Figure A2****App Inventor**

Figure A3
App Inventor Designer

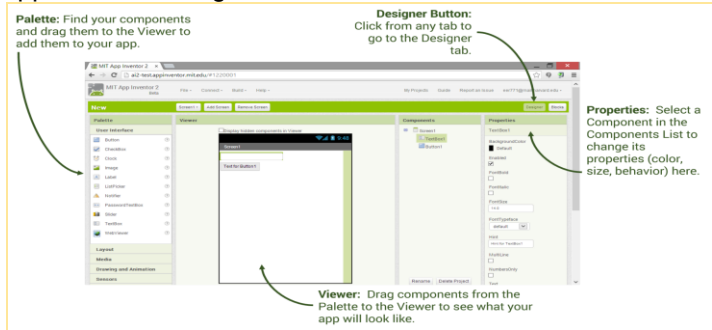


Figure A4
App Inventor Blocks Editor

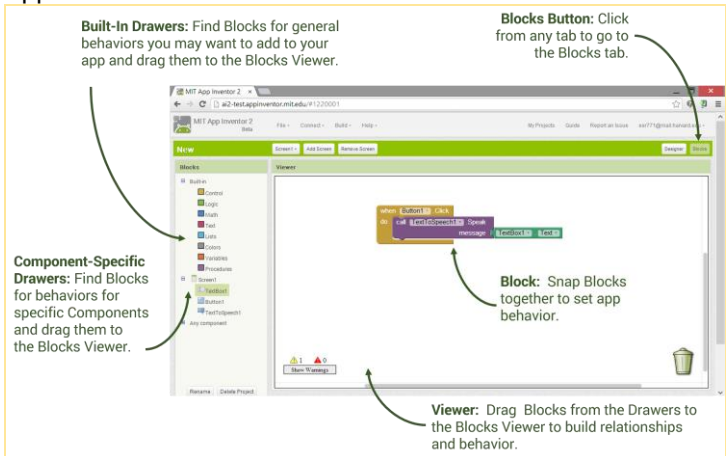


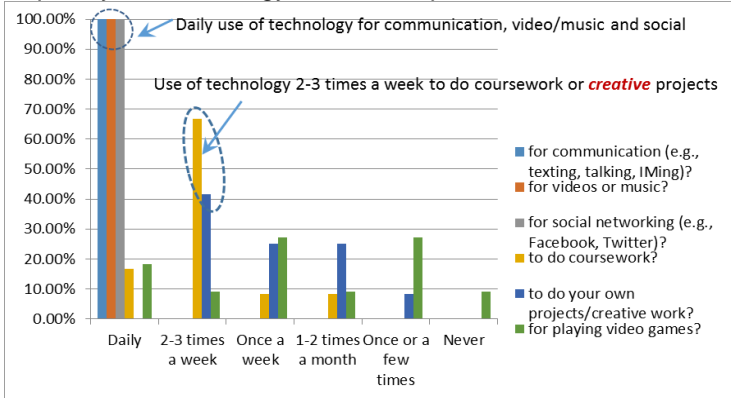
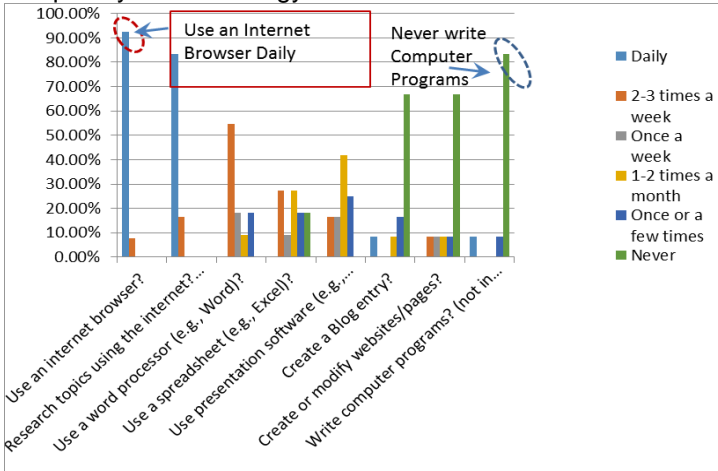
Figure A5**Frequency of Technology Use – Computers and Mobile Devices****Figure A6****Frequency of Technology Use for various tasks**

Figure A7
Computing Skills, Jobs, Career Goals

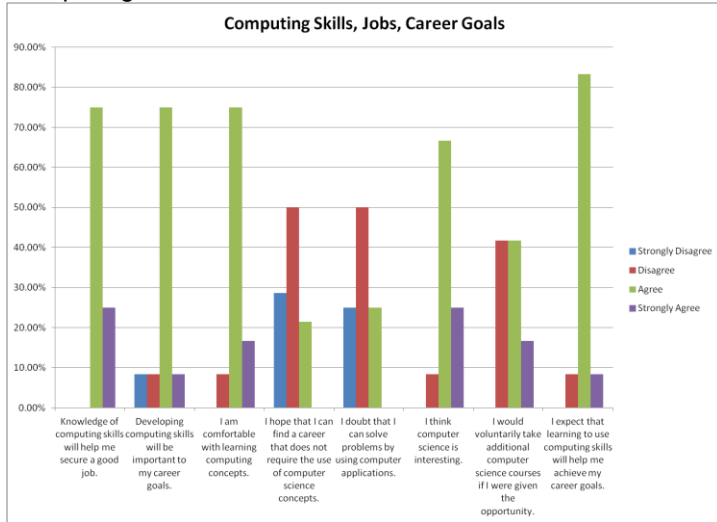


Figure A8
Computer Science and Problem Solving

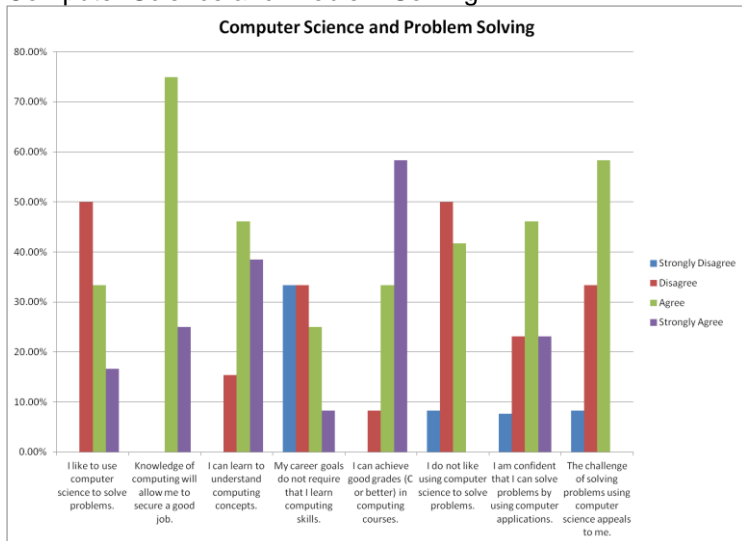
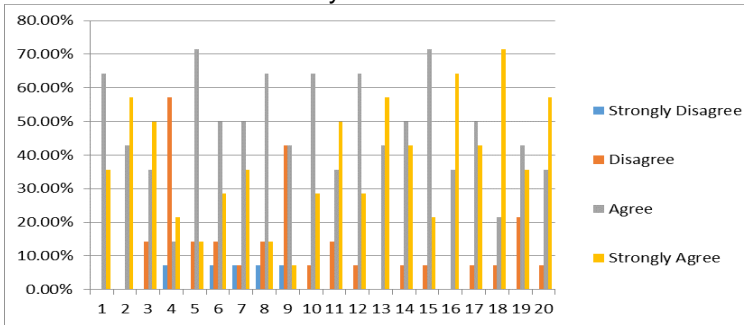


Figure A9
Post-Course Student Survey Results



- Q1. The course content was simple and understandable.
 Q2. The course increased my knowledge of programming.
 Q3. I can now understand computing concepts fairly well.
 Q4. My career goals require that I learn these skills.
 Q5. I can write successful computer programs.
 Q6. Knowledge of computing skills will help me secure a good job.
 Q7. I am confident that I can solve problems using skills learnt in this course.
 Q8. The challenge of solving problems using computers appeals to me.
 Q9. Skills learned in this class will be important to my career goals.
 Q10. I am comfortable with learning computing concepts.
 Q11. I think computer science is interesting.
 Q12. I am good at using on-line search tools.
 Q13. I am capable of manipulating interactive media (image, video, sound).
 Q14. I can effectively use abstractions and models to achieve goals.
 Q15. I have effective research skills.
 Q16. I am persistent at solving logic problems.
 Q17. I have effective research skills.
 Q18. Given the opportunity, I would take other such courses.
 Q19. I would recommend this course to others.
 Q20. I gained practical knowledge from this course.

Figure A10

Sample Pre Course Student Survey – Few Questions

Mobile App Development: Pre-Course Student Survey**Technology Use****1. In the past year, how often did you use a computer or mobile device (e.g., cellphone, ipad, etc.):**

	Daily	2-3 times a week	Once a week	1-2 times a month	Once or a few times	Never
for communication (e.g., texting, talking, IMing)?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
for videos or music?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
for social networking (e.g., Facebook, Twitter)?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
to do coursework?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
to do your own projects/creative work?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
for playing video games?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

2. In the past year, how often did you:

	Daily	2-3 times a week	Once a week	1-2 times a month	Once or a few times	Never
Use an internet browser?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Research topics using the internet? (e.g., Wikipedia, Google, Google scholar)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Use a word processor (e.g., Word)?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Use a spreadsheet (e.g., Excel)?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Use presentation software (e.g., PowerPoint)?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Create a Blog entry?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Create or modify websites/pages?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Write computer programs? (not in HTML)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

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A Twist on Statistical Analysis Instruction

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Abstract

This study focuses on the growing need for effective data analysis in the educational environment and the practical uses by teachers and administrators of research and statistics in P-20 education. Carrying out such research studies are often perceived by many teachers, especially those uncomfortable with math, as difficult. This article demonstrates how teaching statistics “backwards” within a research design component produces greater content retention among education students in a graduate teacher education program. Performance data to demonstrate the effectiveness of this instructional strategy and examples of course materials is also provided.

Introduction

To meet the needs of the newest paradigm shift in American education, educators will need to be researchers, innovators, and communicators in an environment of accountability (Astin & Antonio, 2012; Earl, 2013; Falchikov, 2005). Shulman (2012) believed that a scholarship of teaching and learning should exist to meet the pressing needs of three elements.

- Professionalism: The obligations that come with becoming a professional educator;
- Pragmatism: The activities needed to ensure a teacher's work is meeting objectives and improving; and
- Policy: The responds of education to the demands of society and political policy makers.

Accountability, as called for from policy makers, is presently tied to assessment based on hard numbers. Earl noted in this regard, that “educational reform in the past several decades has been a roller-coaster ride for most teachers and schools.” Earl

also noted that the latest reform, accountability based on scientific assessment is now a major part of education. "Classroom assessment must satisfy many goals—providing feedback to students" and "offering diagnostic information for the teacher to use" (p. 3). Astin & Antonio pointed out, however, that most assessment processes in education, up until recently, have been "of limited value" (vii). The push to make educational assessment bound to scientific based research may have changed this.

The Problem

The ability to use the common language of mathematics, to use data to meet accountability requirements, and to apply statistical skills to solve educational problems is a critical element in the present day process of evaluating educational practices. Statistical literacy is quickly becoming a 21st century skill and, as Anderson and Shattuck (2012) observed, statistical driven research has been touted as a practical way to bridge the gap between research and practice in the school setting. Thus, in a backdrop where the US Department of Education accepts only scientifically-based research as viable, applied analysis may be one of the few avenues for educators to communicate the quality of student and teacher performance in an effective manner.

Expanding educator skills to meet the demands of accountability and effective communication of student performance in a scientifically-based manner represents a critical component in advancing teacher education that matters. It is no longer sufficient for teachers to provide instruction, principals to supervise instruction, and superintendents to provide effective leadership in Teaching, Learning, and Schooling. All educators have the responsibility to demonstrate student performance beyond a one-dimensional, high-stakes test. Statistical literacy grounded in the context of school is a skill proving invaluable to educators in fulfilling this responsibility.

Traditionally, however, teacher preparation programs have not included instruction in statistics. Thus, few educators are versant in basic research and statistical analysis. Many teachers whose content areas are not in math may also feel threatened by the pressure to carry out statistical studies. Today's atmosphere

of accountability, however, requires all educators, whether administrators or classroom teachers, to be leaders who have the ability to identify problems, test hypotheses, implement solutions, and evaluate outcomes.

One solution to the problem is the application of professional development for practitioners which focuses practical statistics in real-world applications. Such professional development programs would allow both veteran and new educators to be statistically literate. Perhaps the greatest barrier to carrying out this process concerns the fact many teachers lack the ingrained habits of thinking statistically and may be uncomfortable in having to do so. Fortunately, teaching difficult concepts within a known context is a proven strategy for effective learning. Beginning with concrete data rather than abstract statistics and considering these concepts in the context of a variety of research designs can help students in a doctoral program to become proficient in these critical skills.

Context of the Study

The Ed. D. Program at Oakland City University is a traditional three-year educational leadership program with a non-traditional delivery format. *LDR 745 Applied Analysis* occurs during the first year and is the foundational statistics course in the program. Basic instruction in quantitative descriptive and inferential statistics (correlation, *t*-test, ANOVA, Chi-Square) and qualitative analysis methods was accomplished through presentation of the statistical method, its purpose and assumptions, its application in research, use of Excel and SPSS, and analysis of findings. The course's key assessment was a paper/pencil test. Most students did not retain course content at a level needed to successfully write Chapter 3 in the program's third year. This issue necessitated a redux of basic inferential statistics.

The current course structure draws on student experience and prior learning by reversing the presentation method. Beginning with data printouts, students consider a problem's context, draw conclusions based on the data, brainstorm possible research questions and hypotheses, and identify additional information needed. Data are then entered into Excel where descriptive statistics are calculated; students compare the

calculations to their original conclusions. This process is repeated with SPSS. Research questions are developed, hypotheses are tested, and research design options are discussed. This process is repeated for correlation, *t*-test, ANOVA, Chi-Square, and other relevant tests. Students consider how each inferential test might apply to a possible action research project. The course's key assessment is the development of a mini research proposal emphasizing Chapters 1 and 3.

Methodology

A mixed- methods design was used to conduct the study. Student performance scores for the Original Format (OF) final examination and project were compared to the Revised Format (RF) rubric-based evaluation and project. The analysis process was in two parts. The OF final examination and RF rubric-based evaluation were congruent in criteria outcomes and composed the first analysis. Both sets of scores were based on the identical 100-point evaluation tool. The OF project and RF project were congruent in criteria outcomes and composed the second analysis. Both sets of scores were based on a four-point scale. All tests were performed at the $\alpha=0.05$ level of significance. Student comments were coded and analyzed for themes and commonalities.

Results and Discussion

To begin the analysis process, a series of descriptive statistics was computed.

Descriptive Statistics

Variable	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Standard Deviation	Variance
OF Exam	81	64	94	80.52	7.783	60.578
RF Rubric	73	69	98	88.45	5.764	33.223
OF Project	81	1.7	4.0	2.859	0.601	0.361
RF Project	73	2.7	4.0	3.671	0.391	0.153

A comparison of the OF exam and RF rubric data indicated a higher and more consistent level of performance for the Revised Format scores. A comparison of the OF project and RF project data similarly indicated a higher and more consistent level of performance for the Revised Format scores. The Revised Format data also displayed a higher minimum and maximum student score as compared to the Original Format.

To complete the analysis process, a series of *t*-tests for independent means was computed.

***t*-Tests for Independent Means**

Variables	<i>F</i>	Sig.	<i>t</i>	<i>df</i>	Sig.
OF Examination – RF Rubric	0.301	0.584	0.388	152	0.699
OF Project – RF Project	13.263	0.000	9.825	152	0.000

Variances were tested for significant differences. No significant difference ($\alpha=0.584$) was found for the OF exam and RF rubric comparison; a significant difference ($\alpha=0.000$) was found for the OF and RF project analysis. Results of the *t*-tests found no significant difference ($\alpha=0.699$) in the OF exam and RF rubric comparison; a significant difference ($\alpha=0.000$) was found for the OF and RF project analysis.

The Revised Format produced higher student test scores, but not statistically significant. The OF exam and RF rubric evaluation content focused on statistics terminology recall and other lower-order skills. The OF traditional strategies of teacher-centered, direct lecture instruction with paper-and-pencil exam produced a mean score of 80.52. The RF authentic strategies of student-centered project learning inquiry with project outcomes produced a mean score of 88.45.

The Revised Format produced a statistically significant difference with higher project scores. The project focused on higher-order skills as course content was used to create original work, a type of authentic assessment. These results support findings of a question posited by Swails (1998) in her study *An Analysis of Instructional Orientation and Assessment Orientation of Secondary English Literature Teachers in Indiana* which

theorized that student learning increases when the instructional strategy (direct, teacher-centered or authentic, student-centered) matches the assessment strategy (traditional or authentic). Student comments focused on two areas of benefits. Learning benefits included an emphasis on process, the use of simulations, simplification of complex information, and the focus on context. Student-centered benefits included open discussion (*in a stats class?*), consideration of diverse perspectives, and increased confidence based on visual learning strategies. These findings support adult learning theory which holds that student learning increases when course content is relevant, real-world, and authentic in focus.

Conclusion

Clearly, the authentic strategies for instruction and assessment in statistics instruction demonstrated an increase in student performance in this instance. To maintain and improve upon these findings, the authentic strategies were continued with additional emphasis toward improving the lower-order skills. To date, these strategies have included integrating Q &A in class discussions with intentional focus on terminology, modifying the mini-proposal project requirements to include RF rubric items, and expanding rationale statements with in other course assignments. These efforts have maintained the increased project scores with modest gains in rubric scores. The next step is to evaluate student capstone project scores for LDR 820b Dissertation III to measure any increase in content retention. The capstone project for this course is a draft of dissertation Chapter 3. The LDR 745 Applied Analysis course is a pre-requisite. Also, replicating this study after each LDR 745/LDR 820b course offering cycle may serve to strengthen these findings.

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Un peu de respect for the ladies: Female Rappers and Hip-hop Educational Philosophy in France

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*This is for the ladies, pour les ladies.
Pour les ladies je demande du respect, quoi qu'on en dise.*

This is for the ladies, for the ladies.
For the ladies I demand respect, whatever they say about it.

Lady Laistee, “*For the Ladies*”

Abstract

This study contends that through the medium of French rap, female artists are provided agency and a socially expressive pedagogical space where they educate listeners and denounce patriarchal and misogynistic attitudes by encouraging social justice and raising awareness of issues that relate to the experience of women of colour in France. In this sense, and when evaluated under contemporary norms, female lyricists have played an important role in French rap as hip-hop philosophers by offering their students (consumers) a uniquely feminine view and perspective to a variety of issues affecting women of colour in France that otherwise may not be heard, discussed, exposed, or understood in a country that still has a long way to go in terms of gender equity.

Introduction

The most recognisable icon of France is that of Marianne, a defiant and strong woman who symbolises the strength and revolutionary resilience of the *République française*. However, despite the enduring presence of the radical allegoric female

figure that Marianne represents, French women have long been in a subordinate position as compared to men, and they remain underrepresented in nearly every sector of the country. A report published by the World Economic Forum (2014) places France in the 57th position internationally in terms of gender equality, which ranks it in second to last place in Western Europe. When the data are further broken down by category, the findings are even worse. In terms of women's political empowerment, France ranks 63rd internationally, when regarding wage equality the country finds itself in the 129th position. Although the French government routinely adopts legislation to equalise the playing field in terms of gender issues, statistics like these illustrate a different reality for woman in the country.

For centuries, women in France have expressed their frustrations by using the very French tradition of resisting authority and educating the masses via the written word. Female authors such as Simone de Beauvoir, Colette, Marguerite Duras, George Sand (etc) used literature to discuss various morals and codes facing women, and this type of educational and pedagogical approach has continued in subsequent generations of feminist writers. Francophone women authors of colour (e.g. Maryse Condé, Assia Djebar) have also employed this literary resistance strategy within their narratives as they also highlighted various issues relating to gender whilst focusing on subjects pertinent to their unique cultural experience. This sort of teaching via literature from a gender / racial / spatial point of view continues to be relevant in the contemporary era as young women of colour are also increasingly turning to this style of protest, but with a small twist: Via rapping their rhymes via French-language hip-hop. This new form of rapped *résistance* is occurring to a non-response from feminist groups in France to address issues that pertain to the unique needs of young females of colour. For example, Duchin (1987:11) states that French feminist organisations "have the reputation of paying more attention to theory than to practical questions." Due to this narrow approach amongst more established women's rights groups, issues relating to females living in disadvantaged communities are nearly non-existent in the national discourse. Thus, because women of colour are made invisible by official State Secularism that does not acknowledge gender as a

defining national statistic, and by feminist organisations whose mission it is to promote women's rights, the contemporary medium of hip-hop has been, and still is an increasingly effective way in which to bring the issues of young females to the masses via an effective and educational lyrical delivery rapped above a thumping bass line.

Although hip-hop culture in France and elsewhere has been dominated by males since its embryonic stage, French women of colour have left their own distinct marks on the genre. In their songs, female rappers tend to focus their attention more on education, immigration, social issues, gender inequality, and quality of life themes, with little to no emphasis on street violence and the type of male posturing / positioning that one often associates with hip-hop. However, the music industry in France has not always been kind to females. For example, rap lyrics often portray females ambiguously, usually in oppressive, sexist or negative ways. Responding to this often-misogynistic portrait motivates the representations put forth by female artists and separates their thematic approaches and personal *résistance* from males as they shape the genre of hip-hop to fit their unique needs. The goal of these women rappers is to inform listeners about humanistic themes that affect females first, and to discuss how social discrepancies with concern to gender also affect society at large. This paper introduces and briefly examines a few songs that have a mission to educate listeners on topics concerning women of colour by the four most popular female French rap artists over the past two decades. In doing so, we illustrate how this quartet of *rappeuses lyriques* also act as hip-hop philosophers or teachers who use the public platform of the microphone as a pedagogical tool in which to discuss divisive subjects that minimise the role of ethnocultural women in France.

Race, Space, and Hip-Hop Philosophy

Researchers such as Prévos (1996), Forman (2000), and Chang (2005) argue that the base rubric of hip-hop music is formed by the rapper's spatial and social construct. To this end, Chuck D of the group Public Enemy once echoed that sentiment when he labelled rap lyrics as being "*Black America's CNN*" since early American hip-hop educated listeners of the realities occurring in minority neighbourhoods. Forman (2000:78)

maintains that the location, or “place” serves as a “lens of sorts that mediates one’s perspective on social relations,” and that it “offers familiarity” that provides rappers with a certain “perspective” in which to evaluate their spatiality. The concept of speaking truth to power as a way to educate people is not new to hip-hop, as the movement was founded on the principle of using rap music as a non-traditional pedagogical tool, and lyrics were first composed to bring to life issues that others in society were afraid to discuss (Chang, 2005; Rose 1994, 2008). Hip-hop itself springs from the African narrative tradition of the village *griot*, a person whose job as the village librarian of sorts was to educate citizens about their history and culture for thousands of years. Early hip-hop artists in the United States continued this sort of legacy of “*griot education*” in regards to their lyrics and their focus on community affairs, and what has now come to be known as “conscious rap” music continues it.

In its embryonic stage in the United States, hip-hop culture and the art of rapping were viewed as effective ways in which to educate consumers and listeners on a variety of subjects and themes facing people of colour living in the “inner city” (Hebdige 1987, Rose 2008). For example, Grandmaster Flash’s 1982 song entitled “*The Message*” was one of the first tracks to teach listeners about a myriad of negative social issues emanating from the ‘hood, and its videoclip represents one of the classic examples of how hip-hop could be used educationally. Perhaps the most well-known artist to juxtapose hip-hop with pedagogy was (and remains) the artist known as KRS-One from the Bronx-based group Boogie Down Productions (BDP); a person whose very name is broken down as “*Knowledge reigns supreme over nearly everything*.” Each of BDP’s albums was rooted in subjects involving social justice, and the group’s tracks took firm stances and deconstructed controversial subjects such as misogyny, gang violence, drug use, educational deficiencies, and so forth. Moreover, song lyrics even found ways to instruct listeners about safe sex in ways that were easily understood and appreciated. Whilst lyrical discussions concerning themes like this have been present in all musical genres for decades, few artists outside of hip-hop have been able to mass market themselves solely as “teachers” and “philosophers” with educational messages to distribute to the masses, all of which were endorsed by industry

record companies until American rap music started to embrace a more “gangster” style in the mid-1990s. KRS-One is not the only artist to label him/herself a “*Hip-Hop Philosopher*,” but he is one of the originators of the concept and his popularity remains intact.

The use of rap music as pedagogy is also gaining traction amongst American educators, as it is increasingly seen as being an effective educational tool in classrooms. Tobias (2014) argues that because hip-hop music represents a social and cultural practice, the genre critically expresses and socially considers a variety of important subjects that are necessary curricular topics in schools, especially where students of colour form the majority of students. Lesson plans that use examples from hip-hop songs that feature themes such as one’s representation, agency, place, space, and identity, and its use by the artist as a teacher (and by students as consumers) are all valuable ways to understand and teach issues that otherwise may not be discussed in official school curricula. Further delineating on this subject, Tobias (2014:22) maintains that the use of hip-hop in education enacts and increases critical pedagogy in classrooms, as it provides opportunities for “students to consider themselves and their community in terms of who they are and collectively.” This sort of unique pedagogy fits into the educational mission and vision put forth by KRS-One and other hip-hop philosophers and it also provides teachers a critical pedagogical and curricular lens that otherwise would not exist via mainstream educational policy. Whether one is a consumer of the genre or not, a comprehension of hip-hop’s early mission to inform listeners of problems facing ethnocultural minorities is necessary in order to understand issues facing this segment of the population, whether in the United States or elsewhere.

Margins and Misogyny

Even though hip-hop culture is assumed to be the domain of young men, women have also played a major role in rap, and gender motivates the topics and subjects that are discussed in their songs. Berry (1994) and Rose (1994, 2008) posit that males in hip-hop usually rap about social dichotomies such as racism and other issues that focus solely on the masculine urban

experience (e.g. police harassment, crime, street violence). Thus, this means that the thematic material in their songs is spatially limited (i.e. men rap by using language associated with power and dominance). Female rappers also breach social issues in their lyrics, but their narrative tends to focus less on the above-mentioned themes and more on equality and social issues. Strausz and Dole (2010) argue that the subjects that are heard in songs by women seek to produce a broader dialogue concerning different ideologies, topics, and communities that are not spatially limited to urban areas (i.e. domestic abuse, gender bias, sexual discrimination, etc). Rose (1994: 147) supports these points by arguing that a tactic employed by female rappers is to work “within and against the existing dominant sexual and racial narratives” in order to conceptualise and educate listeners on issues that are important to females of colour. Furthermore, Rose (1994, 2008) also posits that women rappers use their pulpit to speak to the importance of the female voice and sexual freedom. In other words, women in hip-hop educate their listeners on themes such as autonomy, the importance of gender unity, and the resistance to all types of violence and dominance affecting females across racial lines. Whilst rap music is not something that many would consider as being inherently feminist, female artists employ specific and simple generic qualities of the genre to promote themselves and their lyrical message. Because hip-hop music represents extreme self-promotion, women rappers are able to use this public platform to their advantage in order to express female power without being accused by critics as being self-centred feminist radicals who are anti-establishment; thereby dismissed by mainstream pop-culture outlets and being spatially limited to the academy.

Although women have influenced the rap genre stylistically and technically, their overall contributions are often downplayed or ignored in favour of men (Layli, Morgan and Steven, 2004). Since hip-hop music is usually framed as being a representation of life as experienced by males of colour, it has not always been easy for young females to create spaces outside of the pre-conceived sexual and misogynistic stereotypes found in many rap lyrics and videos (Weekes, 2004). Moreover, the presentation of women in the hip-hop industry is often one of an outsider or a bystander rather than as what Guevara (1996:51)

labels as a “participant,” since the presence of females and their contributions to the genre are largely unrecognised or downplayed. Guevara (1996:51) further states that whenever women take leading roles in commercialised visual presentations of hip-hop culture (especially in film), they enter the scene as “exotic outsiders” who find make their mark via some sort of romantic involvement with a male protagonist. In this sense, hip-hop remains a male-dominated industry and is usually referred to as being the *music of the streets*; a place where female rappers are seen as interlopers (Rose, 2008). Adams and Fuller (2005) argue that in a world where negative social constructs such as sexism, misogyny, hatred, (etc) are institutionalised, observations of this sort of patriarchal ideology and attitude in hip-hop culture are extensions of outer negative societal parameters that go beyond music.

To gain acceptance and credibility in hip-hop culture, women often borrow or adopt masculine attitudes and personalities when they rap, dance, or tag graffiti. Faure and Garcia (2005) state that this type of appropriation of male behaviour is intended to mask signs of femininity, and it is often manifested by language, fashion, or personality changes that mirror those seen amongst male artists. Female rappers take style cues from men in the industry and visually or lyrically appear as “tough” or “hard” in their appearance and delivery, even when many women artists outpace males in sales and popularity. Moreover, stylistic changes assumed by female rap performers are not just limited to one’s look, behaviour, or sound. Troka (2002:87) argues that the experiences of women of colour in hip-hop are made invisible since they are neither male, nor a member of the dominant culture; traits that she states as being the two “prized markers of neutrality” in the United States. Misogynistic lyrics, songs and video presentations further demonstrate the dominance of males in rap by ignoring, dismissing, subjugating women, or outright discriminating against them. According to Guevara (1996:56), female rappers are restricted when they perform, and hip-hop music is oppressive and discriminatory because women artists are “expected to act differently” than males when they appear on stage. For example, it is acceptable for men in rap to be sexually suggestive and even misogynistic on stage or in visual presentations, whilst females must refrain from doing anything

similar when they present themselves. Because industry insiders and record companies are cognisant that young males are the major consumers of hip-hop in the United States, Hollywood's concept in regards to the involvement of women in rap focuses more on *fantasy* (i.e. focusing on the appearance of female artists) than *reality* (i.e. the creative talent / art of females). Although rap music is promoted as mere entertainment, hip-hop representations of women perpetuates existing gender and sexual objectifications and stereotypes; thus endorsing a society where females are viewed as the subordinate objects of men (Quinne, 2000).¹

Meanwhile in France: Earning Respect via Resistance

Hip-hop culture in France has been no less limiting towards women as seen in the United States, as the genre in that country is also traditionally dominated by males and geared towards male consumers. Strausz and Dole (2010:12) argue that women present in French rap have been more "tolerated than accepted," and in order to gain respect, female artists have been forced to struggle against hardened patriarchal attitudes that have been pervasive in the industry. However, over time women rappers have gained respect and a few have become major players in French hip-hop. This sort of popularity suggests that the opinions of the purchasing public in France do not reflect the assumed male-dominated aesthetic of the market as seen and promoted by record companies.

Despite the lack of an equilibrium in terms of gender during rap's nascent stage in France, the first ever hip-hop song to be issued on vinyl in French was the song "*Une sale histoire*" by the female artist Beside, which appeared on the B-side of New York rapper Fab Five Freddy's 1982 hit entitled "*Change the Beat*." However, following this initial ground-breaking contribution to rap music in France, women largely disappeared from the scene and remained non-players until the late-1980s.

¹ The cover photo of latest single by the American hip-hop artist Nicki Minaj (entitled "Anaconda") illustrates this aforementioned point, as the artist is featured in a misogynistic and suggestive pose that some may consider as sexist and/or degrading to women. The thematic idea of this photo was made by Nicki Minaj herself (as she stated in radio/television interviews), most likely with the advice from her producers and record company management.

The first female hip-hop artist to receive album recognition after Beside was Saliha, a *rappeuse* who entered rhyming competitions across France. Throughout the late-1980s, Saliha recorded singles that appeared on the numerous best-selling “*Rapattitude*” compilations, and she later followed this up with an album of her own in 1994. However, following the very tepid success of Saliha, no woman would attract much interest from companies or producers from a large commercial perspective. Other artists (such as Princess Aniès) occasionally appeared and released albums that featured feminist-empowered lyrics, at times enjoying moderate airplay, but a sustainable female presence was lacking throughout the 1990s. Despite these challenges, over time things would change as a newer and younger group of women rappers emerged to challenge male dominance in rap music and this new group of female artists would eventually reverse the misogynistic imagery as presented in hip-hop culture up until that point.

One of things that expedited the serious arrival of female rappers in France in the late-1990s was the sudden rise of women in American hip-hop. During this time, artists such as Lauryn Hill and Missy Elliot were breaking sales records and winning multiple Grammy awards as they changed the landscape of American rap music. The emergence of female rappers in the United States was hardly a new concept, as earlier artists such as Queen Latifah paved the way and diversified American hip-hop in the late-1980s with empowering songs such as “*Ladies First*,” a track whose lyrics and Afro-centric feminist narrative celebrated the contributions of women in hip-hop and in society, as this example shows (from Berry, 1994: 193):

Who said the ladies couldn't make it, you must be blind
If you don't believe, well here, listen to this rhyme
Ladies first, there's no time to rehearse
I'm divine and my mind expands throughout the universe
A female rapper with the message to send
The Queen Latifah is a perfect specimen.

Stimulated by this new wave of females gaining prominence in American hip-hop, things started to evolve in France as well

when a rapper from the French Caribbean island of Guadeloupe named Lady Laistee (née: Aline Christophe) emerged onto the scene in the late-1990s. After working alongside one of the pioneer groups of French hip-hop (NTM) and issuing a few songs on compilation albums, notably "*Respecte mon attitude*" (which appeared on the release entitled "*Cool Sessions 2*"), Lady Laistee enjoyed success not previously seen for a female rapper. Following this small bit of initial visibility via her contributions on those male-dominated compilations, Lady Laistee put forth a few successful albums of her own, two of which deserve denoting. The first of these releases, entitled "*Black Mama*," became a top selling record in France, and the most popular track of this album was the song "*For the ladies*." As its title suggests, the song's lyrics challenged anyone who dismissed females as second-class citizens, as shown here:

*Baisse les bras mon statut de femme fait de moi une exclue
L'univers fermé, dépassé, partageons le monopole (...)
Pas d'machisme. À l'envers, gardez votre défaut, frère,
Envers et entre tous, je représente les soeurs fières.*

Lower your arms, my status as a woman makes me
excluded
The closed universe, past up, let's share the monopoly (...)
No machismo. Get back, keep your weakness, brother,
Reverse and between it all, I represent proud sisters.

The above excerpt echoes familiar themes as manifested in many songs by Lady Laistee; such as a demand for equal rights for women and female empowerment via the unity of all women. As mentioned previously, Weekes (2004: 147) maintains that American rappers such as Queen Latifah and later Missy Elliot were re-appropriating hip-hop music and producing their own responses to the "masculinised containing of femininity" by using hip-hop to educated the masses and create a place where women could portray themselves on their own terms, and it is from these American female artists that their French *cousines* would draw their inspiration. The song "*For the ladies*" as well as others from Lady Laistee's album *Black Mama* received massive airplay in France, making her the first French female artist to rise

up and challenge male dominance on a large commercialised scale, whether it was in the industry or French society in general. In addition to rapping about the subject of sexism in France from the point of view of a woman of colour, Lady Laistee also followed the usual thematic trends as established by male hip-hop artists in France when she discussed subjects in regards to integration, acculturation and racism, as demonstrated in the following excerpt from the song “*Black Mama*” (a track that addresses the disparities and exclusion facing French-Caribbean migrants in France):

*Née sous les tropiques mon domaine les DOM-TOM
Jusqu'a c'qu'on m'emmène loin de mon home sweet home
J'ai fait un vol de huit heures pour devenir métropolitaine
Métro, police haine, banlieue, on n'a pas eu mieux (...)
On jouait avec des mômes qui nous insultaient, je me battais
C'est là que j'ai pris conscience de la couleur que j'avais.*

Born in the tropics, my domain is the DOM-TOM
Until I was brought far from my home sweet home
I took a flight for eight hours to become metropolitan
Métro, police hatred, suburbs, hardly had better (...)
We used to play with the kids who insulted us, I fought
It was from this where I became conscientious of the colour
that I am.

The discussion of one's ethnocultural identity and marginalised social position is a frequent topic found in French hip-hop in general, and Lady Laistee is following the pre-established lyrical schema that forms the rubric of rap in France; one that uses music in order to express or protest a social message. That said, the lyrics throughout the song “*Black Mama*” address the realities of downward mobility and exclusion as faced by immigrant women in France in particular, including those new residents coming from the overseas territories (known locally as the DOM-TOM). Despite their lack of traditional immigrant status (they are French citizens in full), people from the Antilles are frequently marginalised and they live in socially-disadvantaged suburbs of Paris and other cities amongst other immigrants from ethnocultural communities. Unemployment figures amongst

youths of colour aged 15 to 25 years old in many suburbs are estimated to range upwards to 85%, with women being the most underrepresented in terms of jobs (Kokoreff 2008; Mallière 2008).

Unlike the few female artists who came before her, Lady Laistee was able to sustain her popularity for a few years. Her follow-up album was entitled "*Hip-hop Therapy*" and it also featured several songs promoting the empowerment of women, as well as discussing the lack of rights concerning females of colour in general. The two most popular releases of Lady Laistee's new album were the songs "*Diamant noir*" ("Black Diamond," a track where she reflects on the nostalgia of growing up in as a woman of colour in the downtrodden Paris suburbs), and "*Un peu de respect*" ("A little bit of respect"). The latter song was intentionally modelled after the famous 1960s feminist anthem by Aretha Franklin, even sampling its background music and beat (where Lady Laistee's single would be immediately recognisable to listeners). Lyrics from "*Un peu de respect*" follow the exact same model as the earlier empowering song by Aretha Franklin, i.e. where respect is demanded and expected, and women insist on being treated as equals. Throughout the entirety of the track, female listeners are instructed to stand up, speak loudly, and believe in one another, as shown here:

*On demande un peu de respect
Viens on va t'apprendre comment rester droit
Dans notre monde, faut pas t'attendre à ce qu'on nous
entende plus
Car en nous on y croit (...)
Finis l'âge de pierre, on est pierres précieuses,
Pour causer des fractures, on frappe dur (...)
Laisse parler des soeurs.*

We're asking for a little respect
Come on, we're going to teach you how to stand tall
In our world, don't expect us to shut up
Because we believe in ourselves (...)
The stone age is over, we're precious stones,
To break things apart, we hit hard (...)
Let the sisters talk.

Later lines from the song further echo this sort of powerful refrain of shaking up this system ("*pour causer des fractures, on frappe dur*") as a means of appealing for female unity and empowerment when the track's consumers are told to "let the haters hate when it comes to our future" ("*On laisse baver les bavards sur notre futur*") and let the sisters talk for themselves ("*laisse parler des soeurs*"). Lady Laistee goes on to remind everyone that the time has come for true equality for all women as they are setting their sights on new goals in order to create a new female-first history that matches that of their forefathers ("*On vire nos repères pour égaler nos pères*"). In a country that ranks 126th globally in terms of wage equity (World Economic Forum, 2014), empowering lyrics such as these resonate with female listeners. Similar to Queen Latifah in early American hip-hop, Lady Laistee's massive success would open the door for future female rappers. Other artists soon followed in her footsteps as the genre further developed during the first decade of the 2000s, though not all would receive the same type of popular and critical acclaim. The most famous female "*rappeuse*" who immediately followed Lady Laistee was the artist Bams.

Born in France of Cameroonian parents, Bams (née: Rita Bamsoukoisant) was an outstanding scholar and athlete who became attracted to hip-hop as an adolescent. Similar to previous female rappers, Bams also appeared on compilations that featured emerging artists, and she was the only woman who appeared on the *hardcore* rap album entitled "*Hostile hip-hop*." Bams differed from other women rappers in the sense that her lyrical narrative tended to be more radical in form, an approach that mimicked popular male *hardcore* artists. This was not surprising considering that she released songs under the tutelage of the same management company that worked with artists such as NTM, a frequently banned hip-hop group who has made a career out of tackling controversial issues dealing with race and class in France with forceful and direct language. Bams' debut album "*Vivre ou mourir*" ("Live or Die") did exceptionally well in regards to airplay, and from this release came the powerful song "*Douleur de femme*" ("Women's Pain"). This track featured a thematic approach of direct and explicit feminist militancy; one far greater than what was stated by Lady Laistee and others. In this song, Bams raps "*je fais mes thèses*

bien exposées” (“I expose my theses well”), and further lyrics of this track delineate the historical role of women in society, as shown here:

*Rien n' change, l'histoire se répète
Bafouées, toutes ont pris perpète
De quel délit la femme est donc la vedette
Sous le péché d'Ève un mari trop bête
Imbécile, trop stupide une bouchée d' gourmandise fait
Que le mal soi-disant nous magnétise (...)
Femme à l'aube de l'an 2000, les marques de l'histoire
laissent des traces indélébiles
Quelle que soit la décennie on nous veut le même profil
Toujours plus belle, plus servile.*

There is nothing to change, history repeats itself
Violated, all (women/stories) has been perpetuated
No matter the offense, women are the star
Eve's sin due to a very stupid husband
An idiot, too stupid, a mouthful of gluttony
(And) that so-called evil magnetises (influenced) everyone
Woman at the dawn of 2000 marks the history leave
indelible
Whatever the decade, they treat us the same way
Always more beautiful, yet more servile.

In addition to the above example, later lyrics from “*Douleur de femme*” further elaborate on subjects of rape and violence against women and they instruct listeners to understand that firm resistance to these things is not solely a feminist duty, but one that is the responsibility of humanity: “*ce n'est pas un geste, ni une cause féministe, juste un sentiment de devoir humaniste*” (“it's neither a feminist cause nor gest, just a feeling of humanist obligation”). An additional refrain from this song aims to unite all women together as one in order to resist the uneven and subordinate categorisation of females everywhere on Earth (“*unis, l'ensemble des femmes,*” or “united, all of together as women”). The song “*Douleur de femme*” fared very well commercially, and its accompanying videoclip showed that not only male artists could take a more militant approach to rhyming

about negative societal ills, as women also have something to say on the matter.

Additional tracks from the album "*Vivre ou mourir*" such as "*Pas cool*" with its lyrics "*J'veux pas être jolie, fais chier d'être une fille*" ("I don't wanna be pretty, it sucks to be a girl") address sexism and gender imbalances directed towards women, whilst releases such as "*Moi, ma violence*" ("My Own Violence") take a more direct approach. In the latter song, Bams suggests that working-class females of colour (about whom she raps as being "on the bottom, who have nothing") should revolt and resist against the systematic discrimination they face. Direct, hard-hitting tracks such as these made Bams the first *hardcore* female rapper, and her approach has been further copied and emulated by others in recent years, notably by the contemporary Marseille-based radical artist Keny Arcana. Bams was a very popular and *rappeuse* whose lyrics were far more revolutionary than the time when they were released in the 1990s. Despite the fact that male artists had been addressing themes of social resistance to the political order for years, Bams was the first female rapper to cast away any reluctance to tackle these subjects in the same fashion as men in French hip-hop. Although she received critical acclaim for her work, Bams' popularity was short-lived and she did not enjoy the same amount of sustained commercial success as Lady Laistee. After Bams' popularity waned and she moved to other educational-type projects (e.g. becoming a co-founder and later editor of *Respect Magazine*, a popular bi-monthly magazine whose target audience is youth of colour in France) and several years would pass until another female would gain any sort of prominence in hip-hop.

Teaching from the platform of a *Méga-Star*

The immediate years following Bams' success did not see the emergence of any notable female rap talent on a grand scale, though a little-known rapper by the name of Diam's (née: Mélanie Georgiades) started gaining notoriety for her unique rhyming, lyrical delivery, and stylistic technique. In time, Diam's would become the highest-grossing female rapper ever seen in French hip-hop, and one of the best-selling Francophone musical artists of all time. Born in Cyprus of a French mother and a Cypriot father, Diam's moved to Essonne in the Paris suburbs

when she was very young. Growing up in the disadvantaged “*banlieues*” (urban-suburbs) as French rap started to explode in popularity in the early 1990s, Diam’s started writing and performing as a teenager and she was quickly noticed by small record labels. Similar to other artists who came before her, Diam’s would also be featured in tracks released by male rappers (on albums by Les Neg Marrons, and Black Mozart) as she made a name for herself in the industry. After a few solo releases that were mildly received by the public, Diam’s finally evolved from the rap underground in 2003 with her own album entitled “*Brut de femme*,” (“*Crude Woman*”) a release that was autobiographical in nature and one that tackled many women’s issues head on, such as domestic violence, marital problems, and gender discrimination in employment, amongst others. Once released, “*Brut de femme*” became one of the top selling French hip-hop albums of all time and its crossover appeal helped Diam’s win a “*Victoire*” award for “*Best Rap Album of 2004*” (a first by a female artist). This sort of visibility and commercial success enabled Diam’s to cement her status as a major player in the French hip-hop scene.² However, it was her next album, entitled “*Dans ma bulle*” (“*In my Bubble*”) that would set a new standard, not only for female artists, but for French hip-hop in general. The subject matter of this new album did not shy away from discussing contentious matters as they affect women and others from ethnocultural communities, and divisive topics such as racism and sexism in France were lyrically analysed and deconstructed. Diam’s was fully cognisant of her popularity and she used this public platform as a lectern in which to educate the French public on the aforementioned issues and much more.

Upon its release, “*Dans ma bulle*” quickly rose up the charts and it became the top selling album in France in 2006 (of all musical genres). We previously mentioned that the vast majority of hip-hop artists hail from immigrant and ethnocultural communities in France, and the subject of one’s identity and social position is a repetitive theme in French rap. To this end, several songs from “*Dans ma bulle*” album addressed the marginalisation of immigrant youths, albeit from a feminist and

²The *Victoires de la Musique* are the French equivalent to the Grammy Awards in the United States.

humanist perspective, as this excerpt from the track “*Ma France à moi*” (“My France”) demonstrates:

*C'est pas ma France à moi cette France profonde
Celle qui nous fout la honte et aimerait que l'on plonge
Ma France à moi ne vit pas dans l'mensonge
Avec le coeur et la rage, à la lumière, pas dans l'ombre (...)
Ma France à moi se mélange, ouais, c'est un arc en ciel,
Elle te dérange, je le sais, car elle ne te veut pas pour
modèle.*

It's not my France, this deep France
The one who shames us and wishes that we dive from it
My France does not live in the lie
With the heart and rage, in the light, not in the shadows (...)
My France is all mixed together, yeah, it's a rainbow,
It (my France) bothers you, I know, because she does not
want you as a model.

High concentrations of immigrants and people of colour reside in the impoverished suburban areas surrounding Paris, cramped into small apartments located in high-rise complexes known as “*cités*.” Kokoreff (2008) and Marlière (2008) state that youths from these areas suffer from institutional discrimination, low educational attainment, and high unemployment, and these are the themes featured in the song “*Ma France à moi*,” albeit from a female perspective. Rose (1994, 2008) states that what separates female hip-hop artists from their male counterparts is their broader focus on issues that go far beyond the usual lyrical discussion that centres on racial and cultural discrimination as the central thematic refrain. Women rappers tend to discuss social issues from a far less revolutionary perspective as is often the case with male rappers; choosing instead to focus on humanistic themes. Diam’s is no exception to confronting personal and social issues, but she generally does so by rapping empowering messages in her songs and their accompanying videos. This sort of pedagogical and philosophical narrative was previously used by Queen Latifah and Lauryn Hill, amongst other female rappers in the United States (Rose 1994, 2008).

Similar to the subject matter heard on many of the tracks from previous album, the second major release by Diam's also tackled a broad range of social issues, many of which had never before been discussed so openly in French music, no matter the genre. Topics such as teen suicide, relationships, anxiety, dating, eating disorders, and body image were featured as major themes in many songs, all of which were accompanied by popular music videos. More radio-friendly topics were also covered on this new album, such as what one hears in the song "*Jeune demoiselle cherche mec mortel*" ("Young Lady seeks Cool Dude"), a song whose subject matter revolves around women looking for an ideal partner, but with a small twist: It is the females who seize and maintain control of the power dynamic of mate selection and dating (with this theme being further emphasised visually in the track's official videoclip). In the single and videoclip, the "*mec*" and men to whom Diam's makes reference are told to be courteous towards women and to treat them well, as illustrated in this line: "*Mon mec a des valeurs et du respect pour ses soeurs*" ("my guy has values and respects his sisters"). Further lyrics from "*Jeune demoiselle*" echo similar points when Diam's raps: "*Dans mes rêves mon mec me parle tout bas, quand il m'écrit des lettres, il a la plume de Booba*" ("In my dreams my guy speaks to me very low, when he writes letters to me he writes like Booba"). The song and video presentation were massive hits in France and its particular "hook" (refrain) resonated amongst males and females alike as it shot to the top of the French music charts, where it remained for several weeks.

Other tracks from "*Dans ma bulle*" contain similar lyrics that demand a reconfiguration of gender imbalances. For example, lines from the popular song "*La Boulette*" proclaim "*y a comme un goût de boum boum dans le cœur de mes soeurs*" ("there are exploding feelings in the hearts of my sisters") that serve to pay homage to the growing unity amongst women of colour in France. The song goes on to address some of the dangers facing females in the disadvantaged suburbs of Paris, as shown here:

*'Y a comme un goût de viol quand je marche dans ma ville.
'Y a comme un goût de peur chez les meufs de l'an 2000.*

*'Y a comme un goût de beuh dans l'oxygène que l'on respire,
'Me demande pas s'qui les pousse à te casser les couilles.
J'suis pas les secours, j'suis qu'une petite qui se débrouille bien.*

Kinda tastes like rape when I walk around my city.
Kinda tastes like fear for us chicks in the 2000s
Kinda tastes like pot in the oxygen we breathe,
Don't ask me why they break your balls.
I ain't like 911, I'm just kid who hustles well.

After first naming some of the distractions that affect ethnocultural women in poor neighbourhoods (e.g. rape, fear of walking freely without being harassed, drugs) and after addressing possible reasons why males are the target of the authorities ("don't ask me why they break your balls"), Diam's ends this lyrical example by rapping how she is able to navigate the contours of her environment because she "hustles well" as a means to survive, with the entire song serving as an educational rallying point that calls for other women to mimic this approach. Further lines from "*La boulette*" mention how ethnocultural youths in France reject the traditional educational secularist narrative from school: "*nan nan c'est pas l'école qui nous a dictée nos codes*" ("no no, school hasn't taught us how to be") with the "us" being women of colour in particular. Additional lyrics from the same song instruct listeners and the public at large about generational differences when Diam's describes the rebelling adolescents of her contemporary era as belonging to "*la génération nan-nan*" ("generation no-no"), which is a repetitive and continual refrain throughout the track, and one that encapsulates and embraces the rejection of contemporary by today's youth.

What makes Diam's stand out from earlier female artists such as Lady Laistee has been her mass appeal across gender, class, and racial lines. At her peak during the first decade of the 2000s, the sheer popularity of Diam's was unrivalled (to date), and her record sales and chart dominance reflected this reality with each of her subsequent album releases. However, constant touring and endless hassling by the French media forced her to

retreat from recording and take a two-year sabbatical until 2009 when she released “S.O.S.” This new album also featured tracks that addressed controversial and contemporary themes in France, but this time discussion religious differences, as shown here in “*Lili*,” a song that discusses the ostracisation of female immigrants and Muslim women in French society:

*La France pour moi c'est rien qu'un très grand hôpital,
Je passe ma vie en isolement depuis qu'on me dit que je
suis malade (...)
Je ne mérite pas que l'on me prive d'études, ou d'éducation
Elle n'est pas laïque cette nation, elle craint juste la
contagion (...)
Parce que je suis une femme convertie, et que je porte le
voile.*

France for me is nothing but a very large hospital,
I spend my life in isolation since they told me I'm sick (...)
I do not deserve that because I was deprived of my studies,
or education
This is not a secular nation, it is afraid of contagion (...)
Because I am a converted woman, and I wear the veil.

Researchers such as Kokoreff (2008) argue that youths of colour in France (and Muslims in particular) have few prospects of success, and thus are condemned to fail by the system. This type of exclusion is contributing to a social separation in France and this deepening dichotomy is creating a “new and dangerous” segment of French society; one that may further manifest itself with anger towards State institutions (as shown in the recent attacks on the periodical *Charlie Hebdo*). It is this theme of social alienation (sans violence) that Diam’s addresses in “*Lili*.” As Diam’s has evolved as an artist, her commitment to making life better for women and others who face obstacles from French majority society has increased. Unlike other performers in the music industry in France, Diam’s has dedicated the majority of her royalties from the sale of the album “S.O.S.” to her foundation (entitled the “*Big Up Project*”), which provides support and funding for youth centres and other projects affecting adolescents in sub-Saharan Africa. In the years following the

success of “S.O.S.,” Diam’s once again withdrew from the spotlight and during an interview on a popular talk show broadcast on the French television network TF-1 (in 2012), she announced an additional indefinite sabbatical from hip-hop. It remains to be seen if she will stage a comeback in the future. Despite this new pause from recording, Diam’s remains the most successful *rappeuse* in France as well as being one of the most popular female artists of all time in French music. Despite the massive popularity that she has achieved as a *mégastar*, Diam’s has made a career out of resisting being placed in any sort of category concerning gender stereotypes, choosing instead to project a more positive outer image that contrasts her style from other female artists and musicians. It was this choice that made Diam’s a commercial success and a best-selling artist. That said, Diam’s also addressed various social issues concerning women in her music through an pedagogical lyrical perspective just as her predecessors once did by rapping in order to empower and educate women of colour across social and racial boundaries in France.

Anarchist Education and *Le rap radical*

Despite the commercial success of Diam’s, female hip-hop artists rarely choose to emulate the more radical side of the music put forth by their male counterparts, with Bams being a notable exception. That type of revolutionary rap, known in French as *le rap hardcore*, features songs with themes involving discrimination, invisibility, and alienation with stated goals to encourage and teach listeners to resist and fight against the system by any means necessary. Although female rappers have not shied away from addressing subjects that discuss racism and despair amongst youth of colour, they have typically avoided having a true “*pure et dure*” revolutionary approach in their music and pedagogical methods, preferring to employ a more delicate approach to which all sectors of French society can relate (as done by Diam’s). However, the arrival of a Marseille-based radical artist named Keny Arkana broke this pre-established schema, and her entire musical repertoire tackles more controversial subjects in a revolutionary and political type of way (whereas previous artists resisted political labels and rapped about issues from a more humanistic perspective).

Keny Arkana's first forays into rap music came via her participation in an underground group from Marseille named *État-Major*. The group released several mix-tapes and vinyl tracks and gained a small underground following which caught the attention of record companies. However, none of these productions received much airplay. Following her participation with *État-Major*, Keny Arkana launched a solo career and the thematic narrative of her lyrics has been more forceful than what has traditionally been the case amongst female rappers in France. For example, her songs focus on issues relating to anti-globalism and anarchist movements, as seen through the feminist lens.

In the poor and working-class areas of Marseille a small anti-globalism collective known as "*La rage du peuple*" ("People's Rage") was formed to protest a variety of global issues that affected youth negatively, with Keny Arkana being a founding member. It was her participation with this radical group that would eventually serve to motivate her music and career. Her first album, entitled "*Le missile est lancé*" ("The Missile is Launched") contains songs with themes addressing a variety of left-of-centre subjects dealing with globalism, capitalism, climate change, the Zapatista movement in Mexico, genetically modified foods (GMOs), and racism. Lyrical representations rapped by Keny Arkana in her tracks employ direct language that is angry, forceful, violent, and more aggressive in theme and subject matter. For example, Keny Arkana's openly encourages revolt and protest by all available means, although she refuses to be aligned with any larger political entity or ideology aside from those strategically allied with her own vision. As stated previously, women rappers in French have tackled so-called controversial themes and subjects in their lyrics, but none have openly and repeatedly encouraged revolt and civil disobedience against the State by being aligned ideologically with political, and especially anarchist movements. Women rappers such as Diam's and Bams differed from Keny Arkana in that they addressed issues as they involved females of colour in France exclusively, instead of targeting subjects related to international anarchist movements and the juxtaposition of feminism and liberation in France with that sort of global struggle for rights. This important distinction makes Keny Arkana stand out from her

peers in the genre. Despite her revolutionary and aggressive approach, Keny Arkana's lyrics serve to express a positive effect since her rapped messages are based in education and social activism, and the not petty street crime in the name of resistance that is often glorified in tracks produced by male hip-hop artists in the United States or beyond.

Perhaps Keny Arkana's most well-known song to date is "*La rage du peuple*" ("People's Rage"), a track that represents and channels the anger of the anti-globalism movement, as well as paying homage to the very anti-capitalist and openly anarchist organisation that she founded in Marseille. Lyrics from "*La rage*" (along with its accompanying video, which shows clips from anti-globalism protests from around the world) outline the frustrations that anarchist groups have vis-à-vis the current world order and the song's stated pedagogical goal is to educate listeners on a variety of topics that directly affect them in their day-to-day lives. In the song "*La rage*," Keny Arkana makes a plea for her listeners to channel their anger (i.e. "*La rage*") into learning more about how they can topple and demolish the current system, when she raps:

*Parce qu'on a la rage, on restera debout quoi qu'il arrive,
La rage d'aller jusqu'au bout et là où veut bien nous mener
la vie (...)*

*Anticapitalistes, altermondialistes, ou toi qui cherche la vérité
sur ce monde, la résistance de demain. Inshallah à la veille
d'une révolution. Mondiale et spirituelle, la rage du peuple, la
rabbia del pueblo; parce qu'on a la rage, celle qui fera
trembler tes normes. La rage a pris la populace et la rage
est énorme.*

Because we rage, we will stand up no matter what,
The rage to go through to the end and where we're willing to
lead our lives (...)

Anti-capitalist, anti-globalist, or wherever you're seeking the
truth about the world,

The resistance of tomorrow. Inshallah on the eve of a
revolution. Global world and spiritual,

The rage of the people, la rabbia del pueblo; because we're
enraged,

The one that will shake your standards. Rage has taken over the people and the rage is huge.

Later in the same track, she even goes as far to express her rage about GMOs when she raps "*La rage, car c'est la merde et ce que ce monde y adhère, et parce que tous leurs champs OGM stérilisent la Terre*" ("Rage, it's this shit this whole world adheres to, and because all of their GMO fields sterilise the Earth"). Despite the strong words shown in the above examples, it is important to note that Keny Arkana does not endorse any sort of hate towards those in power, as in the same song she later raps: "*On a la rage, pas la haine.....la haine est inerte et destructrice*" ("We have rage, not hate.....Hate is inert and destructive").³

The type of forceful and confrontational thematic discourse shown in releases like "*La rage*" separate Keny Arkana from other female rap artists in France since her message is not as much concerned with the unity of woman solely on gender lines alone as much as it focuses on unifying and educating the entire working class, especially females within it, against the French government and corporate interests. It is difficult to know if Keny Arkana will eventually develop a massive following along the lines of Diam's since she is not very comfortable being labelled as a *rappeuse* in the commercial or artistic sense, though she is conscious of her place as an activist-teacher. For example, during an interview with the French radio network RFI, she once stated: "*Je dis que je ne suis pas une rappeuse contestataire, mais une contestataire qui fait du rap*" ("I am not a radical rapper, but rather a radical teacher who raps").⁴ Whilst this choice may limit Keny Arkana's popularity and album sales, it certainly solidifies her reputation as a true radical-type educator in French hip-hop.

³An interesting footnote to the above excerpt is Keny Arkana's linguistic insertion (code-switching) of Arabic and Spanish into her lyrical delivery. This is typical across French hip-hop and it is especially acute for rappers hailing from the very diverse city of Marseille.

⁴ Please see:

http://www.rfimusique.com/musiquefr/articles/083/article_16663.asp (Retrieved: 22 July 2014).

The Future

It is unclear how women involved with hip-hop music in France will continue to evolve and develop as the music becomes more and more commercialised and commodified by industry marketers and advertisers. To use the United States as an example, aside from a few exceptions (such as Nicki Minaj), women have been all but erased from mainstream rap music in recent years, and educational-style conscious hip-hop is not seen as commercially viable as it concerns female artists by Hollywood record executives. In fact, the Grammy Awards mirrors this type of gender invisibility in American hip-hop as it eliminated the *Best Female in Rap* category in 2005. Whereas women were once extremely popular and were an integral part of American rap up through the late 1990s, women are now once again hypersexualised and stereotyped in the industry, and they continue to be the victims of misogynistic lyrical and visual presentations put forth by male rappers in their lyrics, songs and videos. This sort of sexism even occurs amongst best-selling female hip-hop artists in the contemporary era. For example, in 2015 Nicki Minaj's choice to self-promote her "brand" via the use of misogynist body imagery on her recent album differs starkly from the feminist and Afrocentric powerful presentation once employed by female rappers such as Queen Latifah. In France, this type of negative imagery is far less common since female rappers are still involved in hip-hop, but sexism is not invisible when best-selling contemporary hip-hop artists (such as Booba) freely label women as "*putains*" (whores) in many songs and the use of misogyny to sell records is on the rise.

However, although men continue to dominate rap music in France in terms of per capita release percentages, female rappers continue to sell records and their songs and videos are extremely popular when they are fully promoted by record companies. Thus, feminist messages do resonate, albeit when given industry support. Despite the small numbers of women involved in French hip-hop, they are able to be noticed by the consuming masses because the unique subject matter of their rap counteracts and confronts sexism in France by educating listeners of the existing disparities in regards to gender. This sort of rhymed lyrical protest follows a well-established traditional French schema of protesting and promoting *résistance* in poems,

stories, plays, and now hip-hop songs. Unlike what is seen in the United States, commercialised hip-hop in France (to date) has not been disenfranchised as a form of educational resistance due to the fact that the French definition of that term has been historically and culturally grounded in the notion of informing and teaching the masses via poetry and prose. Hip-hop follows this model, but instead of writing a poem or book, all that is needed is a microphone, a rhyme, a turntable, and a sampled bassline. Through the medium of French rap, female artists are provided agency and a socially expressive pedagogical space where they educate listeners and denounce patriarchal and misogynistic attitudes by encouraging social justice and raising awareness of issues that relate to the experience of women of colour in France. In this sense, and when evaluated under contemporary norms, female lyricists have played an important role in French rap as hip-hop philosophers by offering their students (consumers) a uniquely feminine view and perspective to a variety of issues affecting women of colour in France that otherwise may not be heard, discussed, exposed, or understood in a country that still has a long way to go in terms of gender equity.

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Literacy Skills Transfer in Heritage Spanish Speaking High School Students

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Abstract

This study attempted to answer the question of whether or not literacy skills transfer in Heritage Spanish Speakers when they are given literacy intervention in their heritage language. A Spanish for Heritage Speakers course was created that featured a literacy intervention. It was hoped the intervention activities would result in literacy skills being transferred from Spanish to English. Specifically, select group of Heritage Spanish Speaking students who were given literacy intervention help in the heritage language were studied to see if gains were made in SRI Lexile scores in a Spanish for Heritage Speakers course. This group was then compared to the SRI Lexile scores of another group of Spanish for Heritage Speakers not receiving the intervention treatment. The finding of the study indicated the intervention treatment raised literacy scores.

Introduction

There is an essential need to understanding how to teach literacy to students who grow up speaking a language other than English at home. "Heritage Spanish Speakers" is a term that until most recently was not recognized or understood by those outside of the field of World Language Education. It was not until recently that educators have begun to better understand and define these students as ". . . A language student who is raised in a home where a non-English language is spoken, who speaks or at least understands the language, and who is to some degree bilingual in that language and in English" (Valdés, 1997 p.1).

During the last few decades, it had always been assumed that the best way to teach a child whose first language was not English was by immersion into the English Language.

Researchers are now finding this may not be true. In a study by Cárdenas-Hagan and Carlson (2007), for example, it was found that students who had a high knowledge of letters and sounds in Spanish and were in an English as a New Language class had a higher knowledge of letters and sounds in English.

Many students who speak a language other than English at home have been required to partake in English as a New Language course/program in order to help the student become proficient in the English language. The new language learners who are attending schools in Indiana are also required to test in the Indiana ISTEP exam after being in schools within the United States for one year. Unfortunately, school districts have, in the past, placed students in a mainstream English classroom and expected them to learn English through immersion despite student's not learning language at a fast rate. Fromkin, Rodmin, & Hymans (2003) described learning a second language by noting, "It usually requires conscious attention, if not intense study and memorization, to become proficient in a second language" (p. 3). Thus, students that acquired the English language in the American school setting were typically academically behind due to the student having a difficult time with reading and comprehension as well as understanding most content concepts due to the lack of skills.

Valdez (1997) and Roca (2000) argued that there is a lack of research in the area of Heritage Spanish Learners at the P-12 level. There especially existed a lack of understanding of proper techniques to teach these students as well as a lack of understanding on the required training for the teachers of these students. There was also a noticeable lack of information in skills transfer with Heritage Spanish Speakers.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of the study was to examine two angles of a specific problem. As mentioned by Bateman and Wilkinson (2010), many teachers did not feel properly trained by their universities to teach Spanish as a Heritage Language since they had been trained to teach Spanish as a Foreign Language. Another problem arises along these same lines because Heritage Spanish Language Speakers at the high school level have had to learn English by immersion in most cases.

When a Spanish as a Heritage Language student began some type of formal schooling at the kindergarten age, students would be placed in an English immersion classroom. Students were also placed in mainstreamed classrooms with native English speakers. The Spanish-speaking student would have to quickly become proficient in the new language through oral, auditory, written, and reading skills. Thus, the problem with Spanish as a Heritage Language students being immersed in the English language was that many of these students may have never become proficient in the first language. In this case, students had to learn a new language without having prior literacy background in the first language.

Additionally, Heritage Spanish Speakers were often being placed in the foreign language Spanish classroom when in high school. Heritage Spanish Speakers were often placed in introductory Spanish courses, which did not meet the needs of the students.

Additionally, many of the Heritage Spanish Speakers were academically deficient with their English literacy skills as well as in content courses due to the lack of skills in English.

Methodology

This study centered on three questions.

1. Did the students who were enrolled in Spanish for Heritage Speakers class make significant gains on their SRI Lexile scores after having taken the SHS course?
2. Did the students who were not enrolled in Spanish for Heritage Speakers make gains on their SRI Lexile scores?
3. Did Heritage Spanish Speakers increase their literacy skills in the heritage language?

Selection of Subjects

This study took place within the Indianapolis Public Schools District. The targeted populations of this study were the students from George Washington Community High School. During the study, the researcher obtained the data of 50 high school Spanish speakers to conduct the study. Twenty-five students were in given a literacy intervention in a Heritage Spanish course while 25 were not in a Heritage Spanish course.

Instrumentation

This study utilized two different types of data. The pre and post SRI scores for all of the students, who were part of the study, were utilized. The pre and post Heritage Spanish benchmark exam scores for the students' Heritage Spanish course were also utilized. In addition to those two instruments, a brief demographic survey was conducted that included questions for students in regards to their experiences in learning language and their history in language acquisition.

Scholastic Reading Inventory

Scholastic Reading Inventory or otherwise known as SRI was a computer reading assessment which was developed to measure reading comprehension levels for grades K- 12+. The students took the SRI test 3 times a year, beginning, middle and end. After the completion of each test, the students received a Lexile level. Lexile levels measured the difficulty of a text. The framework of the Lexile was a scientific approach to reading comprehension in the English language. The assessment measured the students reading ability to book difficulty. Lexile levels ranged from 0 (beginning levels) to 1500+ (advanced). Lexiles were the most commonly used measurement for reading comprehension.

The SRI was a reading assessment program, which provided immediate, actionable data on students' reading levels and growth over time. SRI helped educators differentiate instruction, make meaningful interventions, forecast growth toward grade- level state tests, and demonstrate accountability.

The targeted population of this study was the students of George Washington Community High School. As noted, there was very little actual research which had been conducted in the area of Heritage Spanish speakers at the high school level, but even less regarding skills transfer in these students. The possibility of skills transfer in heritage Spanish speakers was important because many of the students lacked skills in L2.

Data Collection

Data, scores for the SRI and Heritage Spanish benchmark exam, were obtained from the school's data warehouse. To ensure confidentiality, each student was coded with a number so

that the scores and the names would never be matched. As the instruments for each group of students was collected, the data was separated into three categories:

1. students with intervention of Spanish for Heritage Speakers,
2. students without an intervention,
3. skills growth in the heritage language.

Findings

A t-Test analysis showed that students who did not receive the intervention regressed in SRI Lexile growth. Additionally, students who took Spanish for Heritage Speakers (SHS) made positive gains in Spanish as shown in the benchmark scores as well the SRI Lexiles.

The findings of this study were summarized as follows by null hypothesis. The first null hypothesis proposed that there was no growth in SRI scores in students who took the Spanish for Heritage Speakers course. In the 25 students who took Spanish for Heritage Speakers, however, there was a growth of 2278 points as a class. This is a significant growth in comparison to the controlled group, which had a regression of 604 points as a total group. The hypothesis was rejected.

The second null hypothesis proposed that Heritage Spanish Speaking student who did not take the Spanish for Heritage Speakers course would show growth in their SRI Lexile scores. The scores of the non-SHS who were studied, however, and who did not take SHS regressed an average of -15.1 Lexile on the SRI.

The third null hypothesis proposed there were no benchmark gains in the Heritage Spanish Exam from the pre-test to the post-test. It was found through the t-test that on average students increased 38 points on the benchmark exam for the Heritage Spanish course. It was evident that there was growth in the Spanish Literacy Skills of the students in the intervention course.

Conclusions and Recommendations

As of the time of this research, the researcher found no studies that examined Reading Skills Transfer in Heritage Spanish Speaking Students from L1 to L2. Nor did the researcher find a very significant amount of prior research in the

area of Spanish for Heritage Speakers at the secondary level. Most of the research, which had been conducted had been carried out the post-secondary level and there was a specific comparison to Spanish for Native Speakers.

The results of this study offered compelling evidence that there were skills transfer in Heritage Spanish Speakers from L1 to L2 when a literacy intervention occurred. This is contrary to past research, which recommended that educators immerse non-English speakers into the English language in order to ensure that students acquired English as quickly as possible. The study showed that by utilizing the skills learned through the first language and supporting the first language, students will transfer those skills into their other languages. Several recommendations are offered.

- The first recommendation of this researcher is to expand this study to develop a pacing guide for the Spanish for Heritage Spanish course to be aligned with the Indiana language arts standards and pacing guides. This would ensure that students are in fact learning the same material that is required in the same order so that students can perform at the rate as their peers.
- The second recommendation of the researcher is to expand this study to other languages which are not necessarily romance languages and do not use the same alphabet system to determine if there is a similar correlation in skills transfer.
- Finally, the researcher recommends the research be expanded to study elementary and middle school age students to determine if younger students transferred literacy skills at a faster rate than the secondary level students.

One of the most important focuses in education is ensuring that minority students are competitive with the general population in schools. By ensuring the second language acquisition happened at a speedy pace with skills transfer from L1, students might have a better chance of keeping up with the other students in their school. Additionally, it would help improve the L1 skills so that the students would be fully proficient in their first language.

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THE OAKLAND CITY UNIVERSITY STORY

In June of 1885, the Educational Board of General Baptists organized and then gained a charter from the state of Indiana to operate a college in Oakland City, Indiana. However, because of a lack of funds, the first building, a two-story brick structure housing the administration and classrooms, was not complete until 1891 — the same year Oakland City College actually opened its doors for classes. In those early days the school was called "the college on the hill."

By the mid 1920s, the school had reached a zenith for the first half of the century. There were now several college buildings gracing the grounds, including an expanded administration building, Wheatley Hall, a women's dorm, a field house, Memorial Gym (which housed a library in the basement), Cronbach Hall (a building used for agricultural and industrial arts classes) and a two-story brick building called the president's house. Beside the normal, liberal arts, and theological school, the college had added a large industrial and agricultural department to respond to the vocational needs of the rural area which it served.

Sports teams of the 1920s included basketball, baseball, football, and track. Teams regularly played Indiana State, Evansville College, University of Louisville, and Ball State. By the mid 1920s, a legion of clubs could also be found on campus. Among them were the YMCA, YWCA, Phi Alpha Literary Society, Germanae Literacy Society, Athenian Literacy and debating team, a standard debating team, the ETOSCA club, the Dramatic League, the French Club, the German Club, the Glee Club, the college orchestra, and the college band. Enrollment during these prosperous times often broached 1000 students a semester.

Sadly, this comfortable world came to a screeching halt in 1930 with the coming of the Great Depression. Grimly, the school held on with faculty and staff often forgoing paychecks in order to keep the school running. The end of World War II and the GI Bill helped to cause resurgence in enrollment, and by the mid 1960s, the "college on the hill" experienced an upswing comparable to the 1920s. Several new buildings now crowned the campus, including four dormitories, a new library, Brengle Hall, a science building, and Stinson Hall.

The winding down of the war in Vietnam wrought a substantial drop in enrollment. By the fall term of 1973, the college found itself with an overabundance of empty dorm rooms. Fortunately, the institution endured this difficult period. In the 1990s the college moved to university status. Presently, the school has an enrollment of 2000 and has seen the construction of no fewer than nine new buildings in the last few years. Today, the university stands fully accredited and offers five graduate degrees and over forty undergraduate programs.

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