Examining the Effectiveness of Capturing Kids' Hearts Training for Teachers in a Ninth Grade Transition Program

Marjorie Ann Stealey

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Glen Earthman, Chairman
Carol Cash, Committee Member
Wayne Tripp, Committee Member
Travis Twiford, Committee Member

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this research was to determine if there was a difference in the scores of students on the "What Helped Me to Become Successful in the Ninth Grade?" survey between the retained and promoted students who had been taught by teachers who had Capturing Kids' Hearts (CKH) training during 2007-08 school year. The students in one Mid-Atlantic Virginia, urban school were the study population. Students who had completed the ninth grade on time with teachers who had CKH training were compared with students who had been retained with teachers who had the CKH training were asked to complete a student perception survey.

A mean score on a 25-item Student Perception Survey for each item was computed for the two groups of students who were in this high school during the 2007-08 school year and remained during the 2008-09 school year. Particular attention was given to nine questions that focused on relationship issues. A t-test was utilized to determine if there was a significant difference between comparative data on the mean for the two groups of students.

In all nine of the relationship questions, there was no statistical significant difference in the mean of the responses for the repeat ninth grade students and the on time tenth grade students. The responses to the relationship questions indicated that the training the teachers received had a similar effect on students whether they were on time tenth grade students or repeat ninth grade students. The percentage of repeat ninth grade students had a higher percentage than the tenth grade students of agree responses on five of the nine relationship questions. Additionally, the median for the repeat ninth grade participants was higher on six of

the nine relationship questions; therefore, the repeat ninth grade students had a stronger response to the relationship questions than the on time tenth grade students.

The CKH training was a three-day off site learning experience for ninth grade teachers that provided tools to build positive, productive, and trusting relationships among themselves and their students. The EXCEL Model utilized five distinctive training areas: (a) engaging, (b) exploring, (c) communicating, (d) empowering, and (e) launching. The focus for students included developing skills that could affect their school success.

Dedication

To our loving 17-year-old son, Colin, whom we lost during his senior year in a tragic car accident on February 28, 2005, this degree is dedicated to you. Your hugs, laughter, and commitment to be in college together before you left, inspired me to complete this degree. In the wee hours in a quiet room over the garage, you were with me every click of the key stroke and every barrier I thought was insurmountable.

To Jim and LaVaun Lorenz, my parents who both passed away the year before Colin was born, your inspiration and encouragement helped me throughout my life. To David, my husband, thank you for your support and encouragement to immerse myself in my work for years. You have been my steady rock. To my dear friend Lee, thank you for being connected spiritually with my heart. You have been a constant source of strength in my life.

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Chapter 1

Introduction

Every year, an estimated one out of three public high school students drops out of school, creating an economic underclass of youth ill-prepared for an increasingly skill-driven economy (Horwitz & Snipes, 2008). The dropout problem apparently continues to grow exponentially even though high school reform programs for lowering the dropout rate have been on the national agenda for several years (National Association of Secondary School Principals, 1996).

Research has found that one source of the problem is in the transition from middle school to high school. By high school as many as 40% to 60% of students become chronically disengaged from school including urban, suburban, and rural and not counting those who have already dropped out (Klem and Connell, 2007). This transition becomes monumental because this is the last transition between two levels of school and the transition can become very difficult for many students. Normally, when the change occurs, there is a different building with more students, new teachers, administrators, and new procedures to learn, not to mention the social pressures (Butts and Cruzeiro, 2005). The more able students seem to have a better time of adjusting to the culture change than other students because they are familiar with what it takes to be a good student by managing the challenge with organizational skills and study skills (Newman, Meyers, Newman, Lohman & Smith, 2000).

The average student has the next most difficult time adjusting, then followed by the lower level students who typically struggle academically in middle school. Add change of environment to a new building, courses for credit, more students, a bigger school building, and

the path for graduation for many students becomes more confusing and unmanageable (Butts & Cruzeiro, 2005).

Overview of Study

Since the enactment of the No Child Left Behind Act (2001), school divisions regardless of the socioeconomic status of their students must meet adequate yearly progress and teachers and students feel a sense of urgency to succeed. This national standard has made the organizational need for a successful ninth grade transitional program even more important by trying to discover program components that will reduce the probability of students being retained in ninth grade and subsequently dropping out of school (Letgers and Kerr, 2001).

Over the past decade there have been many programs to address this ninth grade transition problem. The National Association of Secondary School Principals in 2004 named numerous case studies as exemplars for transitional programs (National Association of Secondary School Principals, 2004). The Virginia Department of Education identified ten high schools that have met AYP and accreditation standards for the last two years and have transition programs (Virginia Department of Education, 2008). The Council of the Great City Schools, which represents the largest 66 of the nation's urban school districts, released a document supporting successful transitions to high schools. In that report, there were five findings: (a) Extensive transition programs and new student support programs should be offered students either in the eighth grade or on entering ninth grade in important and meaningful ways to ease the transition between feeder elementary and middle schools; (b) A sustained focus on explicit literacy instruction throughout elementary and middle school is a critical strategy for improving high school success; (c) The establishment of small schools and academies may affect student engagement and improve students' academic outcomes; d) Structural reforms will need to be

combined with well-articulated curricular interventions; and (e) Districts must attend to students' need for remediation programs (Horowitz and Snipes, 2008, pgs. 3-7). In spite of the findings, there is still not a combination of strategies that works for all schools.

One of the important aspects of a transitional program is the development of interpersonal relations by students. It is the responsibilities of both the teachers and the school to develop collaborative activities to be able to teach students how to work together as a community (Dewey, 1958). Being a member of a community also includes those feelings that are associated with feeling part of a group. It is therefore those feelings and relationships that enable the class to discuss group problems when road blocks begin to surface and become supportive of each other both inside and outside the classroom.

Despite the arguments for community as the basis for learning and emotional support systems, critics argue that schools as educational institutions pay scant attention to the socio emotional needs of students (Hargreaves, Earl & Ryan 1996). Since the push to accomplish state testing goals to meet national testing requirements, there has been little research to determine the importance of community and relationships between teachers and students. This could be a tremendously important characteristic to affect students in their often very complex lives.

When students move from a middle school to a high school, they have the ability to become anonymous and to recreate who they were as former middle school students (Gewertz, 2006). Ninth grade students can begin anew amassing credits toward graduation, but many find the transition difficult to navigate, the courses difficult, or uninteresting, and they tend to replay their former unsuccessful middle school academic history of discipline referrals, suspensions or attendance problems.

Even though most transition programs include small learning communities in their design and refer to the importance of a community concept, there is no mention of teacher training. The true success of a small learning community with a common core of teachers would be if those teachers were trained together to create a culture where relationships mattered. Norms collectively could be developed to manage the class and students could be taught to care about each other. Eventually, when students realize that the culture of the classroom is centered on relationships, the content knowledge delivered by teachers could be easier to manage by all the students.

Statement of the Problem

A key part of the transition to high school is that schools are failing to provide even the academically prepared ninth grade students with academic and personal support they need to succeed (Horowitz & Snipes, 2008). Even among students with the same degree of academic preparation, schools may very in the extent to which students make a successful transition to high school are on track by the end of their freshman year (Horowitz & Snipes, 2008). High schools are often larger than middle schools and lead to depersonalization. Both teachers and students have reported that the high school environment is more socially comparative and competitive and these challenges often create feelings of frustration and discouragement that lead students to emotionally withdraw from their teachers, their schoolwork, and school itself (Horowitz & Snipes, 2008). An analysis based on a nationwide sample of students indicate that, in addition to lower academic performance, decreased motivation and a sense of alienation from the local school environment are key predictors of dropping out (Horowitz & Snipes, 2008).

There is a need to improve the relationships teachers have with all ninth grade students. Students who left schools last year without a high school diploma, craved attention from their

teachers and when they received it, they remembered it making a difference (Bridgeland, Dilulio, and Morison, 2006). Participants in the focus groups in a national study, who had dropped out of school, stated that some of their best days were when their teachers noticed them, got them involved in class, and told them they were doing well (Bridgeland, Dilulio, and Morison, 2006).

There is a need for training teachers in ninth grade transition programs to learn how to develop relationships with students. One important concept in helping students successfully transition from middle school to high school is the ability to form positive student to teacher and student to student relationships. The Capturing Kids' Hearts program (Flippen, 2002) emphasizes how to build relationships and how to maintain them. It is known that the best teachers take student failure personally and know how to relate, connect, and encourage students. This training program, CKH, may be able to develop good teachers into better teachers or even good teachers into great teachers by teaching relationships skills. Teachers with CHK training should be able to help students practice relationship skills with other students and improve relationships with teachers (Flippen, 2002).

Research Question

Is there a difference in the scores of students on the "What Helped Me to Become Successful in Ninth Grade?" survey between retained and promoted students who were taught by teachers who had Capturing Kids' Hearts (CKH) training during the 2007-08 school year?

Purpose of Research

The purpose of this research was to determine if there was a difference in the scores of students on the "What Helped Me to Become Successful in Ninth Grade?" survey between the retained and promoted students who had been taught by teachers who had Capturing Kids' Hearts training during the 2007-08 school year. If similar responses are documented, then the

relationship training the teachers received affected both successful students and those who were most at risk of dropping out. Descriptive evaluation was used to determine if students who were both promoted on time to tenth grade and others who were retained exhibited such perceptions. Comparative data between the two groups were analyzed.

Significance of the Research

The number of students failing in the ninth grade and leaving their schools is daunting. The students who are most disengaged are also those who are most at risk of becoming dropouts. Students need highly trained teachers who are engaging and who connect with their students to achieve success. There is little research on relationship training for teachers who teach ninth grade students; yet, it is written into almost every small learning community plan or ninth grade transition design that teachers should create a feeling of community.

Accountability is mounting as high schools strive to meet increasingly rigorous state standards and AYP mandates. The results of this study will provide training information for teachers of ninth grade students, as well as for school division teacher training needs with students of diverse populations. In Virginia, the Department of Education may find the research findings interesting as a strategy to better prepare teachers for ninth grade students. Additionally, this research may also have implications beyond school division training offices for replication in national ninth grade transition programs.

Capturing Kids' Hearts Training

A staff development model called Capturing Kids' Hearts developed by The Flippen Group, 2002, was used to train the ninth grade staff of the study school during the summer of 2007. This training was a three-day off site learning experience that provided tools for teachers, administrators, faculty, and staff to build positive, productive and trusting relationships among

themselves and students. The staff was able to learn how to build an environment of trust with their students in order to maximize learning at the ninth grade level by using the EXCEL Model that represents five components. The components include engaging, exploring, communicating, empowering, and launching with students. The focus for students first began with a reflection and a need to develop quality leaders by the following : affirming and encouraging others; the ability to grow groups; controlling self first in difficult situations; taking the initiative to develop relationships; creating self-motivated leaders; developing optimism; and creating the ability to develop genuine caring (Flippin Group, 2002).

The purpose of the three-day off site training model was to be able to develop relationships with team members so they could practice strategies together before returning to their school and applying what they had learned with students. There is a minimum of fifty people for each, three-day training by the Flippen Group. As a result, several schools are often trained together. The Engage Step of the EXCEL Model reviews the handshake, welcome, affirmation, and the teacher modeling. In the Capturing Kids' Hearts model it is the belief that teachers can control the behavior students bring into the classroom by reading students' expressions on their faces. Teachers are trained to shake hands with students to welcome them with a smile and to read them as to what kind of attitude the student is bringing to class that day. The teacher, by reading the student, is able to ask questions of the student as to what might be bothering the student, before entering the classroom. Early in the class students should be given a chance to share good news about what has happened in a student's life and the teacher and other students give their affirmation by clapping.

For the second step of the EXCEL Model, X-plore develops the teacher skills that will be needed to meet the needs of students (Flippen Group, 2002). These skills are much like those

counselors utilize daily with listening, empathy, and probing to better understand the problems and concerns of students. This is the part of the training where teachers and administrators learn that there must be a safe environment that is developed so students can feel safe asking for help with assignments, telling teachers they don't understand what went on in their classes, or even sharing personal information and that they need advice.

The communication training is a two-way process that is identified as a dialogue between teachers and students. The Flippen Group (2002) defines the process as dynamic and experimental, requiring the teacher to be a facilitator and resource to the class. Teachers who are powerful communicators become powerful team-builders (Flippen Group, 2002). Teachers are also taught how to help students see how their studies will help them in their future efforts to find and plan for the skills needed for their careers. Salesman skills are developed by teachers to assist students when difficult times arrive.

The fourth training component of the EXCEL Training Model is to empower students to use the things they have been taught. When they do so they become truly empowered. Also in this fourth component is developing the skills to build trust with students so a social contract with the class can take place. The students have to feel safe to fail and understand that consequences are just part of the process. When students fail to follow the social contract, it is important that encouragement and support are in place as positive interaction (Flippen Group, 2002).

The fifth and last section of the EXCEL Training Model is how the students are launched or sent from the classes each day. Teachers are taught how to summarize the content, talk about the relevancy and how it relates to students' futures, how they will use the skills learned, and what will be the consequences if the skills are not used. Each day teachers are trained to end the

classes on positive points. According to Flip Flippen, "Passion is the thrust we use to propel our students toward their destinations"(Flippen Group, 2002, p.33). Teachers will end their classes by challenging students to do positive things to bring back to class the next day.

Limitations /Assumptions

There were several imitations to this study. First, the research was based solely from the data of one large urban high school in Mid-Atlantic Virginia. Second, only 51 on time tenth grade students and 14 repeat ninth grade students participated in the study. The data indicated that the same results may occur in a similar school with a similar population.

This study was based upon the assumption that all teachers in one high school were equally trained and equally utilized the skills of the CKH program. An assumption was that the survey participants answered honestly. As a result of the training, the teachers were able to foster and promote the tenets of building relationships with students. The data indicated that the same results may occur in a similar school with a similar population.

Delimitations

The delimitations for this study included the following:

1. Both academically successful and retained students were included in the study;
2. This study included urban high school;
3. The primary focus of this data was to collect information from students pertaining to their perception of teachers who had completed a training program; and
4. The statistical evidence from this study was from participants who were asked to evaluate teachers.

Organization of Study

Chapter 1 of this dissertation includes the introduction of the problem, statement of the purpose, research question, and significance of the study. Chapter 2 includes a review of literature, describes the problem, discusses how other researchers studied the problem, and suggests other research to be studied. Chapter 3 includes the methodology, explains the study's design, data collection procedures and the data analysis procedures and Chapter 4 includes the results from the data. Chapter 5 discusses the conclusion, implications, recommendations and future research.

Chapter 2

Chapter two discusses studies that will provide an understanding of the importance of the ninth grade lack of promotion dilemma and how some school divisions are working to reduce the problem. Some schools are reducing their large freshmen classes to smaller groups of 150 students with the same group of teachers to create more personalized cultures in large schools that traditionally feel impersonal because of the large student body. Most often these transition programs focus on academics, personalization, and engagement. These are three areas that numerous studies have cited as areas that lead students to leave high school early (Newman, Weilage, and Lamborn, 1992).

The most successful transition programs have a high promotion rate from ninth grade to tenth grade after only one year in high school. The most successful high schools closely monitor first time ninth grade students in their transition programs knowing that if students do not meet promotion standards there is a high probability that the students will not graduate on time. Many successful schools implement remediation programs conducted by ninth grade teachers, while other schools have established a twilight school, which is similar to the night school concept but for younger students. Large urban school districts without successful transition programs sometimes experience 50% dropout rates which represent thousands of students (Neild & Balfanz, 2006).

Sometimes life becomes difficult for students and the older they get, the more impatient they become, particularly those with severe economic and academic difficulties. If a student finds no one he can trust or no one in a large high school to listen to, then negotiating help with

assignments, projects, even the need for advice becomes more difficult, and if poorly negotiated, creates the probability of a school dropout (Legters & Kerr, 2001).

Dewey viewed education as a social and collaborative process and promoted the idea that students should function as a part of a social group. It should be the responsibility of the teacher and school to encourage the development of this sense of community by designing communal activities to which all contribute (Dewey, 1958). Since Dewey offered his thoughts about community and education, numerous educators have revisited the importance to develop a sense of community in the schools of today to reduce isolation, alienation, and polarization.

Research Studies

A significant search was conducted to provide a comprehensive overview of a variety of transition programs and small learning communities as they related to teachers building relationships with students and how those relationships might affect students' learning. There were many articles about transition programs and smaller learning communities and even references to the importance of teachers developing positive relations with students; however, no teacher relationship training programs were found. Further data were collected about lack of students' academic progress as they progressed in their schooling from an elementary school to middle school and from middle school to high school. This provided information on the importance of teacher to student relationships, particularly in the ninth grade, because of the high school academic standards for graduation and earning credits for promotion. Substantial data were collected about how student relationships with their teachers impacted negatively and positively about success in various programs. Research information was collected from Wilson Web, ERIC from Ovid, and ProQuest. An internet search was conducted using dropout, ninth grade transition, and teacher relationship training.

There were eight studies that contributed to this research. Akos & Galassi (2004) studied the perceptions of students, parents, and teachers involved in the middle to high school transitions. Students and parents perceived that teacher relationships contributed to student success. The Conchas study (2002) provided data of successful urban career academies in California. Students indicated that it was the supportive environment created by teachers that contributed to the students' success in this study. The Ohio study (Newman, Myers, Newman, Lohman, and Smith, 2000) investigated a program that prepared sixth grade African American boys for success in ninth grade with a promise of college. Students indicated that there were both positive and negative feelings about their teachers as it related to encouragement and providing academic support.

The Alspaugh study (1998) looked at the increased number of times a student changed schools as adversely affecting most students because new routines had to be learned and new relationships had to be developed, particularly with teachers. One study, (Smith, 1997) was a large longitudinal study that determined the effectiveness of full or partial transition programs. Students in this study were 20% less likely to become a dropout if their school had a full transition program. A full transition program included high school teachers and counselors making connections with their feeder middle schools by presenting evening programs to their eighth grade students about the high school expectations. Some full transitions programs also began developing positive relationships with eight grade students by providing a summer camp before high school with teachers serving as camp counselors.

Dyke (2007) found in her research that a summer transition program for over age students could have a positive impact with small classes and a focus on academic achievement. A comprehensive reform model in two Philadelphia high schools improved pass rates in academic

classes and reduced suspensions. A transition class that assisted students with processing adult relationships, academic responsibilities, and goal setting made a significant impact (Useem, Neild, and Morrison, 2001). Finally, Butts & Cruzeiro in their 2005 study, surveyed high school students in a large Midwestern high school that did not have a ninth grade transition program, but students shared their perceptions of what they thought contributed to their success. The students listed relationships with teachers as a factor for their success.

Review of Studies

Akos & Galassi studied the perceptions of approximately 493 middle and high school students and their parents and teachers in a 2004 research study to determine what each group thought was the top three concerns about the middle and high school transitions. This research project took place in a high performing, midsized southern school district that included eight elementary schools with four middle schools, and two high schools. This was a university community where over ninety percent of the high school students attended postgraduate education (Akos & Galassi, 2004).

The study included 173 sixth grade students, 83 parents, and 12 teachers. By race the composite included: 57.2% White, 19.7% Black, 8.7% Asian, 8.1% Hispanic, 4% multiracial, and 2.3% who did not specify their race (Akos & Galassi, 2004). The high school part of the study included 320 ninth grade students, 61 parents, and 17 teachers. By race the composite for these schools included: 76.3% White, 10.3% Black, 5.6% Asian, 3.4% Hispanic, 2.2% multiracial, and 1.9% that did not specify race (Aksos & Galassi, 2004). The items for the research were developed from a previous transition research project. The middle school questionnaire was similar to the high school transition questionnaire but was modified to elementary-middle school level questions. Students were asked in a checklist format to indicate

what things they looked forward to and were concerned about when they were in middle school regarding the move to high school (Akos & Galassi, 2004). The instrument also included five open-ended questions.

The parent and teacher questionnaires were similar to the student's questionnaire involving school transition with the exception that both groups were able to add items unique to their situation. Parents were asked to rate the difficulty of the move from middle to high school on a four point Likert scale from difficult to easy (Akos & Galassi, 2004). Additionally, parents were asked to respond to nine open-ended questions. The instrument for the teachers included three open-ended questions.

The procedure for the research followed established practices of numbering each questionnaire for tracking purposes; however, the researcher did not want to connect a student to a parent's questionnaire. Completed questionnaires were collected on site by a counselor and delivered to the researchers. Pre-numbered parent questionnaires were sent home in sealed envelopes. Teachers completed their version of the questionnaire during a faculty meeting (Akos & Galassi, 2004).

The results of the perception study found all three groups for the elementary to middle school transition choose the same top choices, which included the following: (a) choosing classes; (b) making new friends; (c) participating in sports; and (d) having lockers. The top choices of the middle school transition to the high school included the following: (a) more freedom; (b) making new friends; (c) attending school events; (d) choosing classes; (e) participating in sports; and (f) PE class (Akos & Galassi, 2004). For both student categories of middle and high school groups the number two most important concern about the transition was

making friends. For middle and high school students relationships were very important (Akos & Galassi, 2004).

The middle school students suggested that once they had moved to the new school, personnel should be more welcoming (13%) and encouraging (11%).They also suggested that it would have been helpful if students would have had the opportunity to talk more about the transition (13%). Their parents thought the orientation was the most important aspect of the transition (45%) and the teachers indicated that team-building activities would help to develop friends (50%)(Akos & Galassi, 2004). The high school students had fewer suggestions after they arrived at high school. Thirty-four percent suggested being nicer to the ninth grade students and not scaring the students. The parents recommended communication with other students and teachers (26%) and the teachers recommended that students should attend the ninth grade orientation (29%) (Akos & Galassi, 2004).

Results of a one-way analysis of variance indicated differences among the groups in their mean ratings of the difficulty of the middle school transition, $F(2.\ 260) = 6.77$, $p < .001$. Post – hoc comparisons at the .05 level using Tukey's HSD test indicated that both students ($M = 2.00$, $SD = 0.96$) and parents ($M = 2.00$, $SD = 0.87$) rated the middle school transition as "somewhat easy" and significantly easier than teachers ($M = 3.00$, $SD = 0.60$) did (Akos & Galassi, 2004). For students, the most difficult parts of being at the middle school were classes (35%), good grades/homework (25%), and teachers (10%). Parents identified the change in responsibilities/expectations (52%), and other students (27%) as the most difficult aspects (Akos & Galassi, 2004).

In contrast to the middle school data, post-hoc comparisons indicated that high school students perceptions differed significantly, $F (2, 382) = 6.83$, $p<.001$. High school students ($M =$

1.88, SD = .86) viewed the transition "somewhat easy" and significantly easier than both parents (M = 2.22, SD = 0.92) and teachers (M = 2.50, SD = 0.73) (Akos & Galassi, 2004). At the high school level, students identified homework (35%), a variety of social and organizational changes like not having their friends in classes and riding the bus (25%), and grades (16%), as the most difficult aspects of high school (Akos & Galassi, 2004). The parents of high school students identified homework (24%), academics (20%), and time management (16%) (Akos & Galassi, 2004).

Adjusting to the social aspects of middle school or high school is just as important as the academic aspect. In this study, even though the top transition concerns were academics at both levels, students said that their primary method of adjusting to or getting comfortable in the new school was spending time with friends. Additionally, both the middle and high school teachers identified fitting in and making new friends as primary challenges and opportunities for students involved in school transition programs (Akos & Galassi, 2004). As Dewey (1958) reported, it should be the responsibility of the teacher and school to develop a sense of community by small group activities that help students to be able to fit in and make new friends.

The limitations of this study included that the schools selected were high-performing with 90% of the graduates attending colleges. In addition, the data were collected after only one year of the program being in operation, rather than several years to determine if this was an anomaly.

In 2005 Butts & Cruzeiro studied a large Midwestern high school of 2300, grades 9-12 that did not have a ninth grade transition program. The high school had three feeder middle schools and the population consisted of 78.3% Caucasian, 16% Native American, 1.7% African American, Asian, and Hispanic with approximately 22.9% of their students receiving free and reduced lunch (Butts & Cruzeiro, 2005). The purpose of the study was to determine what factors

students perceived was the greatest influence that helped with their transition to ninth grade during the first half the their first year in high school (Butts & Cruzeiro, 2005).

During February of their ninth grade year, each student was asked to complete a survey to determine the greatest influences on their success in school. The 495 students were asked to respond to 30 questions with a scale choice of one to four. The surveys were monitored and collected by teachers and analyzed (Butts & Cruzeiro, 2005).

The findings revealed that even though the school didn't have a transition program, 66.1% of the students felt successful while 17.58% did not and 16% did not respond (Butts & Cruzeiro, 2005). For indicators of relationships, students listed teachers who cared, teachers who explained well, teachers who were easy to talk to, and having friends in class with the highest median score. Students also listed interesting classes, going to classes regularly, and getting homework done at school with high median scores as success factors. The lowest median score was to limit time with friends, (Butts & Cruzeiro, 2005).

This study helped to understand that regardless of whether a transition program is in place or not, there are social aspects of school that appeal to high school students. According to the results of this study, relationship comments about teachers helping students were in the top four categories of the open-ended question, "What did you need most to help make the transition into ninth grade?" with the majority of students who felt successful.

A limitation of this study is that it was conducted half way through the ninth grade year. Further, geographical location or the size of the school may influence the responses. The selection of only one high school was a rather small sample.

Conchas (2002) completed a case study of the Baldwin High School Academies which were designed to focus on one of four careers (medical, graphics, teaching or transportation) in

small learning communities during the tenth through twelfth grades. This was a case study to investigate a modern phenomenon within a real-life setting. The researcher collected and analyzed college preparatory data on a well-established AP program, as it compared to the large scope of the entire graduating class of 288 students. The study was defined as an empirical inquiry to collect qualitative data on 80 African American college bound students at Baldwin High School in California. The school had 1,900 students in this large northern city with 65% African American, 20% Asian, 10% Latino, 4% White, and 1% Filipino (Conchas, 2002). Of these students, 40% qualified for free or reduced priced lunch. More than twelve different languages were spoken by students as their native languages (Conchas, 2002).

Despite its problems, many minority students thrived socially and academically at Baldwin High School. District data indicated that Baldwin students surpassed the district average in scores above three (three earning college credit) in the Advanced Placement examinations, and the school had the largest percentage of students attending post secondary education of the nine comprehensive high schools in this northern California city of Ventura (Conchas, 2002).

Further, in order to analyze the rigor of the program, the investigation included triangulation through qualitative and quantitative methods (Conchas, 2002). The qualitative component included data on 80 minority students and assessments of their responses to various structures and cultures of the high school (Conchas, 2002). Data were collected in interviews, focus groups, observations of these students in various high-achieving and school-within-a-school contexts.

Interviews with teachers, administrators, and staff took place during the 1996-97 and 1997-98 school years. Semi-structured protocols were used to guide the interviews and focus groups which lasted one to two hours each. These interviews were taped and transcribed

verbatim (Conchas, 2002). Additionally, quantitative information was taken from the 1990-1994 panel on National Educational Longitudinal Study collected for the Education Statistics by the Opinion Research Center to delineate comparative data with Vietnamese Americans, Mexican Americans, and African Americans (Conchas, 2002). An Ordinary Least Squares (OLS) Model of analysis listed a prediction of hours students spend on homework nightly (Conchas, 2002). The results of the statistical analysis revealed that expectations matter. Students who were expected to attend a four-year university studied two more hours per week than students who were not expected to graduate from high school (Conchas, 2002).

As a result of students leaving high schools without diplomas in California, educators looked at organizations such as academies to slow the exit. Academies that were highly successful at Baldwin were the Medical Academy and the Graphics Academy. In the Medical Academy students interested in the health or biosciences, joined the program in the 9th or 10th grade and took academic classes for 80% of their school day for the remainder of their high school program of study. Students participated in work-related learning, internships, and senior projects. The graduating class of 1997 was very successful with 93% of the 267 students graduating and of those, 98% enrolled in college (Conchas, 2002).

The Graphics Academy specialized in computer-assisted graphics and attracted the strongest math and science students. During three years in the academy, students took the highest level classes in math and science, including physics, calculus, and chemistry. The graduating class in 1997 had a 100% graduation rate from the Graphics Academy and all went on to 4-year universities (Conchas, 2002).

Notable similar findings through interviews, according to students, between the Medical and Graphics Academy included the following:

- Students were made to feel special and were encouraged to apply to the academy;
- Students had many classes together and they saw the quality work;
- They encouraged one another;
- Teachers were the key players in the environment;
- There was a seriousness in the academy about academics;
- The academy enabled the majority of students to see themselves optimistically, as students with high potential; and
- Academy students indicated that the school setting was the most important motivator and developer of optimism because it was something that adults could control when the home life couldn't be controlled (Conchas, 2002).

While all academy students worked with adult mentors and developed strong forms of social scaffolding, low-income African American males placed a high value on athletic fame and perceived college as a pathway to achieving it (Conchas, 2002). Key findings as a result of this study included the following: (a) smaller and intimate school-within-a-school structures or small learning communities were significant for student engagement; (b) school effects contributed to different patterns of school adaptation within and between racial groups; (c) some institutional arrangements were much better at creating a supportive cross-ethnic community of learners; and (d) some institutional arrangements successfully channeled students of varying academic abilities into a culture of academic achievement (Conchas, 2002).

The survey data of Baldwin High School provided a general understanding of student outcomes by race, class, and gender. The results indicated that going to classes and the practice of going to school for certain groups of students were far more difficult than for others. Baldwin's open campus policy allowed students to leave school during breaks and lunch

(Conchas, 2002). This policy also permitted outsiders who were a source of violence. Students stated that these outsiders stated fights, fires, and terrorized students so many students would not attend school (Conchas, 2002). Understanding how students become high-achieving students in a hostile environment required an in-depth analysis as well as an understanding of the social culture.

The limitations of this study included that there was only one high school from California. The study focused only on the high performing students in this school.

Newman, Myers, Newman, Lohman, and Smith, 2000, completed a qualitative study of 22 African American students from nine Ohio cities, all of whom qualified for the Young Scholars Program. The purpose of the study was to identify students in the sixth grade as having academic potential and determining how many of these 22 students would maintain their academic status at the end of their ninth grade year.

When the students were selected for the YSP, they had to be members of an underrepresented minority group and come from low-income families in which neither parent had earned a college degree (Newman, Meyers, Newman, Lohman, and Smith, 2000). When the students were selected, the parents and students signed a contract that promised admission to Ohio State University after high school graduation, as well as a loan-free financial aid package (Newman et al., 2000). For their part, the students had to participate in year round YSP activities, complete college-preparatory courses, and maintain a 3.0 on a 4.0 scale during high school (Newman et al., 2000).

The 22 African American students who were identified for this study represented nine urban Ohio school divisions that had YSP intervention programs. Eighteen of the students lived in single-adult homes; 14 in mother-only; two in single-guardian; and two in grandmother-only

homes (Newman, Myers, Newman, Lohman, and Smith 2000). In the mother-only homes, six students were low performers and eight students were high performers. One low performer and one high performer lived with single guardians. Two high performers lived with their grandmothers (Newman et al., 2000).

The study was designed to identify factors that contributed to the academic success of African American students who were making the transition to high school. Twenty-two students who were identified as having promise in the sixth grade were identified with the YSP criteria. They participated in Summer Institutes for three weeks each summer on campus and engaged in academic coursework, social activities and tutorials when necessary over the two years leading to high school. By the end of ninth grade, only 13 of the 22 students had maintained a 3.0 grade point average. Nine other students were making progress toward graduation but were at risk of losing YSP financial aid (Newman, Myers, Newman, Lohman, and Smith, 2000).

Ethnographic data collected for the study included: (a) tape recoded interviews; (b) students responded to standardized measures of academic motivation; (c) taped interviews with YSP coordinators in each city; and (d) paper and pencil questionnaires completed by persons identified by the students as academically supportive. Case narratives were written for each student and they were organized around the following ten issues:

1. Characteristics of the transition from eighth to ninth grade;
2. Classes where students felt confident and did well;
3. What helped students do well;
4. Classes where students had difficulty;
5. Why students did not do well;
6. People supportive of the students' academic efforts;

7. Challenges faced during ninth grade;

8. People to whom students turned when faced with challenges;

9. The role of the Young Scholars Program during the transition to ninth grade; and

10. Characteristics of a successful student at their school.

A matrix was developed that linked participants to their responses. Two researchers coded each case. The results indicated the following negative about their teachers: (a) some teachers were not supportive; (b) some teachers were not approachable; (c) some teachers gave homework without explaining directions; and (d) some teachers seemed indifferent (Newman, Meyers, Newman Lohman, and Smith, 2000).

In summary, the students thought their teachers played a primary part in their success in high school. Most students reported about teachers first being negative and then positive. Low performers had more positive comments about their teachers. The most frequent comments included that high school teachers were not as supportive as their middle school teachers and they graded harder (Newman, Meyers, Newman, Lohman and Smith, 2000).

With questions about why students did not do well in school, high performing students listed "needed to study more," "problems with teachers," and "too much work." Two additional reasons high performing students gave as reasons why they struggled academically were "boredom" and "lack of motivation." Low performing students listed "not attending class" and "needing more help" as their greatest reasons (Newman, Myers, Newman, Lohman, and Smith, 2000).

While the study had merit about supporting students as they prepared for high schools, several important research questions remain unanswered which may have affected the performance of students. The students were from nine different Ohio cities. The selection

criteria included recommendations from teachers, parents and community members. The students who were selected had promise, leadership abilities and talents ((Newman, Myers, Newman, Lohman, and Smith, 2000), yet the study did not discuss the rigor for the selection criteria. The selection of each student would be paramount, particularly since the fruition of the support activities would continue for several years.

Since much time, planning, and community partnering took place, there was no special mention of training for the ninth grade teachers who were going to teach these bright male students. The project also did not describe any freshman transition program to enhance the three years of work in the community. It should be noted though, that this was a very comprehensive study that focused on four critical areas identified for success: family, peers, school, and neighborhood.

Alspaugh (1998) completed a study to determine whether there was achievement loss between the different transition years of fifth to sixth grade and eight to ninth grade. At each transition, the grades regressed from the previous year. Each time there was a change to a new school meant that there were changes of procedures for the students, as well as new relationships that had to be developed with new teachers. The researcher compared three groups of 16 school districts, of which most were located primarily in rural and small towns. The study used an ex post facto methodology.

The first goal in this study was to explore the achievement loss between grades 6-8 middle schools, and grades 9-12 high schools. The second goal was to determine if there was any relationship between the number of school-to-school transitions and the percentage of students who dropped out of high school (Alspaugh, 1998). The first group of school divisions had a K-8, 9-12 grade organization and only one elementary school and one high school. The

second group had districts with one elementary, middle, and high school, all feeding into the next grade level. The third group of districts had two or three elementary schools, one middle, and one high school with a pyramid arrangement of students (Alspaugh, 1998). Students in the elementary school fed into the one middle school and eventually into the high school. There was a significant difference between the numbers of students per grade level for the three groups (Alspaugh, 1998).

The limitations of this study included that though there were a large number of districts included in the study, they were primarily small town districts. Additionally, the school size and student SES were confounded with the school transitions in influencing the dropout rates.

The Missouri Mastery and Achievement Tests (MMAT) were given to students each May. The pretransition achievement measures were from May 1994 to the post transition scores of May 1995. The comparisons of individual school group achievement showed a significant loss to only the pyramid middle school students. The dependent variable for the two-way ANOVA with repeated measures on academic areas was the eighth and ninth achievement test scores (Alspaugh, 1998). The independent variable was the number of times a student changed schools. All three groups experienced a mean achievement loss in all four areas for English, science, social studies, and math during the transition to high school in the ninth grade. The least achievement loss in student scores was in mathematics (Alspaugh, 1998).

The students involved in a pyramid transition of multiple elementary schools into a single middle school experienced a greater achievement loss than did the students in a linear transition of a single elementary school to a middle school (Alspaugh, 1998). Mixing students from multiple elementary schools in the transition may tend to increase the transition achievement loss. Students attending middle schools experienced a greater achievement loss in the transition

to high school than did the students making the transition from the K-8 elementary school (Alspaugh, 1998).

Increased high school dropout rates for the students attending middle schools have been associated with achievement losses. Students who had two transitions, one in elementary to middle school and then to high school had twice the transition experience to cope with and adjust to in comparison to students who had been in a K-8 school and moved to high school. Schools with two transitions had higher dropout rates than those with one transition. Also, students attending larger, less personal schools had higher dropout rates than students in smaller schools (Alspaugh, 1998).

The sample for this study consisted of three groups of 16 school districts for a total of 48 districts which is a significant number of schools to study; however, the schools were primarily in rural and in small-town school districts (Alspaugh, 1998). No urban districts were included in the comparison groups. There were statistically significant differences between both students in the free and reduced-price lunch rates and enrollments per grade level for the three school groups (Alspaugh).

The second goal of this study was to explore the relationship between the school-to-school transition and the high school dropout rates. Tukey's pairwise comparisons of the three school groups showed a statistically significant difference between the mean dropout rates for the K-8 schools and the dropout rates for both middle school groups (Alspaugh, 1998). School size and student SES were confounded with the school transitions in influencing the school dropout rates.

Smith (1997) evaluated the effectiveness of high school transition programs on the educational progress of a nationally representative sample of middle school students. In the

process, he explored the potential for transitional programs to improve student performance in high school. The comparison groups of the study were defined by the type of transition programs available to students in their middle schools, such as students in school with no programs, in schools with partial programs, or in schools that addressed student, parent, and staff issues in the transition process.

Three years of data from the National Center for Educational Statistics for 1988, 1990, and 1992 collected by the National Educational Longitudinal Survey (NELS) were the base-year and second and third years. There was a national sample of 1,035 public, private, and Catholic schools, from which 30 eighth grade students were selected at random from each school (N=26,200)(Smith, 1997). The two outcome measures were generated from information collected four years after students were in eighth grade. Dropout status was derived from the supplemental dropout file provided by the Office of Educational Research and Improvement (OERI) (Smith, 1997).

Of the 13 possible programs offered to aid students in their transition to high school, Smith grouped the programs according to target audience - parent, student, or school staff. From this grouping, a school was identified as having a full transition program if it offered programs involving all three groups (Smith, 1997). Programs that only targeted one or two of these groups were identified as having a partial transition in place. There were also schools that had no transition programs (Smith, 1997).

The most consistent practice for both partial and full transition programs was to ask high school counselors to meet with eighth grade students; 83% of the full programs did this and 74% of the partial programs reported this (Smith, 1997). The least successful practice was to have a Big Brother/Big Sister match up with high school students (Smith, 1997). Only about 15% of

students in these two categories did this. The biggest difference between full and partial programs appeared in those targeting parents or staff. For example, 78% of the schools with a full transition program in place permitted eighth grade parents to visit the high school; only 35% of the schools with partial programs did so. Additionally, 63% of the schools with full programs had middle and high school teachers meet with each other, but only 14% of those with partial programs did so (Smith, 1997).

Students who had access to a full or partial transitional program showed a reduced tendency to drop out when compared with students who did not have such a program in their middle school. However, after taking into account the eighth graders' school behaviors and the characteristics of the school attended, the effect of full transition programs became more pronounced with a final significant effect of reducing the likelihood of dropping out by about 20% (Smith, 1997).

The original sample size of 26,200 students from 702 middle schools was greatly reduced to 7,924 after follow-up surveys were received four years later (Smith, 1997). One of the strengths of this study, however, is that it was a large national study with follow-up surveys four years later. The most significant weakness was that there were cross-over influences. Since there were 13 original programs that the researcher grouped into four groups, not all may have fit into the newly formed groups will exactly with the same characteristics; therefore, there could have been confounding evidence.

Dyke (2007), completed an evaluative study to determine if a transition program had a greater success rate for over age, first time ninth grade students, than with other first time ninth grade students. The school authorities initially identified 126 over age, first time repeat ninth graders, of whom 47 were special education students and were not included in the study. Of the

remaining students, the researcher identified the group of 37 over age students, who did not attend a summer transition program as the control group. The last forty-two over age students who attended the summer transition program were identified as the experimental group (Dyke, 2007).

The participants were from a Southeastern Virginia high school with an enrollment of 1,703 students. The student enrollment included: 84.3% Black, 12.9% White, 1.6% Hispanic, .6% Asian, .4% Native American, and .2% unspecified. The school population was economically disadvantaged with 55.7% of the student population receiving free or reduced lunch (Dyke, 2007).

The summer transition program determined which students were placed in the control and experimental groups once the school year started. The criteria for the transition program was that each student had to be at least 15 years of age, a first time ninth grade student, enrolled in a general education program, and had completed the first semester (Dyke, 2007). The transition program was designed only for the experimental group and included double blocked English 9, Algebra 1, and biology. Additionally, there was one elective class that met for 50 minutes daily. This approach to curriculum limited the number of classes required and that students would see these teachers daily. The transition program also enabled teachers to meet and plan weekly, talk about students, and monitor their progress.

The study utilized a quantitative method of research to determine the results of both the control and the experimental group with a post-test. One group received the treatment and the other group didn't. T-tests were used to determine if there was a significant difference in the effectiveness the program had on grades, discipline, and attendance (Dyke, 2007).

It was determined that the program reduced the number of students who repeated ninth grade at the end of the school year. This was based on passing classes that were required to be promoted. There were no significant differences in attendance rates, Grade Point Averages, or discipline incidents with the experimental group as compared to the control group for first semester (Dyke, 2007).

The number in the experimental group was small and the timeframe of one semester was very short for improvements to take place. Limiting the number of courses and doubling the teaching and learning time was impressive; however, teacher qualifications and licenses also needed to be considered. Additionally, teachers must be adequately trained in order to pace the delivery of instruction with twice as much time. Staff development is critical for teachers, yet it was not mentioned in the description of the transition program.

A comprehensive reform model developed at Johns Hopkins University was implemented in Philadelphia as Pennsylvania's Talent Development High School in 2000 to address the 50% graduation rate. A major part of the restructuring included a Ninth Grade Success Academy with interdisciplinary teams, ninth and tenth grade Career Academies, and courses that provided support for weak students. Additional components included intensive and specific staff development, block scheduling, and recovery opportunities (Useem, Neild, and Morrison, 2001).

The design of the research project was both qualitative and quantitative and utilized comparative data. During the 1998-1999 school years baseline data were collected at two urban, comprehensive high schools, Strawberry Mansion and Edison. Comparative data with the following year of 1999-2000 listed a decline in areas of arrests, suspensions, and increases in school attendance. The percentage of students passing all of their core courses increased 24% to 56% overall at the two schools (Useem, Neild, and Morrison, 2001). Promotion to tenth grade

grew 47% at Strawberry Mansion and 65% at Edison. Standardized test scores increased in math with a small gain of 3.5 normal curve equivalents and reading scores made a small decline while the control schools also showed a significant decline (Useem et al., 2001).

During the second year, new promotion guidelines were implemented which meant that students needed to earn credits in English, science, and Algebra 1(Useem, Neild, and Morrison, 2001). During 2000-01, first time ninth grade students at Talent Development Schools were more likely to have passed all of these courses than those at demographically similar control schools. The data indicated a 50% passing rate for all three courses compared to 35% for the students at the control schools (Useem et al., 2001).

The evaluation process during the first year included interviews of a total of 185 students at Strawberry Mansion and Edison. Students identified core areas of the Talent Development Model as being significant such as, teacher-student relationships, taking time to listen, and helping whenever students needed it. Two-thirds of the students said it was effective to have a separate area of the building for ninth grade students. Three-fourths of the students liked the Freshman Seminar class for the organizational skills, work habits, and career exploration. The write-ups from the evaluations and surveys were prepared by the director of research and evaluation at the Philadelphia Education Fund (Useem, Neild, and Morrison, 2001).

Since the first two pilots began implementing the Talent Development program, a third high school, Simon Gratz was added to the restructuring concept as a high-poverty school with the need to improve pass rates in English, Algebra, and science, as well as improve attendance and reduce suspensions (Useem, Neild, and Morrison, 2001). The promotion rate immediately improved (Useem et al., 2001). The data indicated that the program had been a tremendous success.

Even though many of the components had been incorporated in other improvement plans, these combinations were yielding results. The schools were limited to the Philadelphia Public School District and the data were reflective of only two years. It would have been insightful to have more information about each academic area in order to gain information about the most effective instructional strategies.

Summary

After reviewing the eight studies, the work at Baldwin High School revealed students who chose certain academies during the third and fourth year of school, experienced work-related learning, internships, and senior projects. Students looked forward to differentiated strategies of learning with teachers who coached them and cared about them. The college acceptance rate for most of the academies was exceptionally high. The key factor in the environment was the teachers. While this study was limited to one district in California, there were many commonalities of successful teaching strategies including the relationships that teachers had developed with students.

The 22 African American young men, identified as promising students from the age of ten, provided a realistic snapshot of events affecting students' lives regardless of academic ability and the promise of scholarships. During the data collection of this Ohio study, many students commented about their teachers. Many were not positive, yet it was almost always the teachers who inspired the students to excel. Even though a more comprehensive staff development plan for the teachers should have been developed, this study emphasized the importance of relationships between students and teachers.

The Alspaugh's Study in 1998, summarized the importance of the change process and how it affected students as they changed grade levels from elementary to middle and middle to

high school. The most profound finding was that every time an academically successful student changed grade level, it affected the students' grades; therefore, adversely affecting the least successful students. The importance of this study emphasized that when students changed to a new school, particularly at the sixth grade and the ninth grade, teacher to student relationships needed be established quickly and effectively to reduce the stress of the change process.

The large longitudinal study that Smith completed in 1997 was to determine the effectiveness of full or partial transition programs for students that transitioned to high school. This study focused more on numbers than on analyzing successful programs. Transition programs were grouped together, therefore creating a complexity of cross-over in the data. In order for a school to be ranked with a full transition program, the only criterion was that the counselors were to have met with the eighth grade feeder students. This study did collect data on the large scale documenting the number of districts that had transition programs.

Dyke in 2007 identified over age students for a summer program and determined that it could be beneficial and even reduce the number of retained students and those who were referred to the discipline office during one semester. Even though attendance and grade point averages were not affected, teachers targeted promotion requirements which moved students to the next grade level. The focus on a small group of students was beneficial.

The Talent Development High School, a reform design by Johns Hopkins University, included in the transition model teams of teachers who exclusively taught the same group of 150 to 180 ninth grade students to develop strong relationships (Neild & Balfanz, 2006). The design included a component so the teachers who had developed these relationships could work with students in an after school hours program called Twilight School to recapture failed courses for students who took longer to understand the material. This component of the transition program

was beneficial so students could make-up failed courses during the semester without getting further behind in school (Neild & Balfanz, 2006).

The Talent Development Model, a comprehensive reform model at two Philadelphia high schools, had significant results in major areas such as grades, attendance, suspensions, and discipline. The Freshman Seminar class was listed as the most significant component, according to students, because of the relationships that had developed with teachers.

The role of a supportive and caring teacher is important in all of the studies. Teachers provided mentoring and coaching and cared about their students. Students, on the other hand, indicated that it was the student-teacher relationships and taking time to listen that was the key in the most successful transition program. High expectations were an outgrowth of teachers providing support and expecting quality work. Students learned how to rise to the expectations and in spite of socioeconomic backgrounds, students were able to achieve because teachers expected them to do so.

It is most evident that an effective transition program is needed between middle school and high school to ease a student into the rigor of the next level with appropriate support systems because of the difference in academic expectations. The number of times a student makes a change to a new school level or new school makes learning more difficult for even the best learner so those who struggle academically are even more prone to failure. Sometimes the entire ninth grade class in a large urban school district may include as many as 500-600 students and sometimes from five different feeder middle schools. The challenges for a first time ninth grade student may feel almost insurmountable.

The research indicated the need for educational institutions to pay attention to the emotional needs of students. Developing positive relationships between teachers and their

students, as well as training students to develop relationships with other students should be a priority in every school. This could be a very important characteristic to affect students and their very complex lives. School districts that train teachers on how to connect with the most reluctant ninth grade students during the student's first year of high school, may find the greatest success.

Chapter 3

Methods

This chapter begins with an overview of the methodology of the study. It includes the purpose of the study, population, research design, and the research question. Research procedures and ethical safeguards will be discussed for the quantitative methods.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this research was to determine if there was a difference in the scores of students on the "What Helped Me to Become Successful in Ninth Grade?" survey between the retained and promoted students who had been taught by teachers who had Capturing Kids' Hearts training during the 2007-08 school year. If similar responses are documented, then the relationship training received by the teachers affected both successful students and those most at risk of dropping out. Descriptive evaluation was used to determine if groups of students who were both promoted to tenth grade and others who were retained exhibited such perceptions. Comparative data were used to discuss the findings.

Program Description

The faculty in one high school in a Mid-Atlantic school division in Virginia received training in the Capturing Kids' Hearts program designed to assist the teachers in forming better relationships with students. The school received a five-year Smaller Learning Communities Grant in 2005-06 from the U.S. Department of Education which enabled the high school to create a program for a SLC so every first time ninth grade student would feel success and to reduce the number of students who did not meet the promotion requirements.

The school focused on training all ninth grade teachers, the principal, an assistant principal, and a dean of students, prior to the beginning of the 2007-08 school year, in a

relationship program to improve communications and relationships with ninth grade students. Since research had indicated the lack of training for teachers of ninth grade students, Capturing Kids' Hearts training was selected (Flippin Group, 2002).

The study school selected the Capturing Kids' Hearts program because the planning team decided that there was a tremendous need to better relate to the ninth grade students. This was a critical area of the school that could be affected with adult relationship training. The Flippen Group (2002) had a reputation of delivering high quality training with outstanding facilitators.

School Population

The study school was selected because the teachers and administrators had been working on strategies to improve the promotion rate of first time ninth grade students as a method to reduce the drop out rate, as well as improve on time graduation. The ninth grade staff was receptive to the Capturing Kids' Hearts training as a strategy for teachers to improve their relationships with the youngest high school students who were also the most at risk of being retained (Legters & Kerr, 2001). This high school was similar in student make up to the four other comprehensive high schools in this urban division.

During the 2007-08 school year, the school had a student population of 1,916 students with 14.8% special education, 46.1% free and reduced lunch students, and .8% limited English proficient. The student population included 58.8% African American, 30.5% White, 4.3% Unspecified, 3% Hispanic, 3.3% Asian, and .01% American Indian. Students in each grade level included 787 ninth grade students, 494 tenth grade students, 290 eleventh grade students, and 323 twelfth grade students. There were also 22 post graduate students. The high number of ninth grade students included those students who were retained in the ninth grade. There were also 127 teachers during the 2007-08 school year.

The school was located on the east side of the city where 64% of the students lived within a one mile radius and walk to school. There was a federally funded housing project that was in close proximity to the school and several low rent housing arrangements.

Instrumentation

A *Student Perception Survey* was utilized for this research with permission from authors Butts, and Cruzeiro (2005). The instrument had been previously utilized in their research and included 30 items to which students were to respond. The survey was revalidated in a graduation level research class. For the purpose of this research, the original survey instrument was modified with the elimination of a total of five questions. The five questions covered material that was not in keeping with the research needs of the study and further, these items could have been confusing to the students. For example, the students were not in different buildings but rather they were in the same building, students were already are on a block schedule, there were no Big Brother/Big Sister high school programs in the city, and the use of time and welcoming feelings were not relevant to the research needs of the study. The five questions deleted covered these subjects and were not relevant to this study.

The survey instrument was designed to collect perceptions of students regarding the greatest influence upon their transition from eighth grade to ninth. The questions in the survey were aligned to categories that researchers agreed influenced students on how well they were able to succeed in ninth grade. The survey questions fell into one of the following five research based categories: teacher relationships, student determination, friends, family support, and external forces that the co-authors of the survey selected. Likewise, these categories were appropriate for this study. External forces included family issues such as a parent in prison, wanting to get out of a gang, or being homeless. Teacher relationships, which served as a

focused interest of this study was the one most closely linked to the effects of the Capturing Kids' Hearts teacher training. If the relationship training of Capturing Kids' Hearts was effective, then there should be a similar numerical response on the survey from the retained ninth grade students, as well as the on time tenth grade students. This would indicate that regardless of the academic success of the student, the perceptions of the students were that teachers cared about them, selected appropriate materials, answered questions, and the like. Students who had positive relations with their teachers were likely to return to school and continue to pursue a high school diploma (Neild & Balfanz, 2006).

This survey was selected because it included the categories that researchers most often concur impact a student's academic success. To what degree each factor played a significant role would be dependent on the individual student; however, experts in the field (Bridgeland, Dilulio and Morrison, 2006; Butts & Curzeiro, 2005; Horwitz & Snipes, 2008; Legters & Kerr, 2001) indicated that teacher influences were very strong. Since researchers (Bridgeland, Dilulio, and Morison, 2006; Conchas, 2002; Neild & Balfanz, 2006) indicated that teacher relations do affect student performance to some degree, then effective relationship training for teachers could increase student success.

Table 1 includes the twenty-five questions included on the Student Perception Survey and five categories supported by research that influenced students' success in the transition during ninth grade. Each question was identified as to which category it aligned itself with an X.

The survey instrument, used with permission of co-authors Butts and Cruzeiro (2005), to provide data to analyze the Research Question, was not validated. Even though the co-authors collected 495 surveys from student participants in the ninth grade, they did not mention validation in their study. The readability and language appropriate questions were validated by

members of a graduate research class so as to ensure the survey questions were aligned for the purpose of urban learners.

Table 1

Summary of Survey Questions to Student Success Influences

Student Perception Survey Questions	Teacher Relations	Student Effort	Friends	Family Support	External Forces
Teachers care about me and helped me.	X *				
Teachers explained things well.	X*				
Teachers were easy to talk to.	X*				
Class materials and expectations were easy to understand.	X*				
Classes were interesting.	X*				
I worked hard to do the work on time.		X			
I had good study/work habits.		X			
I did better in a structured environment.		X			
I was determined to be successful.		X			
I participated in sports.		X			
Tutors helped me with my school work.	X*				
Teachers and students cooperated.	X*				
Class behavior was good.	X*				
I completed my work at school.		X			
I went to class every day.		X			
I made new friends.			X		
I had limited time with my friends.			X		
I avoided negative influences (gangs or drugs).					X
I forgot my outside problems.					X
I had confidence to do high school work.		X			
I had parent/guardian/grandparent support.				X	
I had friends in my classes.			X		
I hung out with the right people.			X		
I was prepared to enter high school.		X			
I would have benefited with fewer students In my classes.	X*				

* Items used to analyze the student-teacher relationships.

The student respondents were asked to indicate, using an interval scale of one through five, to express the extent to which the factor in each question assisted them to form positive relationships in their ninth grade success.

Methodology

Within two weeks of the approval to conduct the study, students who were first time ninth grade students in the 2007-08 school year and promoted to tenth grade for the 2008-09 school year were identified by the executive director of strategic evaluation, assessment, and support for the school division. Additionally, students who were not promoted to the tenth grade in this same high school were also identified. Databases of both groups of students were provided to the co-investigator, in alphabetical order.

Research Procedures

Before research was allowed in the school, the researcher had to first receive permission from The Institutional Review Board (IRB) at Virginia Tech and the school division. It was necessary to revalidate the survey instrument for readability and age appropriate language for urban respondents in a graduate level research class in early April, 2008 before submitting the application to the IRB.

Following permission to conduct the study, the co-investigator then submitted a request to the school division for the data and included the IRB permission, as well as documentation that the co-investigator had satisfactorily passed the Dissertation Prospectus Examination. The executive director of strategic evaluation, assessment, and support of the school division then sent two data tapes in SSPS format. One data tape included the alphabetical listing of tenth grade students who were promoted on time in the test school as first time ninth grade students during the 2007-08 school years. The second data tape included an alphabetical listing of

students who were not promoted on time to the tenth grade during the 2008-09 school year and who were students in this same school during the previous year. Once it was determined which students were eligible to complete the survey by returning both the parent permission form and the student permission form, eligible students completed a 25 question student survey. An independent sample t-test was the statistical method utilized to answer the research question. The independent sample t-test was utilized because it evaluated the difference between the means of the two independent groups. All questions were examined at the .05 level of significance.

The data analysis for this study was conducted to respond to the research question. A descriptive analysis was then completed which included the means, standard deviation and a range of scores. For each of the 25 questions on the student perception survey, both on time tenth grade students and repeat ninth grade students, selected one of five responses from a five point Likert scale (1=Strongly Disagree to 5=Strongly Agree) in order to collect data. The participants' responses were analyzed by the researcher to determine if there were any patterns, similarities, or differences in the responses from the two different groups of students. Since the nine relationship questions were of significant importance to this study, only those questions were discussed in the study. The data for the remaining questions were included in the appendix. The researcher summarized points for discuss to include in Chapter 5 and finally, the researcher tabulated the data to be included in tables in both Chapter 5 and the Appendix.

Assurance of Confidentiality

Student respondents, parents, and participating teachers were assured of confidentiality. Prior to completing the surveys an assembly was held for the on time tenth grade students and the repeat ninth grade students. Parent permission forms were sent home with students that

described the purpose of the study and their involvement in the study. No student was permitted to participate in the survey until both the parent permission form and the student permission form were signed and returned. The participating teachers signed a teacher permission form before permitting students to leave their classes for the assemblies. A letter of approval was received by the Institutional Review Board (IRB), of Virginia Tech prior to the administration of the survey.

Chapter 4

Purpose of Study

This chapter contains the statistical analysis of the data related to the research question. Student identification data were provided by the school division's database. The responses from the students' surveys were placed into the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS 16) for analysis. The first section includes a discussion of the purpose of the study. The additional sections represent the student information, data collection and procedures, results, analysis, and summary.

The purpose of the study was to determine if retained or promoted students who were taught by teachers who have had Capturing Kids' Hearts training during the 2007-08 school year perceived student/teacher relationships were important.

Ninth grade students were eligible for this study if they attended the subject Mid-Atlantic Virginia high school during the 2007-08 school year and returned to the high school during the 2008-09 school year either as an on-time tenth grade student or as a retained ninth grade student.

Student Population

The school division provided a data base with a listing of first time ninth grade students during the 2007-08 school year, who were promoted on time and returned to the school during the 2008-09 school year. A second data base listed students who were first time ninth grade student during the 2007-08 school year and who were not promoted on time to tenth grade but returned to this school during the 2008-09 school year.

The number of first time ninth grade students at the high school in 2007-08 was 494. At the time of this study in June 2008, only 401 of the 494 remained as active students. Thirty-eight students had transferred to other high schools in the division; twenty-six had moved to out of the

city or state; four were confined to detention; twenty-one could not be located and became listed as dropouts; and the remaining four students were home schooled. Of the 401 students remaining from the ninth grade class in 2007-08, 291 had been promoted on time to tenth grade; 110 students were retained.

Conducting the Survey

For the purpose of this study, the perceptions of both tenth grade students promoted on time and students who were not promoted on time were equally important. Since all first time ninth grade students who were in the high school during the 2007-08 school year were taught by teachers who were trained in Capturing Kids' Hearts, the responses to the student relationship questions of the student perception survey provided comparative data for the two groups of students.

In order for students to attend the first informational assembly and to complete student surveys, passes were sent to all 291 on time tenth grade students. Of that number, 274, or 94% of the students, were in school and attended the informational assembly. The purpose of the assembly was to explain the research study to the students and to issue the parent consent form to the students. The researcher conducted the informational assemblies with one assistant principal and four ninth grade teachers present to ensure that only the process of completing that parent and student permission forms was explained. This process of including the teachers and administrator was to eliminate the possibility of bias. The signed parental consent forms were returned to their English teachers so that the students could complete the student survey.

The 110 retained ninth grade students were sent passes to attend a different assembly. As at the first assembly, the purpose of the research was explained. The importance of having their parents or guardians sign and return the parent permission form was stressed so the students

could complete the brief student survey. Of the 110 students who received passes to attend the assembly, only 52 were present in school on the day of the assembly or 47% of the students. Twenty-one of the students, who received a pass to the assembly, never arrived at the assembly. They were processed the following day for class cutting. Only 28% or 31 of the 110 retained ninth grade students attended the assembly.

Both groups of students were to return the parent consent forms to their teachers after two class meetings or after one week. Only 25 out of 274 parent consent forms were returned from the tenth grade students and 3 out of 110 consent forms were returned from the ninth grade students. After one week, due to the exceeding low return rate, an extension was made for one week. A second copy of parent consent form was sent home to appropriately identified students through their ninth and tenth grade English teachers.

After the second week, 59 out of 274 tenth grade students returned the parent consent form or 21% who attended the assembly and seven repeat ninth grade students or 22% who attended the assembly. The number of the repeat ninth grade students' parent consent forms return rate was very low; therefore, the day before the assemblies, this researcher had the opportunity to personally locate and talk with 22 out of 24 students who had attended the information assembly but had not returned the parent consent form. The next morning seven additional ninth grade students returned the form. A total of 14 out of 110 ninth grade students returned the form or 45% of the students who had attended the assembly or 12.7% of 110 total repeat ninth grade students. Of the 59 tenth graders who returned parent permission forms, only 51 completed the student survey or 18.6% of those who attended the assembly or 17.5% of the total tenth grade students who were in this school during the 2007-08 as ninth grade students.

The high absentee rate for the repeat ninth grade students indicated that absenteeism in the study school is one of the characteristics of students who are not promoted. Likewise, the repeat ninth the grade students who were sent to the information assembly with a note from their teachers and did not arrive, indicated that class cutting was another characteristic of students who are not promoted. Regardless of the absentee rates for both groups of students, it is the opinion of this researcher that the absent students' responses to the student perception survey, had these students attended, would have been similar to the group that they represented.

The Virginia Tech IRB required a separate student permission form to be developed for students who were eighteen-years-old; there were no eighteen-year-old students who were involved in this study. A copy of the eighteen-year-old permission form is included in the Appendix.

On the day of the student assemblies, ninth and tenth grade students who had returned their parent consent forms received passes in their English classes to attend the assemblies. During each assembly students were greeted at the door by a teacher and their name was checked on a master list of those students who had returned parent consent forms. Once the student entered the assembly the researcher greeted the students and reviewed the purpose of the research again and passed out the student consent forms that need to be signed by each student. Once the forms were completed, the students were given the 25 question student survey to complete. After completion of the survey, students were returned to their classes with a pass. Before the assemblies, several permission forms were turned in and accepted in the Main Office.

Data Collection and Coding Procedures

All survey response data for the 25 questions for the ninth grade and tenth grade students were entered into a Microsoft Excel version 2003 spreadsheet. The Excel data were imported

into SPSS version 16 to obtain the group descriptive statistics, including the mean and the standard deviation. Coding variables entered into SPSS were as follows: ID (numeric), Group (ninth 0, tenth 1). Additionally, using SPSSv16, Independent Samples t-test for each of the 25 questions, including Levine's Test for Equal Variance between groups was utilized. Levene's test was used to validate underlying assumptions of the data for the Independent Samples t-t.

Research Question Findings

Once permission was granted by the Virginia Tech IRB and the Mid-Atlantic school division for the research to be conducted, the co-investigator met with the students in two assemblies for the purpose of explaining the research, parent permission form, and the survey instrument. The first assembly was held for the students who met on time promotion standards. It was explained that their opinions were important on the survey instrument because their perceptions of what lead them to become successful may influence how teachers are trained in the future.

The second assembly included the students who were retained and still remained in the ninth grade. It was explained that their opinions on the survey instrument were important because their perceptions of what educators needed to do to better support them may influence how teachers are trained in the future. Following the 15 minute assemblies, students returned to their classes. The students were asked to take the consent form home to be signed by a parent.

The school designee, an assistant principal, collected the completed consent forms each morning from the students' English teachers to protect the integrity of the process. One week later the co-researcher collected and determined that 40% of the consent forms had not been returned. Follow-up announcements were made over the public address system and twice additional parent permission forms were issued to students who had not returned the surveys.

The co-researcher with the school designee scheduled the assemblies to complete the survey. Again, the students were called to two different assemblies in a central location. The survey took approximately 15 minutes to complete and then the students returned to their classes. The completed consent forms and surveys were secured at the co-researcher's home in a locked file cabinet.

Students were asked to answer each question on the survey. The responses ranged from one as the lowest to five as the highest. McMillan & Wergin, 2006, explained that descriptive research described a phenomenon with statistics such as percentages, frequencies, averages, and sometimes visual images such as pie charts, graphs and bar graphs. An ex-post facto study examined a phenomenon that has already occurred in an attempt to infer cause-and-effect relationships (McMillan & Wergin, 2006).

A mean score for all 25 items on the survey instrument, for each group of students was calculated. Additionally, the student responses to the nine items identified as relating to teacher-student relationships for each group of students were computed with a mean item analysis. The mean score of the students who were promoted on time were compared with those students who were not promoted on time. The results of the survey instrument were aligned to the purposes of the CKH training.

The response data from the Student Perception Survey for all students were entered into the SSPS database by two codes, one for students who were promoted on time and zero for those not promoted on time. A third party from the Virginia Tech Hampton Roads Ph.D. cohort confirmed correct data entry.

The research question was answered from the results of the nine identified relationship questions in the Student Perception Survey. Additional information was discussed by the

researcher by comparing the mean of the remaining 25 questions. Descriptive statistics, including the mean and standard deviation were used to analyze groups of students who were both promoted on time to tenth grade and others who were retained. Comparative data was also used based on findings.

A t-test was utilized to analyze unequal samples and to determine the treatment effect on students after one year's time after the teacher training with Capturing Kids Hearts. A t-test addressed the probability of whether the means were statistically different. The formula for the t-test showed how the numerator and denominator were related to the distributions. The top part of the formula included the difference between the means and the bottom of the equation was referred to the standard error of difference. The variance for each group needed to be divided by the number in each group, the two values were added and then the square root was taken (McCall, 2001). The variance became the square of the standard deviation (McCall, 2001). A table determined whether the t-value was positive if the first mean was larger than the second and negative if it was smaller.

All questions were examined at the .05 level of significance. This meant that five times out of one hundred, there would be a statistical significant difference between the mean (Keith, 2006). Finally, the degrees of freedom would be determined by the number of people or schools in the sample minus two (McCall, 2001).

Experts in the field (Alspaugh,1998; Useem, Neild, and Morrison, 2001) have reported that if students don't form positive relationships, they are more prone to drop out. The results for this t-test indicated that the students who were retained at the school where the teachers received Capturing Kids' Hearts training, a teacher training program to improve student/teacher relationships, were similar to the students who were promoted to tenth grade.

When the responses of both groups for the nine relationship questions on the survey were analyzed, the total mean score was 3.29 (m=3.29, sd=.983) for the tenth grade students and 3.54 (m=3.54, sd=1.16) for the repeat ninth grade students. The higher mean indicated that there was a stronger response to the relationship questions from the repeat ninth grade students than the on time tenth grade students. The independent-samples t-test showed no significant difference ($t(65)=.607$, $p>.05$) indicating that regardless of whether the student was a repeat ninth grade student or an on time tenth grade student, the response to the overall questions were similar, as presented in Table 2. The non-significance of the data revealed that, according to the perceptions of the students, regardless of their academic success, both groups of students basically felt the same about their teachers who were trained in the Capturing Kids' Hearts program.

Table 2

Nine Relationship Questions, Mean, Standard Deviation, t-test

Group	Statistic	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q5	Q11	Q12	Q13	Q25
0=	Mean	3.93	3.43	3.00	3.79	3.43	2.64	3.07	3.07	3.57
9	N	14	14	14	14	14	14	14	14	14
	SD	.829	1.016	1.301	.893	1.016	1.598	1.141	1.269	1.399
1=	Mean	4.14	3.35	3.57	3.76	3.37	2.43	2.96	3.08	2.86
10	N	51	51	51	51	51	51	51	51	51
	SD	.772	.913	.781	.907	1.095	1.253	.916	.891	1.371
Total	Mean	4.09	3.37	3.45	3.77	3.38	2.48	2.98	3.08	3.02
	N	65	65	65	65	65	65	65	65	65
	SD	.744	.928	.936	.897	1.071	1.324	.960	.973	1.397
	Sig.	.357	.790	.139	.939	.864	.600	.760	.981	.093

Both groups completed the same 25 question survey and there were a total of 65 student participants in this study. Of the 25 questions, numbers 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 11, 12, 13, and 25 were of

particular interest due to their teacher/relationship nature. The remaining questions were distracter type questions. The relationship questions are listed below with the question number beside it as it appeared in the student perception survey:

1. Teachers cared about me and helped me;
2. Teachers explained things well;
3. Teachers were easy to talk to;
4. Class materials/expectations were easy to understand;
5. Classes were interesting;
11. Tutors helped me with my school work;
12. Teachers and students cooperated;
13. Classroom behavior was good; and
25. I would have been more successful if there had been fewer students in my classes.

Research Question

Is there a difference in the scores of students on the "What Helped Me to Become Successful in Ninth Grade?" survey between retained and promoted students who were taught by teachers who had Capturing Kids' Hearts training during the 2007-08 school year?

Survey Question 1: Teachers Cared Notably. Of the repeat ninth grade students, 71% agreed that teachers cared about students and helped them, while 50% of the tenth graders agreed. The mean of the tenth grade students was higher (m=4.14, sd=.722) than the mean of the ninth grade students (m=3.93, sd=.829); however, the independent-samples t-test found that there was no

significant difference (t(65)=-928, p>.05) between the response of the repeat ninth grade students and the on time tenth grade students as presented in Table 3.

Table 3

Survey Question Number 1, Mean, Standard Deviation, t-test

	N	SA/Agreed	No Opinion	SD/Disagreed	M	S	t	Sig. (2-tailed)
Ninth	14	10 (71%)	3 (22%)	1 (7%)	3.93	.829	-.928	.357
Tenth	51	41 (50%)	9 (48%)	1 (2%)	4.14	.722		

Survey Question 2: Teachers Explained Well. Fifty-three percent of the tenth grade students agreed that teachers explained things well and similarly, 50% of the retained ninth graders students also agreed. The mean result indicated that the ninth grade students responses were slightly higher (m=3.43, sd=1.016) than the tenth grade students (m=3.35, sd=.913) and no significant difference was found between the responses of the repeat ninth grade students and the on time tenth grade students (t(65)=.268, p>.05) as indicated in Table 4.

Table 4

Survey Question Number 2, Mean, Standard Deviation, t-test

	N	SA/Agreed	No Opinion	SD/Disagreed	M	SD	t	Sig. (2-tailed)
Ninth	14	7 (50%)	4 (29%)	3 (21%)	3.43	1.016	.268	.790
Tenth	51	27 (53%)	15 (29%)	9 (18%)	3.35	.913		

Survey Question 3: Communication with Teachers. Of the tenth grade students, 63% agreed that teachers were easy to talk to, while only 43% of the repeat ninth grade students also so indicated. The means were calculated and it was determined that the tenth grade students was higher (m=3.5, sd=.781) than the mean of the ninth grade students (m=3.00, sd=1.301). No significant

difference between the responses of the ninth grade students and the on time tenth grade students (t(65)=-1.560, p>.05) was found as represented in Table 5.

Table 5

Survey Question Number 3, Mean, Standard Deviation, t-test

	N	SA/Agree	No Opinion	SD/Disagreed	M	SD	t	Sig. (2-tailed)
Ninth	14	6 (43%)	1 (7%)	7 (50%)	3.00	1.301	-1.560	.139
Tenth	51	32 (63%)	13 (25%	6 (12%)	3.57	.781		

Survey Question 4: Materials/Expectations Easily Understood. Sixty-five percent of the tenth grade students agreed and similarly, 64% of the ninth grade students also so indicated. The means were calculated and indicated that the ninth grade students had a slightly higher mean (m=3.79,sd=.893) than the tenth grade students (m=3.76,sd=.907). An independent-samples t-test was calculated and there was no significant difference between the responses of the repeat ninth grade students and the on time tenth grade students (t(65)=.077, p>.05). The data are presented in Table 6.

Table 6

Survey Question Number 4, Mean, Standard Deviation, t-test

	N	SA/Agreed	No Opinion	SD/Disagreed	M	SD	t	Sig. (2-tailed)
Ninth	14	9 (64%)	4 (22%)	2 (14%)	3.79	.893	.077	.939
Tenth	51	33 (65%)	12 (25%)	5 (10%)	3.76	.907		

Survey Question 5: Interesting Classes. Of the ninth grade students, 57% agreed that their classes were interesting while only 47% of the tenth grade students agreed. The mean of the ninth grade students was higher (m=3.43, sd=1.016) than the mean of the tenth grade students (m=3.37, sd=1.095); however, the independent-samples t-test found that there was no significant

difference (t(65)= .172, p>.05) between the response of the repeat ninth grade repeat students and the on time tenth grade students as presented in Table 7.

Table 7

Survey Question Number 5, Mean, Standard Deviation, t-test

	N	SA/Agreed	No Opinion	SD/Disagreed	M	SD	t	Sig. (2-tailed)
Ninth	14	8 (57%)	4 (29%)	2 (14%)	3.43	1.016	.172	.864
Tenth	51	24 (47%)	17 (33%)	10 (20%)	3.37	1.095		

Survey Question 11: Tutors Helped. Fifty percent of the ninth grade students agreed that tutors helped them with their school work, while only 21% of the tenth grade students agreed. The means were calculated and it was determined that the mean of the ninth grade students was higher (m=2.64, sd= 1.598) than the mean of the tenth grade students (m=2.43, sd= 1.253); however, the independent-samples t-test was calculated and showed that there was no significant difference between the response of the repeat ninth grade students and the on time tenth grade students (t(65)=.458, p>.05). The data are reflected in Table 8.

Table 8

Relationship Question Number 11, Mean, Standard Deviation, t-test

	N	SA/Agree	No Opinion	SD/Disagreed	M	SD	t	Sig. (2-Tailed)
Ninth	14	7 (50%)	0 (0%)	7 (50%)	2.64	1.598	.458	.653
Tenth	51	11 (22%)	12 (23)	28 (55%)	2.43	1.253		

Survey Question 12: Cooperation. Thirty-six percent of the ninth grade students agreed that teachers and students cooperated, while 33% of the tenth grade students also so indicated. The mean of the ninth grade students was somewhat higher (m=3.07, sd=1.141) than the mean of the tenth grade students (m=2.96, sd=.916); although the independent-samples t-test found no

significant difference (t(65)=.379, p>.05) between the response of the repeat ninth grade students and the on time tenth grade students as presented in Table 9.

Table 9

Survey Question Number 12, Mean, Standard Deviation, t-test

	N	Agreed	Disagreed	M	SD	t	(2-tailed)
Ninth	14	5 (36%)	3 (21%)	3.07	.1411	.379	.706
Tenth	51	17 (33%)	21 (42%)	2.96	.916		

Survey Question 13: Good Classroom Behavior. Of the tenth grade students, 41% agreed that classroom behavior was good in their classes and 36% of the repeat ninth graders also agreed. The means were calculated and it was found that the mean of the tenth grade students was slightly higher (m=3.08, sd=.891) than the mean of the ninth grade students (m=3.07, sd=1.269). There was no significant difference between the response of the repeat ninth grade students (t(65)=-.024, p>.05) and the on time tenth grade students as presented in Table 10.

Table 10

Survey Question 13, Mean, Standard Deviation, t-test

	N	SA/Agreed	No Opinion	SD/ Disagreed	M	SD	t	Sig. (2-tailed)
Ninth	14	5 (36%)	5 (35%)	4 (29%)	3.07	1.269	-.024	.981
Tenth	51	21 (41%)	20 (39 %)	10 (20%)	3.08	.891		

Survey Question 25: Fewer Students in Class Needed for Success. Fifty percent of the ninth grade students agreed that they would have been more successful if there had been fewer students in their classes while only 35% of the tenth grade students agreed; however, the mean of the ninth grade students' was higher (m=3.57, sd=1.399) than the mean of the tenth grade students (m=2.86, sd=1.371). The independent-samples t-test was calculated and there was no

significant difference between the response of the repeat ninth grade students (t(65)= 1.706, p>.05) and the on time tenth grade students as presented in Table 11.

Table 11

Survey Question Number 25, Mean, Standard Deviation, t-test

	N	SA/Agreed	No Opinion	DS/Disagreed	M	SD	t	Sig. (2-tailed)
Ninth	14	7 (50%)	4 (29%)	3 (21%)	3.57	1.399	1.706	.093
Tenth	51	18 (35%)	11 (4%)	22 (43%)	2.86	1.371		

Summary

In all nine relationship questions, there was no statistical significant difference in the responses for the repeat ninth grade students and the on time tenth grade students. The relationship question about teachers caring about the students and helping them had the highest agree response from both the on time tenth grade students and the repeat ninth grade students. The relationship question about class materials and expectations were easy to understand had the second highest agree response.

While the repeat ninth grade students had a higher percentage of agree responses than the tenth grade students on five of the nine relationship questions, the median for the repeat ninth grade participants was also higher on six of the nine relationship questions. The data for all 25 questions can be found in Table 12 in the Appendix.

The response from the repeat ninth grade students was similar in their responses and there were no significant differences to the on time tenth grade students even though both groups were taught by the same teachers with the same CKH training. One group, the repeat ninth grade students, often stigmatized because of the ninth grade label all school year, yet when the respondents completed the student perception survey in the spring of 2008-09, their perceptions

of their relationships with their ninth grade teachers were similar to the more successful group of students, the on time tenth grade students.

Chapter 5

This chapter contains the summary of the findings from analyzing the data gathered, discussion, and recommendations for further study. The first section will be the summary of the findings. The additional sections represent the recommendation further study and conclusion.

The purpose of this research was to determine if there was a difference in the scores of students on the "What Helped Me to Become Successful in Ninth Grade?" survey between retained and promoted students who had been taught by teachers who had Capturing Kids' Hearts training during the 2007-08 school year. The participants in this study were first time ninth grade students during the 2007-08 school year, returned to the school the following year, and were enrolled both first and second semesters. Special education students who were in self-contained classrooms were excluded from this study but all other special education students were included.

Summary of Findings

Of all nine relationship questions on the student perception survey, the independent-samples t-test showed no significant difference ($t(65)=.607$, $p>.05$). This indicated that regardless of whether the student was a repeat ninth grade student or an on time tenth grade student, the response to the overall nine questions were similar. Even though the responses were similar, the repeat ninth grade students had a relatively higher mean ($m=3.54$) than the on time tenth grade students ($m=3.29$) on the perception survey about relationships. Stevenson & Ellsworth (1993) and (Carley, 1994) identified poor relationships with teachers as a causal factor in dropping out of school. While administrators know that relationships matter, content and pedagogy remain their priority. Studies have shown that students of all ages, backgrounds, and even those disengaged, want a teacher who cares about them (Bernard, 1996). While there was

no significant difference between the two groups, the relatively high mean for both groups of students could be indicators that CKH training was effective for both groups.

The analysis of the independent-samples t-test found that there was no significant difference ($t(65= -.928, p>.05$) between the responses of the repeat ninth grade students and the on time tenth grade students to the question concerning teachers caring and helping students. This indicated that even though the responses were similar, both groups were relatively high. The on time tenth grade mean ($m=4.14$) was slightly higher than the repeat ninth grade ($m=3.93$) students. While the two groups were not different in their responses, this could have been because both groups perceived that their teachers cared. The stories of teachers not caring often are reasons why students drop out of school. Frustration and humiliation are often reasons why students will not return to school after dropping out. Even though the least academically able is the most at risk of dropping out of school, sometimes it is the silent students in the middle or the C students who also have left school without a diploma. During focus groups of a large national study in 2005, 476 ethnically and racially diverse students aged 16-25, indicated that they were among the 88 % of the students who had passing grades when they left school and 62% had "C's and above"(Bridgeland, Dilulio, and Morison, 2006). While there was no significant difference between the groups, the relatively high mean for both groups of students could have been an indicator that CKH training was effective for both groups.

The analysis of the independent-samples t-test found that there was no significant difference ($t(65)=.268, p>.05$) between the responses of the repeat ninth grade students and the on time tenth grade students to the question about teachers explaining things well. For both groups of students the mean was similar for the repeat ninth grade students ($m=3.43$) and for the on time ($m=3.35$) tenth grade students. While the two groups were not different in their

responses, this could have been because both groups perceived that teachers had high expectations for all students and provided relevant and challenging material. Engaging students in their own learning has been a challenge for educators. Students who are chronically disengaged are often those same students who are not successful in school. Researchers Klem & Connell (2004) have listed reaction to challenge as a student's coping strategy as to whether her engages or withdraws through the use of effort. If students are threatened by perceiving failure without appropriate support, they escape mentally, physically, or by delaying the activity (Klem & Connell, 2004). It is difficult for students to ask questions in class especially if they are not academically strong. Teachers will have to provide a support system so students won't feel intimidated for improved academic success. While there was no significant difference between the groups, the similar means of both groups could have been an indicator that CKH training was effective for both groups of students.

The analysis of the independent-samples t-test found that there was no significant difference ($t(65=-1.56, p>.05)$ between the responses of the repeat ninth grade student and the on time tenth grade students to the question about whether or not their teachers were easy to talk to. For the on time tenth grade students, the mean ($m=3.57$) was higher than the mean of the repeat ninth grade ($m= 3.00$) students as it related to the question about how well teachers explained concepts. The difference in the mean response of the two groups could have been because more academically able students would have been promoted to the tenth grade and concepts could have been easier to understand for these students. Studies tracking student academic progress have found that about 75% of the students who fail in the first year do not graduate from high school. Few students who get off track rarely recover because poor academic preparation plays a significant role for the ninth grade students (Horwitz & Snipes, 2008). The potential dropout

who needs academic support in high school must be able to seek a support system and take advantage of strategies that offer personalized attention and supplemental academic instruction (Horowitz & Snipes, 2008). For the student who is not academically strong, it is difficult to ask teachers questions. While there was no significant difference between the groups, the slightly different mean for both groups could have been an indicator that CKH was effective for both groups of students.

The analysis of the independent-samples t-test found that there was no significant difference ($t(65)=.172$, $p>.05$) between the responses of the repeat ninth grade students and the on time tenth grade students to the question that asked if classes were interesting. Both groups of students had similar mean scores with the repeat ninth grade mean ($m=3.43$) slightly higher than the mean of the on time tenth grade ($m=3.37$). Butts and Cruzeiro (2005) in their study of a large Midwest comprehensive high school without a transition program, reported that the greatest positive influence on the transition to ninth grade was "interesting classes." In a study of a California high school with academies, Conchas (2002) reported that interesting classes was one of the most important indicators for student success. The rotation of one class after the other during a school day can be boring unless teachers energize their classes with interesting information that makes learning relevant and engaging. While there was no significant difference between the groups, the mean for both groups could have been an indicator that CKH was effective for both groups of students.

The analysis of the independent–samples t-test found that there was no significant difference ($t(65)=.379$, $p>.05$) between the responses of the repeat ninth grade student and the on time tenth grade students to the question that asked if teachers and students cooperated. The mean for both groups was similar with the mean of repeat ninth grade students ($m=3.07$) slightly

high than the on time tenth grade students (m=2.96). Feeling connected to someone is a basic need. Relationships develop the sense of belonging and motivation that are essential for success and engagement (Scott, 2005). Improving relationships between staff and students should be a priority for every educator, especially those students who are most at risk. Unless the adult in the classroom is respectful, students feel no responsibility to cooperate. For teachers who embarrass students as a strategy to teach a lesson or to make an example of somebody only causes resentment. The impact of negative incidents is much more stressful for at risk students than for successful students. The student who is most vulnerable feels the pain of each incident as one more in a series of rejections (Scott, 2005). Cooperation is an important function of every class. While there was no significant difference between the groups, the slight difference in the mean for both groups could have been an indicator that the CKH training was effective for both groups of students.

The analysis of the independent-samples t-test found that there was no significant difference ($t(65)=-.024$, $p>.05$) between the responses of the repeat ninth grade students and the on time tenth grade students to the question that asked if classroom behavior was good. For both groups of students the mean was similar with the repeat ninth grade mean (m=3.07) and the on time tenth grade mean (m=3.08). Classroom behavior is so important, especially for the at-risk student and the students who struggle academically. Suspensions from school compound the academic struggles and the students get further behind. There will always be discipline issues but unless classrooms are orderly, the academic environment will not be conducive to learning. Some districts have established early warning systems to track behavior and attendance patterns. Researchers, Horowitz & Snipes (2008) in Philadelphia identified four key educational indicators that would identify potential ninth grade dropouts with a 80% accuracy by tracking attendance,

classroom behavior, and failing math or English. While there was no significant difference between the groups, the slightly different mean for both groups could have been an indicator that CKH training was effective for both groups of students.

The analysis of the independent-samples t-test found that there was no significant difference ($t(65)=.007, p>.05$) between the responses of the repeat ninth grade students and the on time tenth grade students to the question whether materials and expectations were easily understood. There was a slight difference between the mean of the repeat ninth grade students and the on time tenth grade students with the repeat ninth grade mean ($m=3.79$) and the on time tenth grade ($m=3.76$) mean. Delivering an effective instructional lesson depends on whether the teachers can clearly explain to students what is going to be taught, how it is going to be taught, and why it is necessary for students to engage in the learning process. Equally important are the materials used during the class to support the instruction. If materials are not developed and delivered appropriately during the class to support what has been taught, then students become frustrated and disengaged from involvement in the class. Some teachers do not believe their role is to serve as the primary catalyst for student engagement. They believe that teachers have to be entertainers to get kids to pay attention (Cothran & Ennis, 2000). Sometimes teachers do not believe that engaging students in the learning process is the affect of providing relevant instructional examples and connecting the content to the real world. While there was no significant difference between the groups, the relatively close mean for both groups could have been an indicator that CKH was effective for both groups.

The analysis of the independent-samples t-test found that there was no significant difference ($t(65)= .458, p>.05$) between the responses of the repeat ninth grade students and the on time tenth grade students to the question about whether tutors helped them. The repeat ninth

grade the mean (m=2.64) was higher than the mean of the on time tenth grade students (m=2.43). Both means were low. Many strategies are utilized in high school to assist students with make-up work, missing work, and school work that is not easily understood. After school remediation is one of the programs that enable students to spend extra time with teachers. "Failing in school" was one of the top five reasons students left school, according to respondents in a national survey conducted by the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation (Bridgeland, Dilulio, and Morison, 2006). When students need additional help with their school assignments, additional help should be provided for all students. Even in the Ohio study (Newman, Myers, Newman, Lohman, and Smith, 2000) that identified academically promising sixth grade, African American students and followed them until graduation with the promise of scholarships, provided ongoing tutors. Even though there was no significant difference between the repeat ninth grade students and the on time tenth grade students, the relatively low mean for both groups could have been an indicator that Capturing Kids' Hearts training was not effective in providing tutors for either group.

The analysis of the independent-samples t-test found that there was no significant difference ($t(65)=2.86$, $p>.05$) between the responses of repeat ninth grade students and the on time tenth grade students to the question about whether they would have been more successful if there had been fewer students in their classes. The mean of the repeat ninth grade students (m=3.57) was much higher than the mean of the on time tenth grade students (m=2.86). High schools are developing programs that aim at reducing class size, particularly in the ninth grade, as a strategy to personalize education and promote higher achievement. Research suggests that structural reforms, such as ninth grade academies, can improve the ninth grade transition and students' progress through high school when bolstered by strong and well-defined instructional and curricular supports (Horwitz & Snipes, 2008). While there was no significant difference

between the two groups of students, there was a difference in the mean that could have been an indicator that the Capturing Kids' Hearts training was more effective for the on time tenth grade students than the repeat ninth grade students.

Conclusion

Researchers have found that there is a problem in the transition from middle school to high school with many students becoming disengaged from school. While different components of ninth grade transition programs are being added and deleted as educators feel the sense of urgency to meet state and federal standards of progress, the most important component will always be the teachers. This research is a very timely topic when schools all over the country are searching for strategies to reduce the dropout rate, improve the academic success rate of their students, and when the investment in teacher transition training has been grossly overlooked. The purpose of this research was to determine if there was a difference in the scores of students on the "What Helped Me to Become Successful in the Ninth Grade?" survey between the retained and promoted students who had been taught by teachers who had Capturing Kids' Hearts training during the 2007-08 school year. Based upon the similar responses to the relationship questions by both groups of students, it could have been an indicator that CKH training was effective for both groups of students.

Discussion

Capturing Kids' Hearts, a teacher training program that promotes positive student/teacher relationships, was used to train teachers of ninth grade students in a Mid-Atlantic high school. A student survey was conducted for participants who began the school year as first time ninth grade students and returned the following school year during 2008-09 as either on time tenth grade students or repeat ninth grade students. According to the perception of the students in this study,

both groups of students responded similarly to the nine relationship questions that were part of a 25-question student survey. There was no significant difference between the responses of the two groups to the relationship questions.

The similar responses to the relationship questions indicated that the teacher training was effective, particularly since the responses were not just from students who were academically successful but also from students who were reassigned to the ninth grade. Students who were repeat ninth grade students, some of whom were over age, returned the 2008-09 school year to continue their studies and according to their perception surveys, had positive feelings about their ninth grade teachers.

Both groups of students had a surprisingly low mean response on the question that asked if tutors had helped them with their school work. Even though there were remediation schedules on the Web Page of the school, remediation posters hung in the halls, and four days a week teachers stayed after school for student remediation, the mean response by both groups was still low on this question. In reflection, at this school, the term remediation is the term used for needing academic assistance and is more familiar to students as a regional term than tutoring, which was used in the question. Perhaps this difference in the wording resulted in the low scores on this item from both groups of students. The student survey was used with permission from the authors who were from the Midwest.

The second question that both groups responded somewhat low was the question about students and teachers cooperating. In the ninth grade classes during the 2007-08 school year, all classes had behavior contracts that were collaboratively developed as a class. All students and teachers signed the contract during the first week of school, which was part of the Capturing Kids' Hearts training program. When students broke the tenets of the contract, they were

referred back to the contract. Positive behavior was reinforced by telling students that they were cooperating. This should not be confused with students who were referred to the office for disciplinary action. Instead, this was a disciplinary prevention strategy to reinforce the rules that the students had developed.

In regards to how students felt about teachers cooperating with students was interpreted at this school as fairness by listening and negotiating. The strategy helped to reduce the out of school suspensions and improve the climate of the classroom as it referred to calmness. Regardless of the adjustments and negotiations that were made, short term out of school suspensions were reduced 31% for first time ninth grade students from the previous school year and prior to the Capturing Kids' Hearts training. The category of insubordination was reduced by 66% from the previous school year (see Appendix).

The question that asked about class size had a high response from the repeat ninth grade students and a much lower response from the on time tenth grade students. Routinely, students who struggle academically need to hear the information a second time or from another view point. Not all students understand material that is delivered the first time. It is understandable why less adept students would want smaller class sizes than those students who are on target. Smaller classes would mean that the teacher would have more time for focused grouping or to answer questions. The tenth grade students might not see the necessity of smaller classes if they were successful in larger classes.

This study was conducted in a single high school in a Mid-Atlantic state with students from eight different feeder middle schools. The time frame for this study was only one year and the teachers were trained immediately prior to the beginning of the 2007-08 school year which was the trial year for the training for this school. Even though this was a single school site, there

were limited returns of the Parent Consent Forms. Of the original 494 first time ninth grade students who began the 2007-08 school year, only 401 remained active the following year with 291 on time tenth grade students and 110 students identified as retained. While one might have thought that it would have been easy to have students respond to the researcher, this was not the case. The low return rate of 51 on time tenth grade permission forms and 14 repeat ninth grade permission forms for urban students was merely interpreted as lack of priority. There was no grade to be gained for the students and there was no pressure from the researcher or teachers. Many students in this school shared different homes during the week with biological parents, step-parents, or guardians. Sometimes it was difficult for students to arrive on time for a very important appointment.

Implications

The implication of the training program, Capturing Kids' Hearts by the Flippen Group (2002) has the possibility to be a model for ninth grade smaller learning communities and transition programs as well. The Excel Model (Flippen Group, 2002) is aligned with several traditional components of an effective lesson plan, while the Engaging and Launching components were added to engage students before they walked into the classroom and as they left the classrooms.

While the analysis of the study concluded that there were no significant differences between the responses of the relationship questions by the repeat ninth grade students and the on time tenth grade students, similar mean scores of both groups indicated that the training was effective. Transition programs could benefit from strengthening teacher to student relationships by training ninth grade teachers with the Capturing Kids' Hearts training as a strategy to develop positive school experiences.

Recommendations for Further Research

- An extension of this study to follow the 2007-08 cohort of first time ninth grade students and compare it to the 2006-07 cohort of first time ninth grade students.

  It would be interesting to determine if the teacher relationship training affected the students' academic success as measured by the dropout rate and GPA.

- A qualitative study of student perceptions of what dominant characteristics teachers need to impact students.

  Investigating ninth grade student perceptions of those characteristics that would make learning more interesting and effective might be a productive effort.

- A longitudinal study to determine if relationship training affects students over a period of time.

  Conduct a longitudinal study comparing students who have been taught by teachers who have been trained in the Capturing Kids' Heart program to students who have not had trained teachers to determine the dropout rate, discipline, and attendance.

- A comparison study of perceptions about student/teacher relationships from students who had been taught by teachers who had and who had not had Capturing Kid' Hearts training.

  Students from different schools could be compared.

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Appendix A

A Student Perception Survey
"What Helped Me to Become Successful in Ninth Grade?"

The purpose of this survey is to collect and analyze data in an urban high school in southeastern Virginia that may lead to the understanding of what factors, according to students, were **most significant** and lead to their success in 2007-08 school year. Many students were promoted to tenth grade on time, while others will need to make up a few credits to graduate with their 2011 graduation class.

Students Directions: Please read each question carefully. Select the following response according to your level of agreement with each question as to how each category of support (i.e. parents, self-determination, and teachers) helped you **during ninth grade** so you could be promoted on time to tenth grade or how you worked toward promotion. Bubble in the corresponding number on your scan sheet to number and answer of each of the questions. Please use a Number 2. pencil and completely fill in the circle.

1) Strongly disagree 2) Disagree 3) No Opinion 4) Agree 5) Strongly Agree

Survey Questions

1. Teachers cared about me and helped me.
   1 2 3 4 5

2. Teachers explained things well.
   1 2 3 4 5

3. Teachers were easy to talk to.
   1 2 3 4 5

4. Class materials/expectations were easy to understand.
   1 2 3 4 5

5. Classes were interesting.
   1 2 3 4 5

6. I worked hard to do the work on time.
   1 2 3 4 5

7. I had good study/work habits.
   1 2 3 4 5

8. I did better in a structured environment.
   1 2 3 4 5

9. I was determined to be successful.
   1 2 3 4 5

10. I participated in sports.
    1 2 3 4 5

11. Tutors helped me with my school work.
    1 2 3 4 5

12. Teachers and students cooperated.
    1 2 3 4 5

13. Classroom behavior was good.
1 2 3 4 5

14. I completed my homework at school.
1 2 3 4 5

15. I went to class every day.
1 2 3 4 5

16. I made new friends.
1 2 3 4 5

17. I had limited time with my friends.
1 2 3 4 5

18. I avoided negative influences (gangs or drugs).
1 2 3 4 5

19. I forgot my outside problems.
1 2 3 4 5

20. I had confidence to do high school work.
1 2 3 4 5

21. I had parent/guardian/grandparent support.
1 2 3 4 5

22. I had friends in my classes.
1 2 3 4 5

23. I hung out with the right people.
1 2 3 4 5

24. I was prepared to enter high school.
1 2 3 4 5

25. I would have been more successful if there had been fewer students in my classes.
1 2 3 4 5

Appendix B

Permission to Use *A Student Perception* Instrument

Marjorie Stealey - Re: Inquiry to use Survey

From: Patricia A Cruzeiro <cruzeiropa@unk.edu>
To: "Marjorie Stealey" <mstealey@nps.k12.va.us>
Date: 10/20/2008 6:46 PM
Subject: Re: Inquiry to use Survey

Hi, Marjorie,
Mike Butts and I are happy to share the survey with you. Since he developed the survey, Mike does ask that you share your outcome with him. He is the principal at Watertown High School in SD.
200 NE 9th St
Watertown, SD 57201-0730

Good luck to you in your dissertation!
Patricia A. Cruzeiro, Ed D
Associate Professor EDAD
Department & Graduate Program Chair
University of Nebraska at Kearney
College of Education Building B149
1615 West 24th Street
Kearney, NE 68849
308-865-8844
cruzeiropa@unk.edu

-----"Marjorie Stealey" <mstealey@nps.k12.va.us> wrote: -----

> To: <cruzeiropa@unk.edu>
> From: "Marjorie Stealey" <mstealey@nps.k12.va.us>
> Date: 10/06/2008 06:12AM
> Subject: Inquiry to use Survey
>
> Hello Dr. Cruzeiro,
>
> I'm a doctoral student at Virginia Tech University. I am using your article on student perceptions in my Chapter 2 as one of my studies. I'm interested in the training that we could provide to ninth grade teachers to develop stronger relationships with students which might affect student learning. The title of my dissertation is Examining the Effectiveness of Capturing Kids Hearts Training for Teachers in a Ninth Grade Transition Program.
>
> I'm close to scheduling my Prospectus Examination. I was wondering, once I get approval to proceed, could I use your student survey that was included in your article? My research is a mixed methods and quite extensive. Your survey is right to the point and better than I can recreate?
>
> I hope this meets with your approval.
>
> Sincerely,
>
> Marjorie Stealey

Appendix C

Superintendent's Approval

[redacted] Public Schools
NATIONALLY RECOGNIZED. GLOBALLY COMPETITIVE.

May 22, 2009

Mrs. Marjorie L. Stealey
Principal, Norview High School
Doctoral Candidate, Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University (Virginia Tech)

The study, "Examining the Effectiveness of Capturing Kids' Hearts Training for Teachers in a Ninth Grade Transition Program" proposed by Mrs. Marjorie L. Stealey, Principal, [redacted] High School, and doctoral candidate at Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University (Virginia Tech), is approved for Norfolk Public Schools.

The research proposal meets NPS Research & Survey Policy criteria (www.nps.k12.va.us), including:
- Voluntary participation allows each participant to individually decide whether to participate, and may withdraw at any time without question or consequence.
- Participant and school names will remain anonymous in data collection and group results reported. Identifiable characteristics or linkage to the identity of any individual or school in the report is prohibited.
- Approval does not constitute commitment of resources, endorsement of the study, or its findings by the school district or the School Board.
- Data collected and results will not become part of any student, teacher, principal, school, or district record. All research records must be locked in a secured location.
- Copy of the final report will be provided for the school district and sent to Dr. Flanagan (SEAS).

We look forward to your findings and contribution to instructional practice, program services, and achievement for *ALL* students.

Sincerely,

Dr. Gail Flanagan, Ph.D.
Senior Coordinator, Research & Evaluation
Strategic Evaluation, Assessment & Support (SEAS)
[redacted] City Public Schools
gflanaga@nps.k12.va.us Office # 757-628-3852 Fax # 757-628-3925

cc: Karren Bailey, Executive Director, Strategic Evaluation, Assessment & Support (SEAS)

Strategic Evaluation, Assessment and Support (SEAS)
800 East City Hall Avenue • [redacted], Virginia 23510
Phone: (757) 628-3852 • Fax: (757) 628-3925 • e-mail: gflanaga@nps.k12.va.us

Appendix D

Teacher
Informed Consent for Participants
A Research/Project Involving Human Subjects
Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University

Title of Project: Examining the Effectiveness of Capturing Kids' Hearts Training for Teachers in a Ninth Grade Transition Program

Investigators: Dr. Glen Earthman and Marjorie Stealey

I. Purpose of this Research/Project

The purpose of this study is to determine if the relationship teacher training of Capturing Kids' Hearts for a Ninth Grade Transition program has the potential to improve students' success in ninth grade based on the perception of students' who were both promoted on time and to tenth grade and others who were retained.

II. Procedures

Data about how students feel about those factors that lead to their successful promotion to the tenth grade will be collected from a 25 question survey instrument. There will be a 15 minute meeting of randomly selected students from one high school to explain the purpose of the research and the importance of the Parent Consent Form. A second 15 minute meeting at the high school will enable students to complete the survey instrument.

III. Risks

There will be limited risks related to this study.

IV. Benefits

There are no specific benefits for you related to your participation in the study. No promise or guarantee of benefits will be made to encourage your participation. The results of the study will assist your school division to assess the effectiveness of the Capturing Kids' Hearts Training Program.

V. Anonymity and Confidentiality

Student names will remain anonymous in the student survey instrument and the high school will only be identified as the high school.

VI. Compensation

There is no compensation for participating in this study.

VII. Freedom to Withdraw

You are free to withdraw from the study at any time. You simply have to inform the researcher about your decision or Dr. Glen Earthman.

VIII. Approval of Research

This research has been approved, as is required, by the Institutional Review Board for Research Involving Human Subjects at Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University

_____ IRB Approval Date _____ Approval Expiration

IX. Participant's Responsibility

I voluntarily agree to participate in this study. I will send the student on my list to the two Tenth Grade Assemblies

X. Participant's Permission

I have read and understand the Informed Consent Form and conditions of this project. I have had all my questions answered. I hereby acknowledge the above and give my voluntary consent for participation in this project.

_____ _____ Date

Reseachers

Should you have any questions about this research project, you may contact:

Marjorie Stealey, 757.547.4085
1208 Rellen Court
Chesapeake, VA 23320

Dr. Glen Earthman, 540.231.9715, earthman@vt.edu
204 E. Eggleston
Virginia Tech
Blacksburg, VA 24061-0302

Dr. David Moore, Chair, IRB, 540.231.4991, moorevt.edu
Office of Compliance
2000 Kraft Drive, Suite 2000
Virginia Tech
Blacksburg, VA, 29061

Appendix E

Virginia Tech Research Project
Parental Permission Form

_____ Student Name

A doctoral research project, *Examining the Effectiveness of Capturing Kids' Hearts Training for Teachers in a Ninth Grade Transition Program,* has been approved by [redacted] Public Schools to survey 267 randomly selected students who entered [redacted] in 2007-08 as first time ninth grade students. The purpose of the survey is to collect and analyze responses on a 25 question survey that may lead to the understanding as to what factors, according to students, were the most significant as they worked toward tenth grade promotion for 2008-09. The findings may be helpful to school officials in planning teacher training programs.

Your student qualifies for this research because he/she was in this school last year as a first time ninth grade student. It will be the opinions of both on time promoted, as well as students who struggle to meet promotion standards that this researcher will collect and analyze. With your permission, your student will be called to an assembly in the auditorium, he/she will complete the survey which will take approximately 15 minutes, and return promptly to class.

In order to comply with The Institutional Review Board (IRB) at Virginia Tech, the following will take place: 1) the data collected will remain anonymous and will not be distinguishable by school or student; 2) only the doctoral candidate and her chairman will have access to the data; 3) the data will be destroyed after five years; 4) there will be no compensation for completing the survey; 5) the student may withdraw from the study at any time without penalty; 6) the student is free not to answer any questions he/she chooses without penalty; 7) there has been no promise or guarantee of benefits to encourage the student to participate; 8) safeguards will be employed to minimize risks; and 9) participation is voluntary. Since the IRB is responsible for the oversight of the protection of human subjects involved in research, it is possible that the IRB may view this study's collected data for auditing purposes.

_____, parent/guardian
I have read the Consent Form and the conditions of this project. I have had all my questions answered. I hereby acknowledge the above and give my voluntary consent.

Any questions concerning this research may be directed to:

Mrs. Marjorie Stealey, Doctoral Candidate
1208 Rellen Court
Chesapeake, VA 23320
757-547-4085

Dr. Glen Earthman, Chairman
204 E. Eggletson
Virginia Tech
Backsburg, VA 24061-0302
540-231-9715

Dr. David Moore, Chair
Virginia Tech Institutional Review Board
for the Protection of Human Subjects
Office of Research Compliance
2000 Kraft Drive, Suite 2000
Blacksburg, VA 24060
540-231-4991

Appendix F

Virginia Tech Research Project
Student Permission Form

Dear Student,

A doctoral research project, *Examining the Effectiveness of Capturing Kids' Hearts Training for Teachers in a Ninth Grade Transition Program,* has been approved by [redacted] Public Schools to survey 267 randomly selected students who entered [redacted] in 2007-08 as first time ninth grade students. The purpose of the survey is to collect and analyze responses on a 25 question survey that may lead to the understanding as to what factors, according to students, were the most significant as they worked toward tenth grade promotion for 2008-09. The findings may be helpful to school officials in planning teacher training programs.

Your student qualifies for this research because he/she was in this school last year as a first time ninth grade student. It will be the opinions of both on time promoted, as well as students who struggle to meet promotion standards that this researcher will collect and analyze. With your permission, your student will be called to an assembly in the auditorium, he/she will complete the survey which will take approximately 15 minutes, and return promptly to class.

In order to comply with The Institutional Review Board (IRB) at Virginia Tech, the following will take place: 1) the data collected will remain anonymous and will not be distinguishable by school or student; 2) only the doctoral candidate and her chairman will have access to the data; 3) the data will be destroyed after five years; 4) there will be no compensation for completing the survey; 5) the student may withdraw from the study at any time without penalty; 6) the student is free not to answer any questions he/she chooses without penalty; 7) there has been no promise or guarantee of benefits to encourage the student to participate; 8) safeguards will be employed to minimize risks; and 9) participation is voluntary. Since the IRB is responsible for the oversight of the protection of human subjects involved in research, it is possible that the IRB may view this study's collected data for auditing purposes.

_____, Student
_____, Date
I voluntarily agree to participate in this study.
I have the following responsibilities:
Complete a 25- question survey.

Any questions concerning this research may be directed to:

Mrs. Marjorie Stealey, Doctoral Candidate
1208 Rellen Court
Chesapeake, VA 23320
757-547-4085

Dr. Glen Earthman, Chairman
204 E. Eggletson
Virginia Tech
Backsburg, VA 24061-0302
540-231-9715

Dr. David Moore, Chair
Virginia Tech Institutional Review Board
for the Protection of Human Subjects
Office of Research Compliance
2000 Kraft Drive, Suite 2000
Blacksburg, VA 24060
540-231-4991

Appendix G

Virginia Tech Research Project
Students 18 Years of Age and Older Permission Form

Dear Student,

A doctoral research project, *Examining the Effectiveness of Capturing Kids' Hearts Training for Teachers in a Ninth Grade Transition Program,* has been approved by [redacted] Public Schools to survey 267 randomly selected students who entered [redacted] in 2007-08 as first time ninth grade students. The purpose of the survey is to collect and analyze responses on a 25 question survey that may lead to the understanding as to what factors, according to students, were the most significant as they worked toward tenth grade promotion for 2008-09. The findings may be helpful to school officials in planning teacher training programs.

Your student qualifies for this research because he/she was in this school last year as a first time ninth grade student. It will be the opinions of both on time promoted, as well as students who struggle to meet promotion standards that this researcher will collect and analyze. With your permission, your student will be called to an assembly in the auditorium, he/she will complete the survey which will take approximately 15 minutes, and return promptly to class.

In order to comply with The Institutional Review Board (IRB) at Virginia Tech, the following will take place: 1) the data collected will remain anonymous and will not be distinguishable by school or student; 2) only the doctoral candidate and her chairman will have access to the data; 3) the data will be destroyed after five years; 4) there will be no compensation for completing the survey; 5) the student may withdraw from the study at any time without penalty; 6) the student is free not to answer any questions he/she chooses without penalty; 7) there has been no promise or guarantee of benefits to encourage the student to participate; 8) safeguards will be employed to minimize risks; and 9) participation is voluntary. Since the IRB is responsible for the oversight of the protection of human subjects involved in research, it is possible that the IRB may view this study's collected data for auditing purposes.

_____, Student
_____, Date
I voluntarily agree to participate in this study.
I have the following responsibilities:
Complete a 25- question survey.

Any questions concerning this research may be directed to:

Mrs. Marjorie Stealey, Doctoral Candidate
1208 Rellen Court
Chesapeake, VA 23320
757-547-4085

Dr. Glen Earthman, Chairman
204 E. Eggletson
Virginia Tech
Backsburg, VA 24061-0302
540-231-9715

Dr. David Moore, Chair
Virginia Tech Institutional Review Board
for the Protection of Human Subjects
Office of Research Compliance
2000 Kraft Drive, Suite 2000
Blacksburg, VA 24060
540-231-4991

Appendix H

IRB Approval

VirginiaTech

Office of Research Compliance
Institutional Review Board
2000 Kraft Drive, Suite 2000 (0497)
Blacksburg, Virginia 24061
540/231-4991 Fax 540/231-0959
e-mail moored@vt.edu
www.irb.vt.edu
FWA00000572(expires 1/20/2010)
IRB # is IRB00000667

DATE: May 18, 2009

MEMORANDUM

TO: Glen Earthman
Marjorie Stealey

Approval date: 5/18/2009
Continuing Review Due Date:5/3/2010
Expiration Date: 5/17/2010

FROM: David M. Moore

SUBJECT: **IRB Expedited Approval:** "Examining the Effectiveness of Capturing Kids Hearts Training for Teachers in a Ninth Grade Transition Program" , IRB # 09-405

This memo is regarding the above-mentioned protocol. The proposed research is eligible for expedited review according to the specifications authorized by 45 CFR 46.110 and 21 CFR 56.110. As Chair of the Virginia Tech Institutional Review Board, I have granted approval to the study for a period of 12 months, effective May 18, 2009.

As an investigator of human subjects, your responsibilities include the following:

1. Report promptly proposed changes in previously approved human subject research activities to the IRB, including changes to your study forms, procedures and investigators, regardless of how minor. The proposed changes must not be initiated without IRB review and approval, except where necessary to eliminate apparent immediate hazards to the subjects.
2. Report promptly to the IRB any injuries or other unanticipated or adverse events involving risks or harms to human research subjects or others.
3. Report promptly to the IRB of the study's closing (i.e., data collecting and data analysis complete at Virginia Tech). If the study is to continue past the expiration date (listed above), investigators must submit a request for continuing review prior to the continuing review due date (listed above). It is the researcher's responsibility to obtain re-approval from the IRB before the study's expiration date.
4. If re-approval is not obtained (unless the study has been reported to the IRB as closed) prior to the expiration date, all activities involving human subjects and data analysis must cease immediately, except where necessary to eliminate apparent immediate hazards to the subjects.

Important:
If you are conducting **federally funded non-exempt research**, please send the applicable OSP/grant proposal to the IRB office, once available. OSP funds may not be released until the IRB has compared and found consistent the proposal and related IRB applicaton.

cc: File

Appendix I

TABLE 14

25 Item Survey, Total Mean, SD, Sig.

Question	0=9th 1=10th	Mean	Std. Deviation	Sig. (2-tail)
Q1	14	3.93	.829	.357
	51	4.14	.722	
Q2	14	3.43	1.016	.790
	51	3.35	.913	
Q3	14	3.00	1.301	.139
	51	3.57	.781	
Q4	14	3.79	.893	.939
	51	3.76	.907	
Q5	14	3.43	1.016	.864
	51	3.37	1.095	
Q6	14	3.93	.997	.961
	51	3.94	.810	
Q7	14	2.71	1.139	.121
	51	3.20	.980	
Q8	14	3.71	.914	.185
	51	4.02	.707	
Q9	14	4.29	.914	.915
	51	4.31	.860	
Q10	14	3.00	1.569	.966
	51	2.98	1.530	
Q11	14	2.64	1.598	.600
	51	2.43	1.253	
Q12	14	3.07	1.141	.706
	51	2.96	.916	
Q13	14	3.07	1.269	.981
	51	3.08	.891	

TABLE 14

25 Item Survey, Total Mean, SD, Sig.

Question	0=9th 1=10th	Mean	Std. Deviation	Sig. (2-tail)
Q14	14	3.43	1.342	.804
	51	3.33	1.244	
Q15	14	3.79	1.251	.203
	51	4.25	.821	
Q16	14	3.29	1.639	.010
	51	4.61	.603	
Q17	14	3.64	1.393	.164
	51	3.10	1.253	
Q18	14	4.00	1.519	.552
	51	4.24	1.242	
Q19	14	2.79	1.188	.459
	51	3.04	1.113	
Q20	14	3.86	1.027	.355
	51	4.10	.806	
Q21	14	3.93	1.141	.285
	51	4.29	1.119	
Q22	14	3.79	1.122	.031
	51	4.12	.850	
Q23	14	3.71	1.139	.147
	51	4.12	.840	
Q24	14	4.14	1.099	.569
	51	4.29	.809	
Q25	14	3.57	1.399	.093
	51	2.86	1.371	

Appendix J

[redacted] Public Schools
Out of School Suspensions
Among 1st-Time 9th Graders

SY 2006-2007 to SY 2007-2008 Comparison

[redacted] HIGH SCHOOL

	SY 2006-2007	SY 2007-2008	DIFFERENCE	PCTINCREASE
DISRESPECT	7	7	0	0 %
DISRUPTION	44	31	-13	-30 %
FIGHTING MUTUAL COMBAT	12	13	1	8 %
HARASSMENT	27	15	-12	-44 %
INAPPROPRIATE PERSONAL PROPERTY	1	4	3	300 %
INSUBORDINATION	74	25	-49	-66 %
MISREPRESENTATION	1	4	3	300 %
PROFANITY	23	32	9	39 %
REPEATED AND CONTINUED VIOLATIONS	2	1	-1	-50 %
TOBACCO PRODUCTS	1		-1	-100 %
UNAUTH USE OF TECHNOLOGY	1		-1	-100 %
WEAPONS - DANGEROUS INSTRUMENTS	1	1	0	0 %
TOTAL SUSPENSIONS:	194	133	-61	-31 %
DISTINCT STUDENTS SUSPENDED:	91	82	-9	-10 %