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The Revolution Begins at 3pm: A Qualitative Study of a Statewide 21st Century Community Learning Centers Program

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ACCEPTANCE

This dissertation, THE REVOLUTION BEGINS AT 3PM: A QUALITATIVE STUDY OF A STATEWIDE 21st CCLC AFTERSCHOOL PROGRAM, by CORRIE L. DAVIS, was prepared under the direction of the candidate's Dissertation Advisory Committee. It is accepted by the committee members in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree Doctor of Philosophy in the College of Education, Georgia State University.

The Dissertation Advisory Committee and the student's Department Chair, as representatives of the faculty, certify that this dissertation has met all standards of excellence and scholarship as determined by the faculty. The Dean of the College of Education concurs.

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ABSTRACT

THE REVOLUTION BEGINS AT 3PM: A QUALITATIVE STUDY OF A STATEWIDE 21ST CENTURY COMMUNITY LEARNING CENTERS PROGRAM

by

Corrie L. Davis

The purpose of this qualitative case study was to explore how teachers and staff members demonstrated caring toward their students within a statewide 21st Century Community Learning Centers (21st CCLC) afterschool program. The participants in the study included 17 program directors, 22 site coordinators, 16 teachers, 3 paraprofessionals, 11 parents, 11 principals, and 18 other stakeholders associated with the program. This multi-site case study utilized the naturalistic paradigm of qualitative research. The data collection process included 98 semi-structured interviews, 22 participant observations, 112 photographs, and document analyses with materials from the 20 grantees selected in the sample. The qualitative software program, Atlas.ti: The Knowledge Workbench (2003) assisted with the management and analysis of data during the coding, categorizing, and interpretation process. Findings from the study revealed 3 central themes: (a) staff members that care about the whole child educate the whole child, (b) using culture as an asset increases students' desire to learn and (c) building character promotes positive change. By incorporating these attributes, the program's staff demonstrated their commitment to the academic and democratic advancement of the students in their care. This study will help inform policy makers, afterschool advocates,

and 21st CCLC stakeholders about the importance of incorporating caring, culturally relevant pedagogy, and character education within local and national afterschool programs.

THE REVOLUTION BEGINS AT 3PM: A QUALITATIVE STUDY OF A STATEWIDE 21st CENTURY COMMUNITY LEARNING CENTERS PROGRAM

by

Corrie L. Davis

A Dissertation

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in
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2008

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In closing, I would like to dedicate this dissertation to my sons. I hope I make you proud.

"When I dare to be powerful - to use my strength in the service of my vision, then it becomes less and less important whether I am afraid." - Audre Lorde

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Abbreviations

21st CCLC	21st Century Community Learning Centers
AAUW	American Association of University Women
AR	Accelerated Reading
ASGL	Afterschool Girls Leadership Program
BU	Binder University
CAQDAS	Computer-Aided Qualitative Data Analysis Software
CEP	Character Education Program
CBO	Community Based Organization
FBO	Faith Based Organization
ITBS	Iowa Test of Basic Skills
MMAP	Minority Male Afterschool Program
MYDC	Manchester Youth Development Center
NCLB	No Child Left Behind
OC	Observer Comments
OST	Out of School Time
PE	Physical Education
PSR	Physicians for Social Responsibility
YES	Youth Empowerment Strategies
YWLA	Young Women's Leadership Alliance

CHAPTER 1

THE STUDY

> Our vision is for the instruction of core values and principles to influence the academic success of our students. It's a long story . . . the journey of how we want to see that happen but it's really moving in that direction. If the people working with the children start looking at them in a way of qualities and virtues, that will automatically spark a shift in consciousness for the person. Anytime someone addresses you, your character, and your culture, that brings about a shift where you feel empowered in a way that you typically don't. When people honor you and say you're pretty or you're cute or you're good . . . those judgment kind of things don't work. But when you address someone's character and honor their kindness or thoughtfulness or their spirit of caring . . . those are valuable things that make a shift in learning because it's kind of empowering to hear people say those things to you. So in time, by integrating these virtues into the classroom, the students will do better academically (M. Grattick, personal communication, February 9, 2007).

Introduction

A common ideological belief in U.S. society is that education is an avenue to achieving the American dream. People from around the globe migrate to the United States because it is widely revered as a "nation built on the ideals of freedom and equality, a nation of principles and responsibilities . . . a nation of wealth and power, a land of opportunity where democratic values are honored and people strive to help children succeed" (Solley, 2007, p. 31). Whether the American dream is realized or not, our schools are often caught in the midst of political bureaucracies. When shifts occur in legislation, regardless of their purpose or intent, "public schools in America have either attempted to be (or were forced to be) a primary societal change agent" (Feldman, 2007,

p. 3). Our teachers *must* produce the leaders of tomorrow and graduate thoughtful citizens who are educated and full of promise.

In an effort to be an agent of change, the U.S. federal government instituted the No Child Left Behind (NCLB) Act of 2001. In addition to increasing educational accountability, the act "was implemented to improve academic achievement of elementary and secondary schools in the U.S. and to ensure that every child has equal access to quality education services" (Odland, 2006, p. 98). According to this legislation, all students are required to meet or exceed standards by demonstrating a level of proficiency on standardized tests. These tests confine education into numeric indicators of success by requiring that schools, teachers, and students achieve predetermined standards and benchmarks that extend from state to state.

Because of this focus on test scores, high stakes testing has become the norm for schools nationwide, with teachers and administrators becoming "preoccupied with test-based accountability" (Rotberg, 2006, p. 58). The intensive time required to teach the test has become more important than teaching important skills that schools once taught, such as critical thinking, discussions, and problem solving (Schroeder, 2007; Solley, 2007). Subjects such as language arts, reading, and mathematics have always provided the necessary and essential tools for students to achieve success on a variety of levels. The overarching belief is that acquiring skills in these subjects is a predictor of success and increases the likelihood that students will contribute to the economic and social forces inherent in our society.

What happens, then, when we release students into the "real world" without providing them with the lessons they need to be thoughtful, caring, democratic citizens?

Why do we, as a society, expect our teachers to educate our students academically but not morally? There should be discussions about “alternative social outcomes of schooling” (Laberee, 1997, p. 41). Much like Ms. Grattick stated in the opening vignette, schools should consider shifting educational practices toward the education of the whole child. This is not accomplished simply by addressing academics but rather by taking into account the moral, social, and emotional needs of students. Noddings (2002) suggested, “We should demand more from our schools than to educate people to be proficient in reading and mathematics. Too many highly proficient people commit fraud, pursue paths to success marked by greed, and care little about how their actions affect the lives of others” (p. 10). Thus, if schools educate the child academically but fail to nurture his or her character, have they truly produced an individual that will contribute to society’s economic structure and value system?

Purpose of Study and Research Questions

There is a growing concern about the “lack of knowledge, attitude, and participation of young people necessary for the future growth of the American representative republic” (Feldman, 2007, p. 11). Because NCLB essentially scrutinizes and punishes school systems, administrators, and teachers for their lack of academic rigor and subsequent test scores, strict and often standardized lessons in the subject areas have replaced lessons on character and responsibility. Teachers are not preparing their students to be informed democratic citizens. Teachers do not have the time they need to demonstrate a pedagogical level of caring about their students’ personal and moral growth. However, staff members in afterschool programs are another resource for caring for students’ personal and moral growth.

With lessons in the basic subject areas consuming the majority of academic hours in a regular school day, I contend that the time and space afforded to afterschool[1] programs is revolutionary in that it allows teachers to exhibit a level of caring and character building not otherwise realized. Therefore, the purpose of this qualitative study was to explore how teachers and staff members demonstrated caring toward their students within a statewide 21st Century Community Centers (21st CCLC) afterschool program. The research questions for the study were:

1. How do the teachers and staff in the 21st CCLC afterschool program demonstrate caring?
2. What role does culturally relevant pedagogy play in the 21st CCLC program?
3. How has the 21st CCLC afterschool program staff included character education into their curriculum?

This study also makes a methodological contribution to the field of educational research by discussing the importance and value of incorporating photographs and digital diaries[2] into the data collection and analysis process. I also discuss the utilization of reflective and analytic memos using *Atlas.ti: The Knowledge Workbench*, a Computer-Aided Qualitative Data Analysis Software (CAQDAS) program. After conducting interviews, focus groups, observations, and document analyses, I discovered that by incorporating culturally relevant pedagogy and character education lessons into the afterschool curriculum, teachers were able to demonstrate caring and discuss relevant topics with their students in an effort to produce democratic citizens.

---

[1] The terms “after school”, “after-school”, and “afterschool” are used interchangeably throughout much of the related literature. For the purposes of this manuscript, I will use the term “afterschool” unless I am directly quoting someone who refers to it otherwise.

[2] I created this methodological tool.

Democratic Education

"Public school, by its very nature, was intended to secure for children their place in a democratic society with the knowledge, understanding, and tools necessary to make decisions for the good of all its citizens" (Solley, 2007, p. 32). Because this intention is lost in the bureaucracy of standardized testing, democratic educators and advocates have called for a realignment of public education's overall purpose. According to many theorists and democratic education practitioners (e.g., Biesta, 2007; Davis, 2007; Feldman, 2007; Fischer, Mazurkiewicz, Kellough, & Presson, 2007; Mann, 1849), public schools would better serve children by purposefully incorporating a formal curriculum in conjunction with the traditional academic areas that addresses openness, tolerance, caring, and societal responsibilities. Gutmann (1987) believed these "democratic virtues would actively engage in the conscience development of the self and in the production of social realities" (p. 46). By incorporating these values and principles into the public school curriculum, students would not be expected simply to "get it" from societal experiences. Despite the push toward high-stakes testing and academic accountability, "democratic education views the educational field as comprised of all aspects of life, such as family, play, work, school, culture, and the environment" (Hecht, 2006, p. 1).

By promoting independent, creative, and responsible human beings, democratic educational experiences or school settings can help to bridge the gap between a public school education and the creation of productive citizens, which, in essence, may lead to the "American dream" that is so profusely sought after. Crittenden (1992) stated,

> If children are brought up in common in the bosom of equality, if they are imbued with the laws of the state and the maxims of the general will, if they are taught to respect these above all things . . . then they will surely learn to cherish each other naturally as brothers . . . and to become in time

> defenders and fathers of the state whose children they will have been for so long. (p. 118)

Lubienski (2001) argued that instead of public schools' seeking immediate gratification from standardized test scores, they could use democratic educational practices and prepare students to respond to daily encounters and social situations. These ideals are not innovative as there are many historical and prominent figures that have contributed to the notion of democratic schooling (Dewey, 1916; Freire, 1970; Gould, 1990). In fact, in his 1818 *Report of the Commissioners for the University of Virginia,* Thomas Jefferson included democratic values as primary objects of education. By addressing qualities such as morals, duties to neighbors, and knowledge of rights, he was making the case for the combination of democratic ideals and citizenship with academic instruction. Although there are many that have spoken on behalf of democratic education, one of its most famous advocates was Horace Mann.

Horace Mann served as the first secretary of the Massachusetts Board of Education (BOE) from 1837 to 1848. In his *Twelfth Annual Report to the BOE* in 1848, Mann outlined his perspectives for the state of public education in Massachusetts as well as the nation. Known as the father of the Common School[3], Mann stated, "schools should foster the public good as well as prepare individuals for success in life" (Urban & Wagoner, 2004, p. 115). His convictions were strong in this matter. In his report, he wrote about the necessity of democratic educational settings and highlighted this point by stating, "a community without a conscience would soon extinguish itself" (Fraser, 2001,

---

[3] The common school movement was revolutionary as it set the premise for many educational trends. According to the school's principles, schools should be free, open to all, and foster morality and ethics (Urban & Wagoner, 2004). Although Mann's common schools were "open to all" Africans and African Americans were excluded from attending.

p. 54). According to Mann, the youthful mind is amenable to influences (Fraser) and by specifically addressing the qualities that are representative of productive citizens, communities nationwide would experience less delinquency and crime. By teaching democratic ideals, Mann (1841) believed that

> nine tenths of the crimes in the penal code would become obsolete; the long catalogue of human ills would be abridged; men would walk more safely by day; every pillow would be more inviolable by night; property, life, and character held by a stronger tenure; all rational hopes respecting the future brightened. (p. 15)

Mann's views may seem idealistic, or even utopian, as his premises were predicated on his sincere belief in a higher power. Indeed, he was quite religious and made no qualms about integrating Protestant perspectives into his educational ideologies. He often included a popular Bible verse into his statements regarding democratic schooling–"Train up a child in the way he should go, and when he is old he will not depart from it" (*Proverbs* 22:6). This verse supported his notion that if students are trained in citizenship and responsibility while in school they will grow to be thoughtful, productive adults.

Educating children to be democratic citizens has its limitations. In fact, even Mann recognized that "inculcating democratic values was laborious" (Kyle & Jenks, 2002, p. 158). Expounding on the ideals of their forefathers in the democratic education movement, Kyle and Jenks (2002) documented the theoretical and historical case for democratic education in the United States. After discussing the values and principles that are fundamental to democratic schooling, the authors addressed its critiques that have surfaced and resurfaced over the years. According to Kyle and Jenks, the major problem within the realm of democratic education is that there is little agreement among democratic theorists about the "pedagogical techniques that foster democratic students" (p. 152).

To teach democratic values, Kyle and Jenks (2002) argued that teachers should involve students in active debates, open and frank conversations, and various hands-on experiences. In an effort to counteract some of the racial and gender inequalities inherent in U.S. society, democratic classes should provide opportunities to interact with a variety of people from varying backgrounds and address "matters of race, social justice, and tolerance/appreciation" (p. 156). The authors also suggested that students and teachers engage in a reciprocal relationship that fosters fluid teaching and critical thinking. To accomplish these goals, teachers need to have the time, space, freedom, and the ethic of care needed to indulge in the indispensable democratic topics that promote character building. In response to Kyle and Jenks's call for a systematic pedagogical technique, I contend that by teaching character education from a culturally relevant perspective, teachers could demonstrate an ethic of care and students would be more apt to learning the values and principles ingrained in the democratic tradition. I also argue that with the demands of high-stakes testing, afterschool programs provide an exemplary setting for democratic education to occur.

Afterschool Programs

"At their best, after-school programs respond to children's individuality, attend to children's point of view, and encourage their sense of voice" (Halpern, 2003, p. 116). Afterschool programs can serve as a crucial partner in the village of people it takes to raise a child, especially for children who would benefit from adult supervision and/or additional academic support and instruction after the school day ends. Afterschool programs also offer children opportunities to engage in character building discussions that are pertinent to their age, culture and community. According to the U.S. Census

Bureau (2000), as many as 15 million children have no place to go once the school day ends. These “latchkey” students must fend for themselves socially and academically.

According to Miller (1999), some children exhibit the dependability and social acuity necessary to maintain decorum during these unsupervised occasions and are therefore able to function independently during this time. However, Hofferth (1995) referred to this time as the “period of unusual risk and opportunity” (p. 65) and stated that the early evening hours between 3 o’clock and 6 o’clock can be a challenging time for both students and parents. In fact, the afterschool hours are the peak time for juvenile crime and experimentation with drugs, alcohol, cigarettes, and sex (Fight Crime: Invest in Kids, 2002). Based on the necessity to provide a safe, comfortable, and/or nurturing environment for their children, many parents are sending their school-aged children to afterschool programs.

From the outset, afterschool advocates have been discussing the benefits of programs that occur during out of school time (OST). Robert Halpern (2002) chronicled the origin and history of afterschool programs in an article published in the *Teachers College Record*. He argued that the decline in child labor in conjunction with the growth of educational initiatives and theories contributed to the widespread need for afterschool programs as early as 1876. It was during this year that entrepreneur Edward Hariman opened what he called, “a boys club.” This eventually expanded into an afterschool program with playrooms, reading rooms, and other smaller clubs within the organization. According to Halpern, settlements were continuing to incorporate boys and girls clubs in the mid-1880s.

"By the turn of the century, churches and other religiously based organizations were also providing after-school programs as were organizations serving specific ethnic groups[4]" (Halpern, 2002, p. 182). As these programs continued to increase, policy makers and afterschool leaders began to notice economic and social benefits. According to Halpern (2003), children and adolescents were now involved in positive activities that allowed crime and costly juvenile prison rates to decrease. Leaders began to theorize that "crime increased nearly 50 percent in poor city wards at the end of the school day and argued that after-school programs were the most effective means of reducing those figures" (Cavallo, 1981, p. 86).

According to studies by Posner and Vandell (1994, 1999), afterschool programs have been effective in communities with a high-concentration of low-income students. In both studies, the authors documented positive effects for low-income children attending formal afterschool programs. They determined that by offering children educational and recreational opportunities that are otherwise unavailable to them, the children in their studies "received better grades, decreased behavior referrals, exhibited better peer relations and emotional adjustment" (Posner & Vandell, 1994, p. 454).

According to the Afterschool Alliance (n.d.), afterschool programs keep kids safe, help working families and improve academic achievement. With the help and support of programs that occur during OST, students subjected to unsupervised free time and negative societal influences have a safe place to learn, play, and developmentally mature.

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[4] In the early 1900s, local and federal agencies did not allow African American children to participate in afterschool programs like their white counterparts. Settlements located near African American families did not participate in integration although some organizations did believe in separate but equal education. One particular place for African Americans, The Stillman House for Colored People, was originated by the Henry Street settlement in New York City in 1909 (Jewish Women's Archive, 2007).

In a 4-year longitudinal study conducted by Galley (2000), students involved in extra-curricular activities, such as afterschool programs, received better grades, attended school more and exhibited improved behavior. They also expressed greater hopes for the future and showed more interest in school. According to a fact-sheet provided by the After-School All-Stars (2005),

> After school programs can offer intangibles such as – the opportunity to engage in activities that help young people realize they have something to contribute to the group; the opportunity to work with diverse peers and adults to create projects, performances, and presentations that receive accolades from their families and the larger community; and the opportunity to develop a vision of life's possibilities that with commitment and persistence, are attainable. (p. 43)

With so many parents working to sustain an adequate standard of living for their children, many have determined that finding the balance between taking care of their home and their children can be a stressful, if not impossible, task (Belsie, 2000; Lopoo, 2005). In fact, in an innovative study, Barnett and Gareis (2006) discovered that, in a sample of 243 working parents (83% were mothers), "parental after-school stress [PASS] was significantly associated with low psychological well-being" (p. 106).

In addition to economic changes and shifts in employment, contemporary social issues, such as the increase in single-parent homes and the rising number of homes with two working parents, have resulted in situations in which adults are not consistently available during the afterschool hours to care for their children (Nash & Fraser, 1998; Sanacore, 2002). These issues demonstrate that parents are in need of quality childcare for their children during the early afterschool hours.

Educational implications are also instrumental in the afterschool decision-making process. As educational benchmarks steadily increase across the nation, federal mandates such as NCLB have required that students meet or exceed statewide standards to demon-

strate academic success. With compulsory education laws and standardized test scores becoming the sole indicator of academic excellence, public school stakeholders are increasingly using quality afterschool placements to bridge academic gaps for students that need additional support.

Although there is no set formula that is used to describe a quality program that would be applicable to *all* afterschool programs, "researchers are making important strides in discovering what program elements constitute quality programming for youth and how such participation leads to positive academic and developmental outcomes" (Wilmer, 2007, p. 4). Recently, researchers and afterschool evaluators have begun to shed light on the characteristics that indicate a quality afterschool program (Birmingham, Pechman, Russell, & Mielke, 2005; Klein, 2004; Mahoney, Lord, & Carryl, 2005; Robelen, 2004; Vandell et al., 2006; Weiss & Brigham, 2003). Based on this research, afterschool program administrators and policymakers are becoming equipped with specific programming components for which to strive. According to Bender, Flatter, and Sorrentino (2000),

> Excellent quality depends on how well we respond to the needs common to all children and how well we respond to the needs of each individual child. Quality programming is more than a big room staffed to keep children safe . . . Quality programming for school-age children and youth on a regular basis requires meeting the human needs and the total development of each child. (p. 180)

This concept of "meeting the human needs and the total development of each child" is also the focus of democratic schooling, caring, and character education and further demonstrates the role afterschool programs play in that venture. Based on the recommendations from the theorists, researchers and evaluators listed above and the intended outcomes of afterschool programs, quality afterschool programs may offer the

following: (a) a broad array of enrichment activities, (b) discussions on character development, (c) collaboration between the local schools or districts, (d) intentional relationship building, (e) a caring environment toward the students, families, and community, (f) a strong, experienced leader, (g) varied learning delivery strategies, (h) adequate materials, (i) a welcoming environment for families, (j) inclusiveness of all stakeholders, (k) high visibility in the school and community, and (l) childcare, transportation, and translation services. Because of the interest in addressing the policies and mandates set forth in our nation, coupled with the desire to provide support for working families, afterschool programs have become a noticeable choice. Although many different programs have been initiated over the years, one such federal response is the 21st Century Community Learning Centers (21st CCLC) afterschool program. Being able to meet parents' needs for quality afterschool care while providing a safe space for children to develop and grow socially and academically is a priority for 21st CCLC. "These programs are promising strategies for engaging children and youth in a variety of positive social, recreational, and academic activities" (Grossman, Walker, & Raley, 2001, p. 3). Designed to offer quality educational services, 21st CCLCs provide afterschool programming in every state nation-wide.

21st Century Community Learning Centers

In 1997, the U.S. Department of Education began a partnership with the private philanthropy group, Charles Stewart Mott Foundation, to establish the 21st CCLC program. The collaboration between the two groups brought together similar democratic missions and goals that eventually led to the 21st CCLC motto, "*Soaring Beyond Expectations.*" Much like the goals of democratic schools, "the mission of the C.S. Mott

Foundation is to support efforts that promote a just, equitable, and sustainable society" (C.S. Mott Foundation, n.d.). The goals of the 21st CCLC programs are to create, instill, and maintain high-quality afterschool opportunities in low-performing and low-income schools that assist students in meeting state standards in core academic subjects while allowing for more character and enrichment opportunities in their surrounding communities.

Within NCLB exists a provision that requires schools to offer supplemental educational services as a remedy for poor performance (Sunderman, 2006). Under this legislation and in alignment with the current research, states are required to award grants only to applicants that would primarily serve students from low-income families. According to the U.S. Department of Education (2003),

> In addition, states must give priority to applications for projects that will serve children in schools designated as in need of improvement [not meeting Adequate Yearly Progress targets for three or more years] under Title I[5] and that are submitted jointly by school districts receiving Title I funds and community-based organizations or public or private organizations. (pp. 6-7)

Under these stipulations, any public or private organization is eligible to apply for and receive funding under the grant. Although funds are available, programs do not rely on the grant for the duration of their programs. Program administrators must seek and make use of their community's financial resources to help sustain their programs. Therefore, program funding is for no less than 3 years and no more than 5.

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[5] Title I distributes money to state education departments based on U.S. Census Data, which includes estimates of the poverty level among children in each school district. School districts where more than half the students are from low-income families qualify for Title I money to allocate for additional staff and supplies (Bowker, 2006).

Also in conjunction with the rules and specifications designated in NCLB, responsibility for the 21st CCLC programs shifted from the federal government to individual state departments of education. With this change in administration, states received greater autonomy over their programs and could offer a larger variety of programs. They could also evaluate their students' successes in meeting state and local academic standards and address the needs of specific subgroups of students. For example, the 21st CCLC program used in this study represented a total of 32,064 students and 7,810 adults during the 2006-2007 school year. A total of 76% of students qualified for free and/or reduced lunch. The racial and socio-economic demographics were as follows:

- 61% of youth were African American
- 27% of youth were White
- 7% of youth were Latino or Latina
- 1% of youth were Asian
- 1% of youth identified as Other (Binder University[6], 2007)

Because the 21st CCLC program grew in staff and local accountability, they were able to disaggregate this data and conduct research on the effects and quality of their programs by race. Despite the shift in autonomy, the programs maintained their commitment to ensuring that students were receiving high quality educational and enrichment activities that supported the daily efforts of the teachers, parents, and members of the surrounding community.

Just as Horace Mann and Charles S. Mott envisioned, 21st CCLC programs place student development at the focus with surrounding communities acting as partners. The overarching definition of a community-learning center is one that "offers academic, artistic, and cultural enrichment opportunities to students and families during non-school

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[6] This is a pseudonym.

hours" (Mahoney & Zigler, 2006, p. 284). The grant also allows for the delivery of services on dates and times when school is not regularly in session, such as holidays, weekends, and summer sessions. Students are provided with a wide ranges of services based on providing academic assistance and challenges as well as the incorporation of various enrichment activities. Curriculum used in the afterschool programs are intended to complement the dayschool lessons and enrichment programs are meant to provide engaging opportunities for recreation, character development, and life skills.

Families of the students enrolled in 21st CCLC programs are also a major focus of the grant. Programs, designed and implemented with the family in mind, have a special focus on literacy, language skills, parenting, and technological support. With the assistance of the surrounding community, businesses and local child advocates become community partners and bridges to various activities in the local areas. Depending on the center, students and families can participate in:

- Remedial education activities and academic learning programs
- Reading and reading comprehension programs
- Mathematics and science activities
- Art and music education activities
- Entrepreneurial education programs
- Tutoring services and mentoring programs
- Limited English Proficient (LEP) programs for adults and students
- Recreational activities
- Telecommunications and technology education programs
- Expanded library hours

- Programs that promote parental involvement and family literacy
- Programs that provide support to students who have been truant, suspended, or expelled
- Drug and violence prevention programs
- Counseling programs
- Character education programs (U.S. Department of Education, 2006)

Origination of Study

I did not intend to study the ethic of caring for my dissertation. As the qualitative methodologist on a university research team, our funder wanted to continue the program evaluation we began in 2005. With Phases I and II completed, our team dedicated the qualitative segment of Phase III to program quality. During Phase I, the Binder University (BU) evaluation team implemented a new Data Management System (DMS) as a pilot program and evaluated program implementation and impact by assessing the organizational and utilization plans for each center. Hierarchical Linear Modeling (HLM) helped develop a two-level model to analyze student achievement at the individual and grantee[7] level.

During Phase II of the study, our team implemented the DMS and continued to use HLM techniques for data analysis statewide but also added a qualitative component. This analysis contributed to the team's evaluation of the extent to which each grantee was meeting the state's two goals:

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[7] The terms "site and grantee" will be defined in a subsection within this chapter.

Goal 1 All students will reach high standards, at a minimum attaining proficiency or better in reading and mathematics.

Goal 2 Low-income families will participate in literacy and related educational activities.

After interviews, observations, and document reviews were completed the qualitative analysis revealed that although participants were satisfied with the program's goals, objectives, and educational approaches, they were experiencing some barriers and challenges in the implementation of their programs.

Two major barriers emerged from the Phase II interviews. Spatial limitations within the local schools were a challenge to implementation. BU also categorized problems with transportation availability and costs as problematic and challenging. The evaluation team decided to explore ways to recommend quality practices that could help combat the struggles some staff members were experiencing. From Phase II interviews, we determined that participants in the study were willing to discuss their best practices with new, developing, and struggling centers in an effort to assist others in developing a quality program. In the Program Quality/Recommendations portion of our Phase II report (2006), we advised that,

> programs need to share information on effective practices and strategies from existing programs. We have identified this need as an investigative priority in our Phase II report, which will be available for review by the end of the current budget cycle. (2007, Program Quality/Recommendations Section, p. 52)

Much like the preceding phase, Phase III of the evaluation was also dedicated to both quantitative and qualitative measures. Its purpose was to focus on examining the relationship between program quality and student academic performance, levels of student engagement, and family participation (Research Team Presentation, 2006). The

following investigative components were included in Phase III: (a) a student engagement pretest/posttest survey assessed student engagement, (b) family registration, activities, and participation data in the DMS determined levels of family participation, (c) satisfaction surveys assessed stakeholder satisfaction, and (d) program visits, interviews, and the review of program documentation assessed program quality.

During Phase III of the evaluation, our team continued to oversee the implementation of the program and the DMS and also measured levels of student engagement. We dedicated the qualitative portion of Phase III to providing "voice"[8] to the staff members and parents that were involved with the program on a daily basis. Our assumption was that these afterschool stakeholders might not have the opportunity to express their concerns and individual perspectives to other centers or administrators in the state. This study provided the space to discuss quality standards and was the venue for the exchange of ideas.

After choosing a purposeful sample of participants based on grant award year, type of grantee (school-based, CBO, or FBO), amount of centers, and grade of students, site visits were scheduled with various members of the afterschool community. Participants such as program directors, site coordinators, community partners, and parents were included in the study in an effort to gather their perspectives about the afterschool program. Data collection included interviews, focus groups, observations, and a thorough document analysis. The research questions for the evaluation were as follows:

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[8] Providing voice to participants allows, "people to be heard who might otherwise remain silent" (Bogdan & Biklen, 2007, p. 214.)

1. What characteristics contribute to the quality of 21st CCLC in the state?
2. What advice and best practices[9] can existing staff members contribute that could alleviate the barriers and challenges previously experienced?

While conducting this study, I noticed that the amount of caring exhibited by the program's staff members was overwhelming. Although a focus on caring was not the intended purpose, I could not deny its prevalence. Much like Pitman and Zorn (2000) noted in their discussion on caring, through my original data analysis "I stumbled over it [and] got hit in the head by its repeated presence" (p. 1). While analyzing the data on program quality, I noticed that the teachers that demonstrated exemplary teaching practices seemed to go the "extra mile" for their students and seemed to care about them beyond what NCLB and other educational agendas required. They used creative teaching practices to respect a variety of learning styles and cultures and seemed to provide academic instruction while also focusing on building the character of the students in their care. Therefore, for the purposes of my dissertation study, I reexamined the data with this new lens.

Definition of Terms

Throughout this dissertation, I will use many terms that are associated with 21st CCLC and afterschool programs in general to explain the thoughts and perspectives of the participants involved in the study. They are integral to the study and are thus worthy of thorough explanations.

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[9] For the purposes of the evaluation, best practices were strategies that have helped to increase test scores and attendance, attracted family participation, and supported on-time promotion.

Academic Enrichment Learning Programs

Enrichment activities expand on students' learning in ways that differ from the methods used during the school day. They often are interactive and project focused. They enhance a student's education by bringing new concepts to light or by using old concepts in new ways. These activities are fun for the student, but they also impart knowledge. They allow the participants to apply knowledge and skills stressed in school to real-life experiences.

Academic Improvement/Remediation Programs

These activities specifically target students whose academic performance is in need of improvement given that the student is not performing at grade level, is failing, or is otherwise performing below average. Academic improvement programs address deficiencies in student academic performance. Activities in this category may involve tutoring, academic enrichment, or other forms of service delivery that specifically involve students identified as in need of academic improvement.

Activities

Activities refers to statutorily authorized events or undertakings at the center/site that involve one or more program participants.

Adult Family Member Attendees

This term refers to adults age 19 or older who are not in elementary, middle, or high school and are family members of participating children and who participate in educational services or other activities appropriate for adults provided by the center.

Center or Site

The terms center or site are synonymous and can interchangeably describe an entity where students and families receive services. A community learning center/site offers academic, artistic, and cultural enrichment opportunities to students and their families during non-school hours (before or after school) or periods when school is not in session. A center/site supported with 21st CCLC funds is the physical location where participating students and adults receive grant-funded services and activities.

Character Education Programs

These activities discourage youth from engaging in high-risk behaviors while promoting the amelioration of the causal factors that may lead youth to participate in such activities. Instruction occurs through counseling and support, and/or the cultivation of core ethical values such as caring, honesty, fairness, responsibility, and respect for self and others.

Community Based Organization (CBO)

A CBO is an entity organized and operated exclusively for one or more of the purposes set forth in their 501(c)(3) status. CBOs are not classifiable as a nationally affiliated nonprofit agency or a faith-based organization.

Community Partner

A community partner is an organization other than the grantee/program that actively contributes to the 21st CCLC funded project.

Expanded Library Hours.

21st CCLC programs use funds to expand the normal operating hours of a library.

Faith-Based Organization (FBO)

An FBO is an entity whose primary program area is religion related. FBOs could be a religious congregation or an organization that primarily undertakes activities that are of a religious nature. (For the purposes of this grant, YWCAs and YMCAs are not faith-based organizations.)

Grantee or Program

The terms grantee and program are synonymous and interchangeably describe the entity serving as the fiduciary agent for a given 21st CCLC grant[10]. Grantees or programs receive funding for 5 years. Funding for the first 3 years is 100% with a decrease in funds occurring in years 4 and 5. By year 5, grantees or programs must demonstrate sustainability through matching funds.

Project or Program Director

The project or program director is the person chosen by the grantee to oversee the daily operations of the program's centers and to supervise the staff employed at each site.

Recreational Activities

These activities are not academic in nature but rather allow students time to relax or play. Sports, games, and clubs fall into this category. Primary lessons learned in recreational activities are in the areas of social skills, teamwork, leadership, competition, and discipline.

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[10] A grantee or program may have received 21st CCLC funding under the name of the fiduciary agent but be known in the community by another name.

Youth Leadership Activities

These activities intentionally promote youth leadership through skill development and the provision of formal leadership opportunities that foster and inspire leadership aptitude in participating youth. (adapted from the U.S. Department of Education, n.d.).

Summary

Although public school teachers and students have been under increasing pressure to demonstrate academic proficiency on standardized tests, the need for a democratic education is still quite prevalent. As much as lessons in the subject areas are important to the growth and development of our youth, character lessons on responsibility and citizenship are just as valuable. I contend that because there are time and political constraints in the regular classroom setting, afterschool programs provide the time and space necessary for students to acquire the aforementioned skills. Through these programs, teachers are able to demonstrate an ethic of caring that is not as visible in the regular school day. They are also able to incorporate character-building lessons and activities using culturally relevant teaching practices. Therefore, this qualitative study explored how staff members in one particular afterschool program, 21st CCLC, exhibited caring, culturally relevant pedagogy, and character education activities in an effort to produce democratic citizens. The literature review for this study presents empirical studies on these themes. The methodological orientation for this study was qualitative in nature so I addressed methods from this paradigm in Chapter 3. Finally, Chapters 4 and 5 present findings from the study and offer recommendations that will potentially help inform future decisions on the importance and relevance of afterschool programs.

CHAPTER 2

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

Introduction

Afterschool programs, such as 21st CCLC, often provide the venue for students to acquire democratic skills, such as responsibility and tolerance that are often missing from traditional public school classrooms (Davis, 2007; Gutmann, 1987; Solley, 2007). Many families are also choosing afterschool programs to increase their child's academic and personal development while providing structure and supervision during the immediate afterschool hours (Halpern, 2002). The increase in number of afterschool programs has been accompanied by an increase in research on their effectiveness (Zhang & Byrd, 2005). As researchers and policymakers continue to consider the benefits of afterschool programs, the need to conduct methodical and comprehensive investigations has become a necessary programming component (Perkins-Gough, 2003). Substantial investments have already been made to learn about what types of OST programs work, for whom they work, why they work, and how to improve them (Harvard Family Research Project, 2006).

State-funded and locally sponsored programs are responding to the ever-changing personal and social needs of students while they are also being held accountable for increases in academic success. These programs provide a second chance for many students attempting to combat the ills of society and the higher level of competition and repercussions associated with poor test performance (Posner & Vandell, 1994). The

programs offer opportunities not otherwise realized in the regular school day. The 21st CCLC program is no different in that the students have opportunities to grow socially, emotionally, and academically. Through lessons and activities that address their home lives, communities, culture, and character, students in the program experience a connection to their personal growth and academic development. Students enrolled in this program have the opportunity to interact with caring teachers who incorporate culturally relevant pedagogy and character education into their afterschool lessons.

The first portion of the review of literature reflects national and statewide evaluations on 21st CCLC. Evaluation reports have been influential to the development of the program's progress since its inception in 1997 (U.S. Department of Education, 2007). It is important to note the differences between evaluations and social science research. Although some of the data collection methods are similar, there are definitive differences between the two approaches (Priest, 2001). According to Scriven (2003), the differences are clear:

> Evaluation determines merit, worth, or value of things. . . . Social science research, by contrast, does not aim for or achieve evaluative conclusions. It is restricted to empirical (rather than evaluative) research, and bases its conclusions only on factual results–that is, observed, measured, or calculated data. Social science research does not establish standards or values and then integrate them with factual result to reach evaluative conclusions. (p. 1)

Evaluation research suggests the need for judgment. For example, evaluators may ask how effective or ineffective, adequate or inadequate, and good or bad is a particular program (Stufflebeam, 2001). Evaluation is specific to a program or project, asking how it best can accomplish its goals (often called formative evaluation) and documenting whether these goals are accomplished in the end (often called summative evaluation) (Fain, 2005). The 21st CCLC evaluation reports discussed in the literature review

addressed the program's relationship to academic achievement and attendance in the regular day school. The evaluators in these studies judged the program's effectiveness to meet the expectations of national and local administrators. This act of assessing value is not a factor of social science research (Patton, 2002).

The remainder of the literature review addresses empirical, peer-reviewed, social science studies that reflect the utilization of qualitative methods. I chose to review these studies because their methodology mirrored the methods I used in this dissertation. Much like this dissertation, each study was non-judgmental and incorporated semi-structured interviews, participant observations, and/or document analyses. Unlike their quantitative counterparts, the studies in this portion of the review are exploratory, humanistic, and occur within the participants' natural setting. In addition to the qualitative focus of the literature, the majority of the studies reflect the variety of programming in afterschool centers nationwide. Through this literature, readers are privy to the creative programming efforts, missions, and perspectives that are inherent within the realm of afterschool programs.

I begin this portion of the review by describing the theoretical underpinnings of caring, culturally relevant pedagogy, and character education. I then conceptualize the literature into themes that addressed the empowerment of marginalized groups through creative programming and pedagogy, building partnerships with communities, teacher perceptions of their praxis, and the preparation of future educators. I discuss the literature on afterschool programs, caring in education, culturally relevant pedagogy, and character education in conjunction with the themes that derived from the review of empirical studies.

21st CCLC Evaluations

As researchers and policymakers continue to consider the benefits of afterschool programs (Perkins-Gough, 2003), the need to conduct methodical and comprehensive evaluations has become a necessary programming component. Substantial investments have already been made to learn about what types of OST programs work, for whom they work, why they work, and how to improve them (Harvard Family Research Project, 2006). State-funded and locally sponsored programs are responding to the ever-changing needs of students while being held accountable for increases in academic success.

Because of the increases in academic standards and the demand for quality afterschool programs, several publications (articles, books, research briefs, and evaluation reports) have documented the successes and challenges afterschool programs encounter (Fashola, 2002; Dynarski & Moore, 2003; Halpern, 2003; Hill, 2004; Posner & Vandell, 1999; & Zhang & Byrd, 2005). Through these studies, grantees are being provided with an "inside perspective" of their program's daily operations through the voices of their participants, families, and staff.

To date, one of the largest and most rigorous examinations of school-based afterschool programs (U.S. Department of Education, 2003) came in the form of a nation-wide evaluation entitled, *When Schools Stay Open Late: The National Evaluation of the 21st Century Community Learning Centers Program*. This study was one of the first investigations under the NCLB Act's definition of scientifically based research. According to the definition this type of research:

> (i) employs systematic, empirical methods that draw on observation and experiment, (ii) involves rigorous data analyses that are adequate to test the stated hypotheses and justify the general conclusions drawn, (iii) relies on measurements or observational methods that provide valid data across

> evaluators and observers and across multiple measurements and observations, and (iv) has been accepted by a peer-reviewed journal or approved by a panel of independent experts through comparatively rigorous, objective, and scientific review. (Public Law 107-110, 115 Stat. 1550-1551)

Although much anticipated, the study and its findings, especially those from year-one, were very controversial (Gewertz, 2005; Chappell, 2006). According to Perkins-Gough (2003) the 21st CCLC report, "generated an outpouring of responses criticizing its methodology" (p. 1).

The three-year study, conducted by Mathematica Policy Research, Inc[11], examined characteristics of typical programs to discover the impact on students' academic skills, test scores, and behaviors in the classroom and out of school after attendance in 21st CCLC programs nation-wide. The study also intended to evaluate how 21st CCLC programs affected students' sense of safety and whether different types of students experience dissimilar effects from the services rendered. Although deemed comprehensive, this study did not address pedagogies and techniques for learning academic and democratic concepts like this current dissertation. Over the course of three years, the evaluation team intended to answer the following questions:

1. Did the program improve student outcomes, such as supervision after school, safety after school, academic achievement, behavior, and social and emotional development?
2. What types of students benefited the most?
3. What were the features and characteristics of programs? (Mathematica, 2005)

The first year of the study occurred during the 2000-2001 school year and included both middle and elementary school students. The middle school study consisted of a nationally representative sample of 21st CCLC afterschool programs and participants

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[11] This company will be referred to as Mathematica for the remainder of this review.

as well as a matched comparison group of students similar to those participating in the program. Participant and comparison groups were similar on baseline characteristics such as English proficiency, parental discipline, receipt of government funding, behavior, and student empathy. They were admittedly different in that a larger proportion of middle school participants lived in low-income households and were more likely to be from a single-parent household where the mother or father held less than a four-year degree. These differences were problematic because with this technique, each member of one group is supposed to have a direct counterpart in another group (Gay, Mills, & Airasian, 2006). Incorporating unequal comparison groups into a study, such as this, can lead to invalid results. In total, 4,300 students from 32 school districts and 61 centers participated in the middle school study.

The elementary school study, however, had more applicants then available spaces so this portion of the study facilitated the use of an experimental design. Data collection methods included a random assignment of students to treatment and control groups. The evaluation team claimed that the elementary schools in the study were representative of typical 21st CCLC elementary schools but encouraged stakeholders and readers to use caution during the interpretation and application of findings. According to the evaluation team, the treatment group included more students from urban communities and served a larger percentage of minority students than the average elementary program (Mathematica, 2003). In total, this portion of the study included 1,000 students from 7 school districts and 18 centers. The differences in the middle school comparison groups and the disparities in the sample of elementary schools presented limitations and contributed to the controversy surrounding the study.

The evaluation team utilized both qualitative and quantitative methods to collect and analyze data. After conducting a document review, observing for two to four days at each site, reviewing school records, and disseminating surveys and questionnaires, the findings from the first year of the evaluation suggested that 21st CCLC participants and non-participants were quite similar. According to the U.S. Department of Education's Office of the Under Secretary (2003):

> While 21st Century afterschool centers changed where and with whom students spent some of their afterschool time and increased parental involvement, they had limited influence on academic performance, no influence on feelings of safety or on the number of "latchkey" children and some negative influences on behavior (p. 1).

Although the evaluators warned readers to use caution regarding the findings of the study, significant policy changes and decisions were enforced as a result. The same day Mathematica released the findings to the public, February 3, 2003, the federal government announced that 21st CCLC funds decreased by 40 percent (from a $1 billion dollar budget in 2003 to a $600 million dollar budget in 2004). This reduction in appropriated funding sparked a large debate between afterschool advocates and policymakers. Researchers such as Mahoney and Zigler (2006) and Kane (2004) heavily criticized the methodology used by the research group as well as its subsequent findings. The researchers critiqued the scientific adequacy of the national evaluation and the government was questioned for making premature decisions on a study that had unmatched comparison groups, limitations on generalizability, and unstable sample sizes (Mahoney & Zigler, 2006). In response to the public display of criticism, Mathematica presented a rebuttal (Dynarksi, 2003) in the form of a conference presentation at the Brookings Institution Stakeholder Forum on After-School Programs. Their presentation

defended their methodology and findings but also assured the public that their remaining two years of evaluation included rigorous data collection and more effective sampling.

In fact, in year two of the study (2001-2002 school year) the evaluation team collected the same type of data but added more elementary school programs and tracked the same middle school students for a second year. In the third and final year, (2002-2003 school year) the team focused primarily on elementary schools and followed up with the first and second cohort of elementary school students through document analysis, surveys, observations, and achievement data. At the conclusion of the three-year study, Mathematica (2005) released their final report. It was their contention that participation in 21st CCLC programs was beneficial to both elementary and middle school students because they felt safer and their attendance in the day school increased. The team determined that for elementary school sites, parents were more likely to participate in day school events if their child attended the 21st CCLC afterschool program. They concluded, however, that participants in both the elementary and middle school programs were no more likely to have higher academic achievement scores in comparison to nonparticipants.

Without analyzing growth, in conjunction with actual scores, it is difficult to assess if students have benefited from services rendered (Bernard, 2002). Because of the variations by state and the amendment of 21st CCLC autonomy from the federal government to state-mandated programs, I argue that national evaluations such as this do not capture each individual state's autonomy and cannot serve to demonstrate localized accountability. There have been many statewide evaluations conducted on 21st CCLC

programs (Bennet, 2004; Hill, 2004; Birkby & Illback, 2002). This studies in this review from Louisiana and Texas represent 21st CCLC evaluations conducted statewide.

The 21st CCLC program in Louisiana mirrors the goals and objectives set forth by the U.S. Department of Education. Homework assistance, technology, recreational activities, and academic support are among the activities the program offers to elementary and middle school students with administrative support coming from the state's Department of Education. During the evaluation year (2003-2004), the program had a total of 16 centers and 5,375 students. The purpose of the year-long study was to examine academic impacts of the program on participants (Jenner, 2004). The evaluation addressed the following research questions:

1. Did participants show improved test scores compared to nonparticipants?
2. Did attendance intensity impact academic growth?
3. Did particular participant groups (race/ethnicity, gender, baseline achievement levels) show greater academic improvements?
4. How did participating programs differ in academic impacts?

For the purposes of this study, four 21st CCLC programs in Louisiana participated: two in rural areas and two in urban areas. The students participating in the study were either in the third or fifth grade. The author did not state why she only chose four sites out of the 16 nor did she justify selecting grades three and five. One can only speculate that the evaluator chose grades three and five based on the federal guidelines that prohibited the promotion of low-achieving students in those specific grades.[12]

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[12] For more on this guideline, please see the NCLB Act of 2001.

This study compared youth who attended the program at least 30 days, 60 days, and 90 days to a group of similar students not participating in the program[13]. Jenner (2004) statistically matched both groups on gender, free and reduced lunch qualifications and type of community (rural or urban). This helped to discern if attendance, otherwise known as dosage, related to academic achievement. "This [data collection method] is a central issue in the evaluation of after-school programs because without the proper documentation of childrens' attendance, researchers have little knowledge of children's program exposure" (Riggs, 2006, p. 77). Evaluators also collected pretest and posttest data from participants as well as the comparison group.[14] Examinations of pretest and posttest scores included an analysis for gains based on the ITBS (Iowa Test of Basic Skills) for both the participants and comparison groups with scores disaggregated by race, gender, and intensity of attendance. The evaluator also conducted focus groups and interviews with project directors and conducted in-depth observations at all four sites.

The findings from the study revealed that 21st CCLC programs in Louisiana varied in structure of academic lessons and activities with each center's lesson plans and subsequent activities focused primarily on hands-on activities, small groups, homework assistance, test preparation, group work and direct instruction. Participants who attended the program 30 days or more demonstrated significant academic growth over nonparticipants on core ITBS scores such as language arts, reading, and social studies

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[13] According to national 21st CCLC guidelines, attendance in a program is considered "regular" if a student attends for 30 days or more.

[14] Race was difficult to match and analyze because minorities were more concentrated in certain sites.

(Jenner, 2004)[15]. Male and female participants also demonstrated significant academic growth in comparison to nonparticipants. However, in the areas of math and science, differences were not significant between the groups. These findings suggested that the program is succeeding in meeting the academic needs of its students in some areas but not others. Based on these findings, program staff was encouraged to consider finding ways to increase the academic rigor they provide in math and science as these subject areas represented important aspects of their educational program.

In Texas, preschool through high school students also have the opportunity to attend a 21st CCLC afterschool program. In addition to the goals and objectives set forth by the federal government, the program in Texas is unique in that grantees do not offer field trips and program directors may not oversee more than five centers. Based on the needs of the Texas Education Agency, a year-long evaluation of the program's 32 grantees was conducted to examine the effect of program participation on youth academic performance. The study, conducted during the 2003-2004 school year, consisted of 136 21st CCLC sites and 35,154 students. Of all the students in the statewide program, low-income students and families represented 81% of the population; a percentage consistent with the target population of all 21st CCLC .

According to the evaluators (Moellmer, Shields, & Castaneda, 2005) data were collected from grantees by utilizing pretest/posttest scores in reading, math, and science. Evaluators assessed students' participation in the overall program as well as student-chosen activities. Grantees collected secondary data by submitting progress reports,

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[15] The evaluator determined that the participants who attended 60 or more days and 90 or more days experienced nearly the same academic growth as those that attended 30 or more days.

spreadsheets of activities chosen by students, family participation information, community partnerships, and attendance rates. Grantees were also asked to provide evaluators with preprogram and postprogram standardized test scores from both the fall and spring. According to the evaluation team, all of the students tested in the fall had matched pretest/posttest data (2,013 in the fall for reading and 1,559 in the fall for math). Although the evaluators utilized the same standardized tests to assess students' academic performance, the study could have been stronger with the addition of qualitative data collection methods and analyses. Whether through interviews with the program staff, students, parents, and regular day teachers or by observing academic activities, evaluators could have garnered a perspective about academic performance not revealed through statistical analyses.

The findings from the study suggested that attendance in the program resulted in a significant increase in reading grades and test scores. "In the fall average grades for all 21st CCLC participants were in the low B range, with average grades in the spring in the high B range" (p. 8). After controlling for gender and race, students who participated in 26 %- 50%, 51% – 75%, and over 75% of the program's reading activities showed a significant ($p < .05$) increased ability than the students that attended less than 25%. However, much like the study in Louisiana, evaluators determined that students participating in 26% - 50%, 51% - 75%, and over 75% of the math tutorials were no more equipped to improve their math ability than students that participated in less than 25% of the available activities.

Another important finding from the study came in the form of the evaluators' assessment of the program's family involvement. Although all parents and family

members of participating students were eligible to participate in family- centered activities, the study determined that only 5% of fall and 7% of spring participants had one or more adult family member actually involved in 21st CCLC afterschool activities. Evaluators contributed the lack of parental involvement to the community's economic deficits and subsequent need of the parents to work extended hours. This finding reflects one of the challenges faced by many 21st CCLCs as well other afterschool programs nationwide (Family Involvement Network of Educators (FINE), 2006). Based on this barrier, specific quality indicators such as the involvement of communities, parents, and family members will continue to be key factors in evaluation and research.

Programs and centers sponsored by 21st CCLC funding provide students with opportunities for academic, social, and personal advancement by providing more time to learn and by engaging them in other educational activities outside of the structured school day (Riley, Cohen, Peterson, de Kanter, Conaty, & Stonehill, 2000). Programs are not only concerned with the provision of services but are increasingly becoming more interested in offering quality programming. "Funding for after-school programs has increased dramatically and there has been a corresponding increase in the need for sound evaluations to document the quality and impact of the programs" (Scott-Little, Hamann, & Jurs, 2002, p. 387).

The national and statewide evaluations presented in this review offered judgments regarding each program's impact on academic improvement, attendance, social behaviors, and standardized test scores. Although they addressed the needs of students by race, ethnicity, class, and gender, they did not discuss the democratic values of openness, responsibility, and civility addressed in this dissertation. The 21st CCLC

programs staff in this study adhered to quality standards but also displayed other characteristics not otherwise captured within the realm of the published evaluations. The staff seemed to go beyond the confines of attendance and other NCLB mandates to deliver academic, social, and personal instruction. The ethic of care the staff provided through culturally relevant pedagogy and character building extended beyond the expectations of a quality program. The literature presented in the next portion of the review represents the theoretical foundations I utilized in this study as well as the themes that emerged from an analysis of empirical studies.

Theoretical Foundations

Afterschool Programs

"Funding for after-school programs has increased dramatically and there has been a corresponding increase in the need for sound research that documents the quality and impact of the programs" (Scott-Little, Hamann, & Jurs, 2002, p. 387). With the increases in academic standards and the demand for quality afterschool programs, several researchers have begun to document the successes and challenges afterschool programs encounter (e.g., Dynarski & Moore, 2003; Fashola, 2002; Halpern, 2003; Hill, 2004; Posner & Vandell, 1999; Zhang & Byrd, 2005). Based on this empirical research, afterschool programs seem to have an "inside perspective" of their program's daily operations through the voices of their participants, families, and staff. This research has shown that afterschool programs are not only concerned with the provision of services but are increasingly becoming more interested in offering quality programming. Because of this shift in priorities, researchers have conducted studies on the various programmatic features that equate to successful implementation of afterschool programs nationwide.

According to Belle (1999), “the quality of after-school programs is a pressing topic for further investigation because children’s experiences vary enormously from one program to another” (p. 166).

Indeed, researchers charged with the task of exploring program quality in after-school settings have much to consider as “quality has to do with nuance, with detail, with the subtle and unique things that make a difference beyond points on a standardized scale” (Patton, 1987, p. 30). For example, in the 4-year study on Houston’s After School Achievement Program (ASAP), Smith and Zhang (2001) used academic achievement and violence prevention as indicators of success while Little (2007) investigated attendance, supervision, and linkages to schools and communities. Because of the context specific nature of afterschool programs, they easily lend themselves to the openness and naturalistic characteristics of qualitative research. Much like the qualitative study on the Extended Service Schools Initiative by Grossman et al. (2002), this current study on the caring aspect of 21st CCLC afterschool programs relies on this methodological approach.

Caring in Education

The critically acclaimed film, *Children of a Lesser God* (Palmer, Sugarman, & Haines, 1986), depicted caring in an educational setting. The movie’s main character, James Leeds, was a teacher who taught students who were deaf or hearing impaired. Although he did not initially see the potential of his students, he learned to appreciate their strengths and eventually embodied what caring theorists, researchers, and educators alike would consider a strong example of a caring teacher. Dillon and Stines (1996) described traits caring teachers should possess:

> These [traits] include honesty, respect, understanding, kindness, and compassion; taking extra time, following through, and remembering

> details; positive reinforcement and praise; individualized one-to-one instruction; attentive and nonjudgmental listening; smiling and exhibiting a sense of humor; sensitivity to students' needs; and positive role modeling. (p. 115)

Although the Leeds character was fictional, he demonstrated an ethic of caring that prominent caring theorists such as Nel Noddings hold in high regard. According to Noddings (1992), schools should be viewed as centers of care where students are cared for and are encouraged to learn to care. She delineated four elements that comprise the ethic of caring:

1. Modeling: showing students how to care by creating caring relationships with them
2. Dialogue: a genuine openness with the cared for in which both students and teachers get to know each other
3. Practice: teachers' providing opportunities for students to demonstrate their own ethics of caring
4. Confirmation: recognizing strengths and highlighting them as assets

It is difficult to operationalize a definition of caring that would meet the requirements for all schools, teachers, classrooms, and students. The ethic and demonstration of caring is context specific and has taken on many forms in a multitude of educational disciplines. For example, Rogers and Webb (1991) simply argued that "Good teachers care, and good teaching is inextricably linked to specific acts of caring." (p. 174) while Prillaman, Eaker, and Kendrick (1994) troubled the notion of caring by calling it "endlessly complex, inherently unstable, subject to change over time, and inevitably grounded not only in each person's but every culture's own contextual experience of relationships" (p. 19). Noddings (1992) suggested,

> Caring cannot be achieved by a formula. It requires address and response; it requires different behaviors from situation to situation and person to person. It sometimes calls for toughness and sometimes tenderness. With cool, formal people, we respond caringly with deference and respect; with warm informal people, we respond caringly with hugs and overt affection. Some situations require only a few minutes of attentive care; others require continuous effort over long periods of time. (p. i)

Many researchers have offered their own definitions of caring in education (e.g., Davis, 2001; Fischman, 2005; Knesting & Waldron; Noddings 1986, 1992; Reno & Riley, 2000; Valenzuela, 1999). Zorn (2000) also captured this notion by stating:

> It includes, but is not limited to, concern. It is a quality in the character of the giver that is experienced by a receiver. The giver is persistent. The receiver cannot easily cast off care from the giver. Like a burr that is difficult to pull off a sweater, caring is difficult to be cast off by the student. Caring is not limited by time or effort but is characterized by the steadfast commitment of the giver. It requires stamina and painstaking attention and persistent guidance. Indeed caring cannot exist without a willingness to hang on and not release. This watchful attention requires commitment, steadfastness, and determination. (p. 115)

Because there are many definitions and theoretical approaches toward caring in education, the literature in this review exemplifies the variation in the field.

Culturally Relevant Pedagogy

Historically, public schools have ignored the needs of students that are racially, culturally, and ethnically diverse. In fact, Shinn (1972) argued,

> Often school curricula are rendered ineffectual due to myths and misconceptions about the lifestyles of ethnic minorities and youth sub-cultures. Consequently, the expectations and constraints placed upon children from diverse sub-cultures adversely affect their self-concept and augment alienation. (p. xiii)

Although he made that argument 35 years ago, his sentiment remains the same today and is the crux of the argument for culturally infused educational practices. Culturally relevant pedagogy is a framework that intends to counter the dominant perspectives and ideologies. In the literature, this pedagogical technique is often called a myriad of terms.

Referring to culturally relevant pedagogy, researchers have used the terms culturally sensitive pedagogy, culturally relevant teaching, and culturally responsive teaching interchangeably[16]. This method of approaching education involves striving toward excellence in a student's academic and personal life while acknowledging culture and race as assets. The first premise is that "classrooms are not culturally neutral terrains" (Boykin, Tyler, & Miller, 2005). Gay (2000) asserted that culture is at the heart of all we do in the name of education, whether that is curriculum, instruction, administration, or performance assessment. Therefore, "culturally relevant teaching is a pedagogy that empowers students intellectually, socially, emotionally, and politically by using cultural referents to impart knowledge, skills, and attitudes" (Ladson-Billings, 1994, pp. 17-18).

Ladson-Billings (1995) further outlined the need for a curriculum that addresses the needs of academically disadvantaged African American students, stating that she believed that culturally relevant pedagogy rests on three criteria:

1. Students must experience academic success.
2. Students must develop and/or maintain cultural competence.
3. Students must develop a critical consciousness through which they challenge the status quo of the current social order.

To provide culturally relevant pedagogy, teachers "must critically analyze important issues such as race, ethnicity, and culture, and recognize how these important concepts shape the learning experience for many students (Howard, 2003, p. 195). Howard (2001b) also argued:

> The concept of culturally relevant teaching is an attempt to create a schooling experience that enables students to pursue academic excellence

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[16] With the exception of direct quotes, I will utilize the term culturally relevant pedagogy to denote the incorporation of culture as an asset during the educational experience.

> without abandoning their cultural integrity. Thus, the ways of communicating, conceptions of knowledge, methods of learning, and the overall context of the educative process are situated within a framework that is consistent with the students' cultural background. (p. 136)

According to Heflin (2002), culturally responsive teachers should ask themselves the following questions:

- How can the methods I use tap into the culturally conscious themes of the literature?
- How can the methods I use integrate call and response interaction patterns?
- How can the methods I use draw on my student's community, home, culture, and history?
- How can the methods I use create opportunities for students to link their personal lives to the literature? (p. 233)

Howard (2001) further addressed the need for culturally relevant pedagogy by stating that "the call for culturally sensitive teaching strategies is partly a response to theorists who have suggested that the infusion of ethnic content alone in school curriculum is not enough to meet the academic needs of nonmainstream students" (p. 135).

Instead of incorporating a colorblind teaching method like multiculturalism (Cuban, 1972), culturally relevant pedagogy allows students of color to be proud of their race and ethnicity. It requires teachers "to go beyond mere awareness of, respect for, and general recognition of the fact that different ethnic groups exist" (Brown, 2007, p. 59). In fact, Stevens and Charles (2005) argued that although educators have made substantial gains, there is much room for growth as multiculturalism has not affected attitudinal change in teachers and students regarding issues of social justice and tolerance. They also stated:

> Research indicates that multicultural educational reform, for the most part, has been relegated to student knowledge, and as a result, has been superficial. Left insufficiently addressed have been the more difficult tasks of

> building understanding and respect among diverse groups of students, eradicating racist and sexist attitudes, and teaching tolerance (p. 17).

Culturally relevant pedagogy uses culture, race, and racism as a site of learning. These practices "can lead [students] down the path towards lifelong learning and ultimately provokes a desire for positive social change" (Lane, 2006). Many school systems have found meaningful ways to use cultural concepts in the classroom. In fact, Tinkler (2006) stated,

> Everyone working in the field of education is aware of the increasing diversity of students in American's K-12 classrooms. No Child Left Behind has brought greater public awareness of this growing diversity and the corresponding achievement gap that many school districts face. In an attempt to address this gap, some school districts are exploring ideas of culturally relevant pedagogy and multicultural education in their schools. (p. 251)

In essence, culturally relevant pedagogy provides a way to teach the subjects that are required without alienating the strength of culture and race. It constructs a bridge between academics and culture that is necessary for a positive self-awareness and identity. Students who possess a strong sense of self are very capable of achieving success despite oppression within or by the dominant culture (Ladson-Billings, 1994). To overcome this oppression, teachers have incorporated a variety of teaching methods that illuminate the cultures of their students. This variety of methods is crucial as culture is context specific. In fact, Seidl (2007) argued, "Given that culture is influenced by and shifts across contexts such as socioeconomic class, geography, and age, it is problematic to talk about culture as though it is monolithic and static" (p. 179). Therefore, the literature in this review represents culturally relevant pedagogy, in practice, from a multitude of different perspectives. The majority of the studies, however, reflect strategies that are for or about

African American students. This representation is consistent with the racial demographics of the students in this study.

Character Education

Our current state of education has equated to a relentless and, as it turns out, hapless drive for academic adequacy (Noddings, 1995a). Despite this shift toward high-stakes testing,

> both history and common sense tell us that a democratic society expects much more. It wants graduates who exhibit sound character, have a social conscience, think critically, are willing to make commitments, and are aware of global problems. (Soder, Goodlad, & McMannon, 2001)

As a sole entity, academic instruction does not suffice.

Acquiring academic skills is, without a doubt, an important facet of schooling; however, this knowledge base does not adequately address all the needs of students. In addition to striving toward academic success, schools around the nation are also gearing lessons and activities to the overall development of their students. “Development, in this tradition, is conceived broadly as the all-around growth of the individual, which may include the development of moral, intellectual, spiritual, and creative capacities” (Kyle & Jenks, 2002, p. 153.) According to Noddings (1995), educators can begin this process by asking the following questions: What do we want for our children? What do they need from education? What does our society need? (p. 365). Character education offers a response to these questions by instilling formal and informal discussions and activities aimed toward developing the “whole child.” It allows students to gain knowledge while developmentally and morally advancing in the world around them (DeRoche & Williams, 2001).

Acquiring character and moral values represent important, sought after traits. The word "character" comes from the Greek word *charackter*, which means "enduring mark" (Murphy, 1998). In this light, the *charackter* of a person provides distinguishing qualities, which then serve as a guide for their behavior. This quality influences decision-making and embodies the enduring aspects of people that others respect, honor, and emulate. Wynne and Walberg (1985) defined character as "engaging in morally relevant conduct or words, or refraining from certain conduct or words" (p. 5).

Disturbed by the image of students being disrespectful, dishonest, addicted to drugs, and having a propensity to engage in violence and other negative behaviors, many schools have incorporated character education into their school structures. Educators of character hope to instill in their students an attraction to constructive, fruitful behaviors. In essence, character education programs teach students to intersect moral knowing, feeling, and action in an effort to promote positive behaviors (Lickona, 1991). In fact, Murphy (1998) believed the premise of character education to be straightforward:

> Uncivil, irresponsible, and destructive youth behaviors such as disrespect, dishonesty, violence, drug abuse, sexual promiscuity, and a poor work ethic have a common core, namely, the absence of good character. Character education, unlike piecemeal reforms, offers the hope of improvement in all these areas. It reminds us that we shouldn't wait for kids to do something wrong before teaching them what's right. (pp xiii-xiv)

Character education rests on the notion that there are virtues that equate to admirable human qualities, such as responsibility, honesty, tolerance, and kindness, that students would benefit from learning (Lickona, 1996). Benson (2006) believed character education programs address the following assets: support, empowerment, boundaries and expectations, constructive use of time, commitment to learning, positive values, social competencies, and positive identity (pp. 32-33).

Accomplishing these tasks is most effective by collaborating with a village of caring individuals. DeRoche and Williams (2001) argued,

> As citizens, educators, and parents, we must insist that our children learn to become good, productive, contributing human beings. We must teach them to think rationally and behave responsibly. We must teach the love of learning, along with the love of living in a democratic society where one has rights and freedoms and equally important, responsibilities. (p. xv)

Educators play a crucial role in this village. Instruction in character virtues occurs through a "combination of example, exposure, and experience" (Lewis, 2000, p. 15). The following reviews on character represent the versatility in character education programs within public schools nationwide.

Thematic Review

The articles in this portion of the review seemed to reflect some of the same ideals and premises of 21st CCLC programs. One of the themes addressed the empowerment of marginalized groups through creativity. Much like 21st CCLC, the authors of these articles discussed uplifting students from low-income households as well as African American and female students. The staff members in these articles were student advocates and cared about providing creative outlets for expression. The articles also addressed building partnerships with communities in an effort to demonstrate an ethic of caring that incorporated culture and character development that was relevant and meaningful to the students, families, and surrounding communities.

The final theme addressed perceptions of teachers as they incorporated the theoretical foundations in this study. It also provides a glimpse into teacher preparation programs geared toward instilling caring, culturally responsive, and character-driven dispositions into future educators. In essence, the themes in this review mirror the ideals expressed in this dissertation. Through the theoretical foundations of caring, culturally

relevant pedagogy, and character education, the articles addressed empowering marginalized groups through creativity, building community partnerships, and understanding teacher perceptions of their praxis and preparation.

Empowerment of Marginalized Groups through Creativity

Unfortunately, even though our national ideals emphasize equality, there are numerous examples of marginalization in today's public schools (Pang, 2006). The reviews in this portion of the literature address the instructional practices of teachers and administrators that confronted the conscious and unconscious marginalization of some students. In particular, they present pedagogical and programmatic practices used for the education of students in poverty-stricken communities as well as for African American and female students enrolled in afterschool programs. They also represent an attempt to dispel marginalization and inequality during the regular school day. Through the use of creativity and expression, the authors in this portion of the literature attempted to capture the emphasis on equality in conjunction with the quality programming delivered by the participants in their studies.

Traditionally, public school systems have failed minority students and families (Shokraii, 1996; West-Olatunji, Baker & Brooks, 2006). By incorporating biased testing practices and by teaching students a curriculum written by and for the dominant European culture, public schools leave minority students feeling alienated and unsupported, further perpetuating the invisible status that many marginalized students have in the discourse on school reform (Fine, 1987; Nieto, 1992; Weis & Fine, 1993). Studying programming efforts is also important as most theories and interventions for

children and adolescents are based on research with mostly European American middle-class samples (Tucker & Herman, 2002).

In a study of afterschool program quality, Beck (1999) sought to research and identify quality features of the Manchester Youth Development Center (MYDC). Founded in 1972, the author states that MYDC had “assisted hundreds of young people to overcome the constraints associated with urban poverty” (p. 109). According to Beck, through the center’s past research and years of service to the community, it was determined that attending the center’s afterschool activities had helped to increase high school completion rates. As an example, Beck stated that in 1996 and 1997, 100% of the MYDC participants graduated from high school while only 18.7% graduated from the general student population in the same community. According to the author, in that same year, teenage pregnancies were drastically lower for young women participating in MYDC sponsored activities in comparison to the city’s averages.

Of the approximately 200 K-12 students attending the program, 90% were African American and resided in the same inner-city neighborhood that housed the center, Manchester. Studying this particular subset of marginalized students is important because “for many families, particularly African American families, the after-school hours are an ideal time for providing students with rich, stimulating experiences to which they would not normally have access during the regular school day” (Fashola, 2003, p. 399). In fact, several programs have focused their programming efforts on improving educational opportunities for African American students (Howard, 2001). For example, the Hilltop Emergent Literacy Project (HELP) in Ohio serves the needs of their primarily African American student body by providing cultural and enrichment activities to

students in grades three to five (Bergin, 1992) while the Laser Academy in New York structured their program for African American high school students interested in careers in science and technology (Bieber, Marchese, & Engelberg, 2005).

Beck (1999) depicted the MYDC neighborhood as isolated from thriving businesses and riddled with negative distracters, such as drugs, violence, and poverty. She described the building as a large structure with a gym and music, art, dance, and sewing studios. The computer lab housed nine classrooms to accommodate a large amount of students that rotated through a master schedule created by the center's staff. Although each family was charged a fee of $25.00 every month, some parents paid less and much of the center's activities were subsidized by public and private support.

The purpose of Beck's (1999) study was to explore factors that had consistently made a difference in the lives of the center's attendees. Beck sought to answer the following research questions:

1. How does the MYDC achieve its goals?
2. What are the programmatic, philosophical and leadership factors that support the MYDC's goals?
3. How are those factors implemented?

As previously mentioned, Beck used qualitative methods in her investigation of MYDC. Participant observations were within the parameters of the center and lasted over the course of 6 months. She documented the observations by first writing field notes as inconspicuous jottings but then wrote full notations with observer comments after the observations were completed each day. Memos, or the author's personal thoughts and inclinations, also occurred throughout the course of the study as she aimed to provide rich and thick descriptions. Finally, key informants such as program staff, parents, community

members, and 24 third- and fifth-grade students participated in formal and informal interviews. Beck did not mention or explain why she only chose third- and fifth-grade participants. This was especially interesting as this study occurred prior to the implementation of NCLB and there were no federal guidelines requiring testing in those grades. Including this information would have contributed to the trustworthiness of the study, as readers must speculate as to why she made those grade level choices.

Findings from the study suggested that "MYDC is able to make a difference in the lives of the children at-risk because it is poised to fill critical gaps in the emotional, social, and academic needs of young people" (Beck, 1999, p. 122). Specifically, the author identified six major factors seen as salient in the quality of the services offered. The center and its staff offered the students (a) appropriate and adequate space, (b) strong support of academic endeavors, (c) cultural experiences familiar to the students, (d) a staff comprised of committed authoritative adults, (e) child-centered leadership, and (f) a safe space.

Overall, Beck concluded that the center was responsive to student and community needs while supporting the academic and personal growth of its attendees. Beck recommended that in the future the center provide more aggressive educational support so students would not fall prey to the overwhelming achievement gap. However, she did not address ways the center could accomplish this goal. Beck's (1999) study on the MYDC afterschool program was empowering as it described how students from a poverty-stricken neighborhood used the center's services and opportunities as a positive outlet. The activities the program offered were creative and seemed beneficial to the African American students in attendance.

Just as the MYDC program was focused on providing opportunities to African American students in a poverty-stricken community, Art-First was a community-based program that centered on providing underserved youth opportunities in art instruction and career development (Larson & Walker, 2006). According to Bryan, Owens, and Walker (2004), providing opportunities for marginalized youth to experience creative and performing arts is an important aspect toward closing the achievement gap. Arts-based activities in afterschool programs can play a crucial role in this venture. In fact, the Afterschool Alliance (2005) stated:

> The arts enhance educational experiences for a variety of reasons. There is intrinsic value in having the opportunity to express oneself creatively. Additionally, the fun and engaging nature of the arts can provide opportunities for stealth learning, with drawing as an expertise in geometry, mixing paints as chemistry, dance and music as counting and drama as reading comprehension and public speaking. (p. 2)

Housed in the arts district in a major U.S. city, Art-First had six studios, a college and career center, lounge, library, and two gallery spaces. The afterschool program focused on experiential education, whereas the students learned by doing. According to Larson and Walker, the core of this model is for students to learn through the demonstration of caring as well as through a cycle of preparation or planning with some form of active engagement with the real world. For the students in the program, this process meant that they had to participate in a 6-week career preparation program to be eligible for the main focus of the study, the Art at Work program.

Youth in this program received $6.50 per hour for 20 hours per week. For two afternoons a week, students had an internship in professional art settings. For the program's leader, Rebecca, these internships were important, as she wanted to ensure that the jobs would provide real arts-based training that went beyond clerical tasks and

unchallenging activities. The second portion of Art at Work was for the students to create murals as a professional art project, which provided the students with exposure to deadlines and consultations with clients. This entrepreneurial aspect of the program mirrored other arts-based programs such as the Black Eyed Peas Peapod Music and Arts Academy in California (Harrington, 2007). This afterschool program also focuses on creating a finished product and provides students with caring and culturally relevant instruction geared toward creating a professional musical composition or video production.

Using a qualitative grounded theory approach, Larson and Walker (2006) had two objectives and subsequent research questions:

Objective #1: To understand the experiential learning process in real time, from the point of view of the students in the program.

Research Questions: What are youth's ongoing experiences as they engage in real-world settings or projects? How do these shape their thoughts, actions, and developmental processes?

Objective #2. To understand the role of adult program leaders in facilitating the program processes.

Research Question: How do leaders keep youth engaged at the same time that the youth are being challenged with novel settings and demands?

To understand the experiences of the youth in the program, the authors conducted interviews with the students, as well as Rebecca, over the course of the two 6-week periods. Larson and Walker (2006) asked Rebecca to select 12 youth out of the 16 students in the program to participate in the study because their funding source was only allocated for that amount. All 12 of the students Rebecca chose agreed to participate in the study. Six of the students were Latino or Latina, two were Asian American, two were White, and two identified themselves as multiracial. Larson and Walker could not obtain

specific socioeconomic data on the participants but through U.S. Census Data, they determined that the median household income was $39,605, which was consistent with the median for the city, $38,625.

Larson and Walker (2006) included a range of open-ended questions in their interviews and, over the course of the study, conducted 67 in-person and telephone interviews. Rebecca also participated in the interview process as the researchers wanted to know more about the role she played in shaping the youth's development. To triangulate their data, the authors conducted four observations of the program sessions and examined documents Rebecca provided about the program.

Larson and Walker (2006) analyzed the study three different ways. They first examined the leaders' intentions for the program and the challenges they endured. Next they focused on the sequence of activities and experiences of the students. Lastly, the authors addressed the two research objectives for each program cycle. As is the case in many other qualitative studies, two unplanned events occurred during the analysis phase of the study. First, the authors discovered that the internships were not as challenging as they had hoped. During the interviews, they discovered that the students were serving as postal carriers and data entry clerks. This was not the intention of the internships. Because the students were still involved in the program and the study was ongoing, the authors conducted an impromptu focus group about the subject and later asked Rebecca to speak to the employers about this emergent theme.

"This case study suggested how organized youth programs can provide young people successful experiences learning to deal with the challenges, constraints, and hard knocks of the real world" (Larson & Walker, 2006, p. 262.). The students were

challenged to be creative and then, through the experiential learning process, adapted to their situations and learned from them. Through interviews with Rebecca, the authors learned that she was proactive and reactive in nurturing and caring for the students. The authors suggested that further research was needed to examine the racial, gender, and age differences among the youth in an effort to note how the particular subgroups adapt to the program's goals.

Although many programs provide opportunities to students regardless of gender, race, class, and ethnicity, some programs focus their efforts on a specific sub-group of marginalized students. Under the provisions of NCLB, school leaders and teachers are supposed to be closing the achievement gap so that no child is left behind. School districts are expected to eliminate the gaps among racial, ethnic, and socioeconomic subgroups (Darling-Hammond, 2007). Depending on a particular community's need, some programs have sought to empower female students, male students, or specific racial groups through afterschool activities and lessons. For example, Kennedy, Petersen, and Sullivan (1991) discovered that single-sex educational strategies were important as girls benefit from space in which they can assume leadership and avoid competing with boys. Denner, Meyer, and Bean (2005) also argued for the importance of female leadership in their study of a Young Women's Leadership Alliance (YWLA) program. The girls in this group focused on developing leadership skills with a focus on equity awareness, research, and the creation of individual research projects.

Supporting the leadership efforts of young women was of equal importance to Mono and Keenan (2000). The Afterschool Girls Leadership Program (ASGL) was created to combat the stresses that coincide with adolescent girls in the school

environment. According to the authors, these stressors can include puberty, changes in school environment, unequal opportunities in classrooms, and inconsistent expectations based on their gender. The authors reflected on a 1991 survey by the American Association of University Women (AAUW) that stated that these stressors might contribute to several unhealthy outcomes for girls such as low self-esteem, unfavorable self-image, depression, and academic underachievement.

To provide further support for their focus on adolescent girls, Mono and Keenan explained that the AAUW survey discovered that "from elementary school to high school, girls' self-esteem falls on average 31%; 23% for white girls, 7% for black girls, and 38% for Hispanic girls" (p. 117). This decline in self-esteem explained the program's focus on adolescent girls; however, the authors did not address the disparity in the percentages between the races.

Located in a large, urban middle school in Seattle, the demographics of the students were 49% White, 28% Black, 19% Asian, 2% American Indian, and 1% Somalian and Ethiopian. Mono and Keenan (2000) stated that socioeconomic status was unavailable, although one-third of the student body was eligible for free or reduced lunch. They continued to describe the school's community by acknowledging the presence of recent neighborhood gentrification efforts. They stated that a large-chain coffee shop and video store were recently built on the corner and that "homes near the school were being sold (primarily) by black families and renovated by white families" (p. 120).

Much like the all-female science program sponsored by the Society of Women Engineers (Ferreira, 2001), the AGLS program forged a partnership between many caregivers in an effort to provide services to adolescent girls (Mono & Keenan, 2000).

Social workers, public health administrators, and educators worked together in this pilot program to address the needs of girls in grades six through eight. According to the authors, “a few school teachers” (p. 122) and grade level counselors recruited participants to the program. The program coordinators received 9 applications, although only 7 completed the program (two girls dropped out because of lack of transportation and childcare responsibilities). Much like this dissertation, the program’s administrators relied on democratic principles as the foundation for their curriculum design. Following the democratic ideals described by Beane and Apple (1995), the program aimed to have

1. the open flow of ideas
2. concern for the common good
3. trust in the group’s ability to form questions and concerns, and especially
4. the active use of critical thinking to evaluate ideas and experiences

The participants met afterschool for 12 weeks on Tuesdays and Thursdays and discussed, through formal and informal conversations, issues related to their self-awareness and self-esteem (Mono & Keenan, 2000). In an effort to establish leadership, the girls conducted a participatory action research project together where they investigated girls’ healthy consumer choices (e.g., not purchasing from sweatshops, wise spending). They collected data through a survey of girls in their local mall. Readers were not privy to the survey or its results but the authors disclosed that because of their survey, the girls decided to design and sew clothing for a range of female body types.

Mono and Keenan (2000) decided to conduct a case study on one of their participants, Krissa J, a student in the eighth grade[17]. After conducting several observations, the authors described her as a student who initially exhibited problematic behaviors but at the conclusion of the pilot program had excelled. Krissa "flawlessly demonstrated the critical thinking steps from the program" (p. 123) and slowly began to increase her self-esteem and decision-making skills. Based on the case study, the authors discovered that (a) it took "the whole school" (p. 123) to deliver the program as intended and (b) the program helped to increase decision-making, especially in conjunction with other asset-building activities. They recommended that the program improve their recruitment efforts (they only asked three teachers to submit names) and the continuation of research past the pilot year in an effort to assess the program's goals and objectives.

Culturally relevant pedagogy can exist within every facet of the public school experience. Hastie, Martin, and Buchanan (2006) focused on the physical education (PE) experiences of the African American students in one southern middle school in the United States. Incorporating culture in the physical realm is also the premise of Sports PLUS Global. Much like Hastie et al, this international organization focuses on delivering educational training to communities using physical fitness and sports to promote human development, social change, and human rights (Wicks, Beedy, Spangler, & Perkins, 2007). Realizing that PE has traditionally catered to White, male, North American ideals, Hastie et al wanted to trouble the notion of this domination by teaching a creative form of African American dancing, called stepping. The purpose of their study

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[17] When a qualitative researcher focuses a study on one participant, he or she is "shadowing" that individual. This person becomes the sole focus of the study (Mills, 2007).

was to examine two teachers' understanding of their teaching practices as they attempted to present a culturally relevant PE program to a class of African American 6th grade students. The authors explored the following research questions:

1. How did these African American children respond to the particular curriculum innovation?
2. What implications did this have for teaching?

The authors in this study were White researchers from their local university. Although they had conducted studies in the school before, they were not insiders and, therefore, had to build rapport with both the teachers and the students. Their racial identity and positionality as researchers initially caused them some discomfort, as they were concerned about delivering material traditionally reserved for African Americans. After careful reflection, the authors believed their desire to be agents of change outweighed their nervousness about the material. The wanted the students to participate in activities that were both meaningful and relevant while allowing for creativity and expression.

After attending a step show at their university, the authors wanted the students to experience stepping during their PE classes. The authors defined the art by stating:

> Stepping is clearly a branch of the African American vernacular dance tree. However, it is not a dance, but a series of synchronized, rhythmical body movements that are combined with chants and, often, verbal play. In stepping there is an absence of musical instruments; the body itself becomes an instrument. Clapping, foot-stamping, and slapping of the hands against various body parts are used to produce multiple rhythms. (p. 296)

Because students would be involved in physical activities that involved many body parts and exercises, the researchers gained approval to conduct the study. Armed with a video of the step show they witnessed, the researchers began their study. As researchers and self-proclaimed "drop-in teachers" (p. 298), the authors in this study stated, "we had ample time to prepare for lessons, and, given there were two of us, we had smaller

groups: we experienced a greater degree of control over the setting than the everyday teacher would experience" (p. 298). The authors served as researchers hoping to gain access and build rapport with the participants in the study.

Two of the authors in this study planned the curriculum of two 40-minute lessons for 6 weeks, taught the lessons, and helped design the program with the students (Hastie et al., 2006). The authors called this a "coming-to-know" process (p. 297) because they had no knowledge of the art of stepping, other than what they witnessed and videotaped at their university's stepshow. The regular PE teacher, Mr. Williams, was an African American man with knowledge of the art of stepping, as he was a member of a fraternity that participated in such activities. The researchers asked him to demonstrate a step on the first day but then, elected not to involve him in any future lessons.

The participants in the class included 42 boys and girls. The authors noted that their participants had limited exposure to stepping and had never had any instruction in the art. Data collection efforts for this study consisted of daily reflections and frequent debriefing interviews with the third author, who acted as an observer during class sessions. The third author, or independent observer, wrote field notes and prompted the two researchers during formal and informal interview sessions. The authors documented their findings with interwoven quotes and jottings from the field notes.

The authors discussed, in detail, their apprehensions about teaching outside of their comfort zones. There was a plethora of information they had to learn before they could instruct the students in their care. They knew they were racial outsiders but also questioned whether they should have been teaching the art of stepping at all, because during their analysis, the researchers noticed that the students often saw themselves as

more knowledgeable and skillful than they. They eventually realized their role shifted from teachers to facilitators, which "disrupted the power relations or hierarchy that is traditionally in place in schools" (p. 302).

Hastie et al. (2006) seemed to learn about their practice as educators and encouraged others to evaluate their positionalities when delivering culturally relevant pedagogy. They were reflective about whether or not they were reinforcing a colonizing relationship, whereas White researchers were teaching a fundamentally African American topic. They also encouraged future teachers to engage with cultural norms to which they are not familiar in an effort to deliver pedagogy that may be appropriate for their students. This study, although seemingly well intentioned, inspired the following question: Who decides what pedagogy is culturally relevant?

The authors' desire to deliver an innovative pedagogy that was creative, meaningful and race-specific to the students seemed genuine but many other issues arose that were beyond the constraints they recognized. For example, the authors seemed to believe that the 6th grade students *should* have known how to step simply because they were Black. Because they lacked experience in this subject and did not mention any research they did on the art, they had misguided assumptions of what the students knew or, in their opinions, *should* know. Although Hastie et al possessed some unfortunate assumptions and misguided notions about their students, there are other researchers that documented good intentions gone awry (Senge, Cambron-McCabe, Lucas, Smith, Dutton, & Kleiner, 2000). For example, in a study by Patterson, Hale, and Stessman (2007) the authors found that instead of the school, Prairie High School, being responsive to the needs of the students, the students were expected to conform to what the school

expected and assumed they needed. These assumptions of need are important and will be addressed in the implications portion of this dissertation.

The literature in this portion of the review symbolized the role teachers and quality programming can play in combating the marginalization of African American and female students. The students enrolled in the MYDC afterschool program were from a poverty-stricken community but the afterschool center provided many opportunities for the majority African American population to experience creativity and expression while combating societal ill and expectations of failure. The Art-First afterschool study implemented the creation of various art projects and helped the students understand about careers in the creative arts. The AGLS study focused on uplifting young women through various leadership opportunities and the PE article instilled, albeit misguided, culturally relevant pedagogy in a subject typically catered toward European students. These articles demonstrated an attempt to quell the marginalization of students from low-income neighborhoods as well as African American and female students.

Building Partnerships with Communities

Today's classrooms often present many challenges to novice and experienced teachers. Educators must contend with historical and contemporary issues in their communities in order for their students to absorb academic material and respect the leadership in the classroom (Crosby, 1999). Often, this requires teachers to incorporate the values and customs of their students' communities into their instructional and management practices. This has been the premise of 21st CCLC since their inception in 1997. According to Wlodkowski and Ginsberg (1995), accomplishing this task is crucial because "any educational or training system that ignores the history or perspective of its

learners or does not attempt to adjust its teaching practices to benefit all its learners is contributing to inequality of opportunity" (p. 26). In their study on the connection between character development and the surrounding community, Peterson, Roebuck, Betts, and Stuart (2005) found it important to determine which community efforts youth valued in an effort to utilize them as partners for successful character education.

The literature in this portion of the review reflects studies on teachers or programs that have built connections with their surrounding communities. One describes the creation of a community-wide afterschool program meant to circumvent the violence and negative stereotypes associated with a specific neighborhood while another describes the pedagogy of caring inherent in two Latino community-based schools. Both of these studies focused on strengthening their respective communities through the educational advancement of public school students.

In 1993, the Philadelphia chapter of Physicians for Social Responsibility (PSR) embarked on an initiative to address the violence that permeated throughout their community. Staff members from a local health center approached the group about creating a program for the 4500 residents in their community. The center was concerned with the increasing number of young males coming to the center because of violent injuries. Many studies are addressing the needs of boys in the public school system. For example, in *Hopeful Girls, Troubled Boys: Race and Gender Disparity in Urban Education* (Lopez, 2003), the stories of inequality by gender and race are told from male students who attended an urban public school in New York City. In her book, Lopez discussed the different educational experiences of males versus females and continued

her argument by stating, “The gender gap in education is most pronounced among racially stigmatized groups, mainly Blacks and Latinos” (p. 2).

The center’s staff was specifically concerned that the adolescent boys would become perpetrators of the violence they endured on a weekly, sometimes, daily basis. Reicher, Stoudt, and Kurtloff (2006) reported that chronic community violence was, in part, a consequence of the poverty the city had endured. In fact, Anderson (1999) chronicled the violence in the Philadelphia area in his book *Code of the Street*. He stated, “of all the problems besetting the poor, inner-city black community, none is more pressing than that of interpersonal violence and aggression” (p. 32). The authors conducted a preliminary needs assessment and argued that “a shrinking city tax base and multiplying needs created community conditions that challenged public safety” (Reichert et al., 2006, p. 188). This preassessment also revealed that the boys were experiencing several emotional, educational, and behavioral reactions that were common outcomes of children’s exposure to community and school violence. This finding mirrored that of Dalton’s (1996) study of the Minority Male Afterschool Program (MMAP). Dalton found that the schools in the Mississippi Delta were facing high obstacles with few allocated resources and educational expenditures. The students, especially the males, in the community were falling victim to the ills of the society that coincided with the increasing poverty level. The MMAP provided culturally relevant character education to minority males in an effort to counteract some of the same struggles faced in Reichert et al’s (2006) study in Philadelphia.

Based on the needs of the community, PSR created the afterschool program, Peaceful Posse. This group was created, in many states, to provide positive opportunities

where boys could become more confident about themselves and their lived experiences. The program's curriculum focused on relationship building, expression, and new ways to handle issues of community violence. According to Grasley, Wolfe, and Wekerle (1999) learning new methods of dealing with violence is essential to establishing patterns of healthy, nonviolent relationships with people that can carry forward to future family members. Although the program began in Philadelphia, it soon spread to other urban areas witnessing the same travesty. Much like this dissertation, the authors' noted the importance of mentoring by caring adults. Other facets of the program focused on healing and strengthening of self-concepts. Through healthy expressions of their experiences, the group's leaders wanted to help the boys discover their personal voices and begin to recover from the traumatic experiences of their boyhood.

To understand the complexities of the program and the experiences of the boys, the researcher incorporated a qualitative approach. The research questions for the study were:

1. How could boys' stories add to what was already understood about this program designed to serve them?
2. How did their exposure to violent neighborhood conditions affect how they see themselves and imagine their lives?
3. How did participants respond in healthy and creative ways to these conditions?

Reichert et al. (2006) used purposeful sampling to choose 10 students out of the 60 participants during the 2003-2004 school year. Group leaders chose the sample based on the amount of time in the program (2 years or more) and looked for boys who demonstrated "a sturdy commitment to the group, its norms, and its leader" (Reichert et. al., 2006, p. 192). The authors did not define what a "sturdy commitment" entailed, nor

did they explain why the participants had to be committed to the program's leader. They did explain that the 10 boys ranged in age from 12 to 17.

Six of the boys were African American and four were Latino. Although each of the participants resided in an urban neighborhood, they represented two different states and three different counties in the Philadelphia area. Data were collected by conducting semi-structured interviews. These interviews grasped the lived experiences of the boys through stories of home, school, and neighborhood survival. Much like this current dissertation, the authors analyzed their data using a qualitative software program, Atlas.ti: The Knowledge Workbench[18]. The analyses of the data revealed five themes.

The first theme was that even though some boys tried not to fight, the rules and codes of the street required many of them to do it anyway. Some of the boys considered fighting something they could never completely avoid. The second theme focused on the tactics and great lengths some of the boys used to circumvent community violence. Some of the participants tried walking in groups, staying away from alleys, and choosing friends that could help them if needed. The third theme was educational in nature. The authors stated,

> Changing classes, bathrooms, recess yards, coming and going to school-all such moments and school spaces placed boys at risk for encounters with violence, derision and a host of challenges that compete with the educational work of schooling for their attention (Reichert et. al, 2006, p. 193).

The fourth theme directly addressed the afterschool program. The boys discussed the importance of attending Peaceful Posse. The boys believed the afterschool program to be

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[18] The authors of this study used an older version of Atlas.ti, version 4.2, to analyze their data. I analyzed the data for this dissertation with version 5.0.

a safe space for them because they were in classes with like-minded boys who were studying non-violent ways. The fifth and final theme focused on how the boys saw themselves and how they wanted others to see them. The boys wanted to be seen as productive citizens and believed the program was helping them achieve that goal.

Because of Peaceful Posse, the students in the program learned how to manage their relationships through strengthened personal identities and self-awareness. The program offered positive role models and skill building to the students in attendance. Based on the stories the boys told, the authors were able to learn more about what the program needed to address in an effort to help the boys. According to the authors, this study alerts program directors to the danger of assuming what students need. The authors encouraged other program administrators to conduct qualitative studies to hear the perspectives of the participants involved in implementing quality programming.

Antrop-González and De Jesús (2006) explored another community initiative. Much like the infusion of other school choice options, such as charter schools, small community-based schools emerged from communities that have experienced educational struggles and culturally hostile political movements (Reid, 2001). In a study of two Latino community-based schools, Antrop-González and De Jesús sought to forge a new caring network that used culture as an asset and privileged the values of communities of color. According to them, this network involved *critical caring*, which was “a term that captured the ways in which communities of color cared about and educated their own” (p. 413).

Citing a notion popularized by the Black-owned clothing company FUBU they argued that the schools in their study were *for the community, by the community*. Much

like Kirmani (2007), they believed all students deserve an education that is responsive to their families, communities, and racial, ethnic, and cultural backgrounds. Indeed, drawing on the culture of the community was of utmost importance in a study of a community-based school for Hmong immigrant youth (Lee & Hawkins, 2008). By incorporating the culture, history, and family structure of this close-knit community, the afterschool program Lee & Hawkins described made educational connections that otherwise might not have been achieved had the community not been taken into consideration.

Throughout their study, Antrop-González and De Jesús (2006) referred to themselves as Puerto Rican/DiaspoRican scholars. They used this term to describe the diverse and evolving nature of the Puerto Rican community in the United States and to denote that as researchers of color, they were sensitive to the needs of marginalized youth. The authors thoroughly described the historical background of each school. The Dr. Pedro Albizu Campos High School (PACHS) "was founded in 1972 as a response to the Eurocentric-based curricula and high dropout rates that Puerto Rican students had been experiencing in Chicago's public high schools" (p. 414). Since its inception, the high school has addressed the needs of its predominately Puerto Rican population by incorporating lessons and activities germane to their culture and community. The second school in the study was the El Puente Academy for Peace and Justice (El Puente). This school, located in New York City, was originally an afterschool cultural arts center. Founded in 1982 by Latina/o activists, the school sought to provide a holistic learning experience that affirmed the language, culture, and identity of the community.

Antrop-Gonzalez and De Jesús (2006) state they used an ethnographic research approach in this study, yet they do not describe how long they were "in the field." Much

like this dissertation, the authors triangulated their data by conducting semi-structured interviews, focus groups, participant observations, and document analyses. Their study employed a collaborative approach whereas the participants assisted in the development of the research questions and interview protocols. The authors also used member checking to ensure they were not misrepresenting the voices of their participants, the students.

Antrop-González and De Jesús (2006) explained that their study:

> illuminated how staff at these schools value high-quality interpersonal relationships and high academic expectation, while providing support and engaging students in the learning process in ways that lead to reported academic success. (p. 411)

Both schools had curriculums organized around the central questions, “Who am I?” and “Who are we?” They explored historical contexts within their communities and created art projects, portfolios, and poetry that described the skills and knowledge they acquired.

The students noted that by the teachers incorporating culture and community aspects into their learning experiences, they knew their teachers cared about them and their families (Antrop-González & De Jesús, 2006). West-Olatunji, Baker, and Brooks (2006) also documented the importance of incorporating culture and character building into community-based lessons and activities. The Rite of Passage afterschool program they discussed collaborated with the community as a means toward academic achievement, motivation, civil responsibility, and self-determination. Their premise was that the students enrolled in the program would achieve success if surrounded by positive cultural images and figures.

According to Antrop-González and De Jesús (2006) the interpersonal relationships the teachers formed by making these connections were very important to the

students from both schools. The students understood that the teachers had high expectations for them and reported a decreasing amount of conflict and gang violence while attending their community schools, as opposed to their neighborhood public schools. According to the authors, three words consistently emerged when students talked about caring relationships in their schools: respect, friendship, and family. Students described their teachers as *like a friend, like family, or like a parent* and constantly discussed the reciprocal amount of respect they experienced.

Antrop-González and De Jesús's (2006) study illustrated how high school students perceived the critical caring they received in their respective high schools. By combining culture with caring, the students were able to engage in the learning process and participate in the continuum of care expressed by the teachers in their schools. Because the schools were community-based and were, therefore, sustained by and for community members, the teachers customized their instructional practices for that audience.

Building community is an important aspect of the educational experience. According to national program administrators from 21st CCLC programs, this type of collaboration helps build a common sense of community that enables the incorporation of mutual goals and visions (Riley, et al, 2000). The participants in the aforementioned studies seemed to understand this concept as they built educational concepts based on the needs and culture of the community. The Peaceful Posse program addressed self-concept issues by providing a safe space for the boys to learn nonviolent means of communication. The study on the two Latino community-based schools incorporated the needs of the students by focusing on the cultural needs of the community. Both of these

studies highlighted the participants' practice of building educational programs based on the expressed needs of students.

Teacher Praxis and Preparation

Reflecting on the practice of instruction is an important aspect of an educator's daily ritual (Howard, 2003). In an effort to improve on pedagogical practices, the author's in this portion of the review explored current instructional techniques and then investigated the role teacher education programs play in the development of future educators. The authors described the instructional practices of teachers working with African American students and discussed current pedagogical practices in the field of character education. They also described different teacher preparation programs designed to address the needs of their respective students and communities.

In a study of urban teachers, Howard (2001a) sought to describe what pedagogical practices four elementary school teachers used to teach their predominately African American students. According to King (2005), studies on issues related to Black Education are vital to the future academic success of this specific population. She argued:

> Indeed, for most Black students, particularly those attending dysfunctional, resource-starved schools in the United States, a leader among "civilized" nations, Black education is synonymous with underachievement and academic failure. . . . To attack the roots of our miseducation, cultural annihilation, and economic subordination, we must undo the entrenched system of thought that has justified our predicament. (p. xxi)

In Howard's (2001a) study, a nominating committee chose the four teachers based on their abilities to "create learning environments that did not encourage students to disconnect from their cultural identities while pursuing high academic achievement" (pp. 181-182). The nominating committee consisted of six elementary school principals, four parents, five teachers, three district administrators, and three civic leaders. The

nominators identified 12 teachers and then Howard observed them to determine if they met his criteria. His definition stemmed from a list of 20 culturally relevant practices; the teachers he observed had to exhibit at least 15 in order to meet his criteria and participate in the study.

After observing the teachers, Howard found that four met the criteria and were therefore included as participants in the study during the 1997-1998 school year. All the teachers were African American women with their teaching experience ranging from 5 to 20 years. Howard did not discuss if the participants' race and gender were factors in his selection of instructors or if the other teachers' demographics differed from the participants. Each teacher participated in three formal interviews and conducted informal conversations with the author during 4 months of observations. Howard recorded the formal interviews, wrote field notes after each observation, and used a grounded theory approach when analyzing the data. This method suggests that findings "evolve during research and that existing or new theories may be elaborated or modified as new data are analyzed and compared" (p. 185). The data analysis revealed that the teachers "demonstrated holistic instructional strategies, culturally consistent communicative competencies, and skill-building strategies to promote academic success" (p. 186).

In addition to being concerned with the academic achievement of the students, the participants in the study tried to focus on their students' social and moral development. Much like the teachers in this dissertation, the teachers in Howard's (2001a) study wanted to teach "the whole child." Much like the premise and challenges of the Youth Empowerment Strategies (YES) project (Wilson, Minkler, Dasho, Carrillo, Wallerstein, & Garcia, 2006), his participants deemed it important to incorporate a holistic approach

that emphasized culture and character building but felt hindered by the increasing demands to produce academically proficient students. This unfortunate consequence of high-stakes testing is the crux of the argument in this dissertation and supports the importance of afterschool programs within public schools.

The teachers in the study also understood the importance of language and used culturally consistent communicative practices in their classrooms. Each of the teachers mentioned their desire to have the students use their cultural forms of expression if it aided in explanations of their knowledge or comprehension of subject matter. According to Howard, African American students tend to be verbal while students of other cultures, such as Asian American, communicate easier through written tasks. Hale (2001) agreed with this sentiment by stating:

> African American culture has a strong orientation toward oral communication, whereas the dominant culture is oriented toward literacy. Early-childhood and elementary education settings should understand the strengths in orality that African American children bring to school so that teachers can connect those strengths with the literacy experiences that the schools define as intelligence. (p. 119)

The teachers in the study seemed to understand this notion as well and incorporated these cultural differences into their instructional methods and daily routines.

Lastly, the findings from Howard's study revealed that all the teachers observed had exemplary classroom management styles that allowed for skill building to occur. As demonstrated in this dissertation, the teachers encouraged their students to practice democratic education skills such as informed decision-making and critical thinking in order to succeed on academic endeavors. One factor that was drastically different from this dissertation was the use of caring in the educational realm. The teachers in the study believed that caring for their students was secondary to the delivery of subject matter.

One teacher, Hazel, even stated, “I only have 180 days to try to get these kids in shape to be successful in middle school. I can’t be worried about whether they love me or not. I have to be worried about whether or not they get it [academic skills]” (p. 196).

Howard’s study discovered that the teachers desired for their students to be successful and understood that culture played a crucial role in the delivery of instruction. His findings indicated that the teachers were aware of their students’ needs and explained that all teachers, regardless of race, could accomplish the same goals. He suggested that in the future, teachers should adhere to the lessons in his study when creating learning environments for their students. In essence, Howard’s study mirrored the participants’ perspectives in this dissertation, as they were interested in providing holistic instruction; however, they differed in their discussions of the role of caring in the classroom. Nevertheless, culture was an asset and permeated through the instructional practices of the teachers.

In his study of a high school character education program, Romanowski (2005) noted that, like many other forms of education, programs such as this are broad in scope and difficult to quantify. Realizing there are many forms of character education, for the purposes of his study, he incorporated Lockwood’s (1997) definition:

> Character education can best be described as any school-initiated program, designed in cooperation with other community institutions, to shape directly and systematically the behavior of young people by influencing explicitly the non-relativistic values believed directly to bring about that behavior. (p. 179)

The author implemented the study at Edwardsville High School, located in a rural setting in Northwest Ohio. In response to the 1999 Columbine High School massacre, the school applied for and received funding to initiate a Character Education Program (CEP). Romanowski described the program’s framework:

- Vision and Mission: to value self and others; to desire, know, and do right; and to serve all
- Goals: to improve academic performance, to develop and maintain a civil school environment, and to increase and maintain community involvement
- Objectives: to develop students who know, desire, and do right
- Nine Monthly Themes: respect, responsibility, citizenship, service, sensitivity, honesty, self-discipline, work ethic, and justice
- 36 Words of the Week

CEP classes consisted of 20-minute sessions the school called, "Team Time." The school administrators assigned students to Team Time groups based on their grade level, and the groups met every week on Tuesdays and Thursdays. Teachers used a variety of instructional strategies that included reflective sessions, short stories, literature, and videotapes. The students also wrote journal entries and had discussions on current character education issues. In addition to the weekly lessons, the teachers invited guest speakers to their sessions once a month and displayed new posters to aid in the class discussions.

After presenting information from a similar study on students enrolled in CEP at several conferences, Romanowski (2003) decided to conduct a similar study with the teachers at a local high school. Two years after publishing his study on the student perspectives, Romanowski interviewed the teachers. His purpose was to present the experiences of the high school teachers' understandings, concerns, and suggestions regarding the CEP. The research questions for the study were as follows:

1. What was the purpose and the goals of the CEP as described by teachers?
2. Did teachers view the CEP as effective or ineffective?
3. How did teachers view and utilize the current character education curriculum?

4. From the teachers' perspective, how did students respond to the CEP?

5. What did teachers see as the key ingredients for an effective CEP?

The data for this study came from semi-structured interviews with the high school teachers who taught character lessons through their formal program. Romanowski purposefully selected the teachers by first announcing the study at a faculty meeting. After this meeting, eight teachers volunteered to participate. Because of the possible bias in this sample, the author chose eight other teachers that the administration described as "having questions about the program" (p. 8). These teachers also agreed to participate in the study.

The 16 participants included 6 men and 10 women with an average of 16 years of teaching experience among them (Romanowski, 2005). Teachers participated in a 50-minute interview that centered on their views of the CEP. The interview questions were open-ended and allowed the teachers to voice their opinions through conversation-style interviews. Romanowski probed the teachers for examples of their statements and remained flexible as different topics emerged from their discussions. Data analysis included the use of the constant comparative method. With this process, "as various new topics developed during interviews, other teachers were asked to discuss these issues, verify a particular situation, or to express their viewpoint on this new information" (p. 9).

Findings from the study revealed that all the teachers believed the program to have potential benefits for the students. They perceived the CEP as raising awareness of character and moral issues but were unclear of how these results could be manifested on standardized tests. The teachers felt conflicted by the standardized testing focus at the high school, and they exhibited some concern regarding where the CEP fit into that accountability. They felt their administration was supportive of the school's character

focus but also “argued that the administration considers character education important for some students but not for students whose parents have power within the school district (p. 12). The teachers in my study echoed the constraints of these political underpinnings during the regular school day. This bureaucracy represents a portion of my argument for the inclusion of afterschool programs in the public school setting.

At the conclusion of the article, Romanowski (2005) compared and contrasted the perspectives from the students and teachers. He ultimately suggested that the teachers and students openly discuss their concerns in an effort to suggest positive changes to the curriculum. He also suggested that the students might benefit from opportunities to apply the lessons to real-life situations, perhaps through incorporating culture through a formal community-wide project. This finding reflects the focus on the community mirrored in this literature review as well as this current dissertation.

In an effort for teachers to demonstrate an ethic of care about the cultural and character needs of their students, colleges and universities need to reflect on the preparation of future educators (Cohen, 1995). “Because school administrators, mentors, and teacher educators are faced with increasingly complex social, political, and moral issues, their challenge is to prepare teachers who are highly qualified to implement practices and deliver sound programs in the classroom” (Brown, 2007, p. 60). Delivering thought-provoking instruction that is both caring and culturally relevant is an important aspect of public school teaching.

Multicultural educators have led people to believe that the world is colorblind and that everyone is, essentially, the same (Roman, 1997). This thought process is taught to many elementary school children as a form of tolerance and acceptance but for pre-

service teachers, this message is not indicative of current pedagogical needs. Stevens and Charles (2005) argued that preparing teachers to extend the boundaries of multiculturalism is essential for them to develop the respect, understanding, and tolerance needed to instruct the diverse students in our public schools. Seidl (2007) furthered this discussion by stating that in education it is still far easier to talk about cultural differences than to act on that understanding (p. 169). She used this lens for her study as she focused on training future teachers to develop bicultural competencies, cultural and political knowledge, and personal pedagogies of culture.

In her article, Seidl (2007) described a fruitful partnership between her university and a local African American church, Mt. Olivet Baptist Church. For seven years, The Ohio State University's Elementary Masters in Education Program participated in a partnership meant to provide prospective teachers with various experiences to develop their culturally relevant pedagogies. Through these experiences, the university established three beliefs that acted as the framework for their research:

1. The development of culturally relevant pedagogies is dependent on the individual beginning to become biculturally competent.
2. Prospective teachers must learn about the range of cultural experiences from the community and begin to situate education within those ideals.
3. Prospective teachers need to personalize cultural and political knowledge.

Students enrolled in this voluntary program spent 2 or 3 days a week working in programs created for the students within the Mt. Olivet community. The students volunteered in afterschool settings, the church's Christian academy, and other community sponsored events. They also attended the church's early morning service on two

occasions. To further their education, students in the program also completed coursework and supplemental readings on racism, culture, privilege, and African American history.

During the 2001-2002 academic year, 12 master's students volunteered for the program. Four of the students were African American women, two were Caucasian men, and six were Caucasian women (Seidl, 2007). The instructor of the course (and facilitator of the experience) was a Caucasian woman. Seidl created a cooperative inquiry process, whereas all the students and the facilitator collected data through telling and retelling of oral and written stories. After participating in activities and events, each student was required to bring a written story about their experiences to share at the weekly meeting. Although the students' stories initially focused on their Mt. Olivet experiences, they eventually began to connect those experiences with others from their families, communities, schools, and internships.

First, the students discussed their stories in small groups and then those they deemed most interesting or thought provoking became the focal point of the large group discussion. In addition to sharing the stories amongst their peers, the students also received feedback from the author. Seidl (2007) encouraged the students to make connections to literature from the course and elaborate more on their thoughts. After receiving feedback from the author, the students were required to reinterpret and rewrite their stories for a grade. Although I appreciated and respected the notion of storytelling, the author's grading process may have been improved by providing helpful comments and not requiring the students to rewrite the assignments. This process may have conveyed a sense of inadequacy though the assignment was about freedom of thought.

Because the study functioned in a participatory action research format, the students were active members of the data collection and data analysis process (Mills, 2007; Seidl, 2007). During the first two quarters of the year, the group worked cooperatively to identify themes. Through deductive analysis, the group began to explore the themes they created and define them in ways that were meaningful to them. The group discovered that adults in the Mt. Olivet community enforced high expectations for their child behavior and scholastic achievement. The students wrote about adults' "pushing" (p. 172) their students toward their goals despite oppressive societal structures. According to Seidl, this movement occurred within a village of parents, teachers, ministers, and grandparents.

Another theme addressed the "double images" (p. 174) some African American students learned to possess within the community. W. E. B DuBois (1903/1989) referred to this phenomenon as a "double consciousness" while Elijah Anderson (1999) referred to it as "code-switching." According to Anderson, code-switching means that one is able to "share many of the middle-class values of the wider white society but know that the open display of such values carries little weight on the street" (p. 36). The stories from the master's students revealed that the students seemed to be aware of how African American people can be prejudged based on their race. Initially, this concept was difficult for the White students to comprehend as their privileged positionalities suggested a monocultural perspective that shielded them from having to be aware of their race and its implications. Seidl believed this to be an important lesson for the teachers because it allowed them to understand the duality their students contended with on a daily basis.

In fact, the discovery of positionalities and their relationship to students was also the focus of a similar program in West Virginia. In Bardwell and Kincaid's (2005) study of preservice teachers, the teacher educators focused on their students learning cultures other than their own in an effort to expand their comfort zones and transfer their cultural awareness into improved lesson plans and activities. Much like Bardwell and Kincaid's study, it was Seidl's hope that this knowledge would also inspire classroom discussions about race and racism. She argued, "Teachers who refuse to discuss, validate, or teach on issues of race and racism may invalidate themselves with their students, who so clearly see and understand its presence within their lives" (p. 176).

At the conclusion of the study, the stories became the focus of the students' thesis projects. They believed their stories were influential as they shaped how they perceived their African American students and the lessons they delivered to them. They discovered that their classroom activities needed to demonstrate knowledge of their students' backgrounds and experiences. I believed the process demonstrated in this article to be a beneficial lesson to the students in the course. Unfortunately, the only students that received the "life-changing" cultural experiences were those that *volunteered*. Most likely, these volunteers had an interest in acquiring cultural competence; however, *all* teachers would have benefited from this instruction.

In another study of a teacher preparation seminar, Tinkler (2006) explored the nature of care exhibited by the teachers' supervisor, Janie. The overall purpose of the study was to understand how one teacher demonstrated an ethic of caring that exemplified the ideals of acclaimed caring theorist, Nel Noddings. After providing a thick description of Janie, the author discussed four skills teacher educators should possess: (a)

knowledge of effective teaching practices, (b) strong observational skills, (c) conferencing skills, and (d) evaluative skills (Sharp, 1990). According to Tinkler, although these skills were relevant and important, the ethic of caring should have also been included as the foundation for all other skills.

In an effort to study Janie and her seminar, Tinkler (2006) employed a qualitative method developed by Elliot Eisner (1998), educational criticism and connoisseurship. This method requires researchers to develop an expertise in the field of education so they are more equipped to recognize quality. The goal is for the researcher to create themes and write detailed narratives that are derivative of their expertise and knowledge of the field under study. Because they are experts, researchers who use this method are able to make judgments about the educational setting under observation. Much like the educational criticism method stipulates, Tinkler offered a discussion of her expertise. She stated, “I entered this experience with a well developed knowledge base of teacher education practices and an intimate knowledge of this particular program and its students” (p. 241).

Janie taught six teacher preparation seminars and Tinkler observed four of them. She conducted three of the observations during the first half of the course and then returned toward the end to confirm her interpretations with one last observation. She interviewed Janie after two of the sessions and then interviewed one of the students. To triangulate the data, Tinkler also examined the course syllabus and other course documents. During data analysis, she utilized member checking and asked Janie to contribute feedback on the author’s interpretations. Finally, to tell the stories of class sessions, Tinkler provided vignettes gleaned from class sessions in Janie’s course.

The participants in the study included eight students, four men and four women. Tinkler (2006) described the age range of the students as from early 20s to 40s. The data analysis revealed that according to Nel Noddings's (1992) descriptions, Janie was a very caring educator. She began each class by asking how the students were doing, revealed personal information about herself, encouraged the teachers to reflect about their experiences, and showed excitement about their personal and professional successes. Recognizing when some of her students were experiencing difficulties, she outwardly confirmed their strengths and helped to improve their confidence. She also set up peer sessions where the students were able to support and care for each other.

Janie seemed to create an atmosphere of caring in her classroom of future teachers. To Tinkler (2006), this demonstrated that Noddings's (1992) ethic of care could be put into practice. Tinkler recommended that more teacher preparation programs incorporate Noddings' notions of caring into their instructional techniques so that through modeling, the teachers would learn to create caring communities in their own classrooms. This article was well written in that the descriptions of Janie and her classroom were vivid and clear. The thick descriptions allowed me to visualize the story Tinkler told. I agree with the author that the study could help facilitate an ethic of caring within teacher preparation programs.

The implications from this section on teacher praxis and preparation demonstrated how reflecting on one's pedagogical practices and instructing preservice teachers in caring and culturally relevant instructional approaches could benefit students and "leave no teacher behind" (Townsend, 2002). Howard's (2001a) article highlighted the holistic instructional practices teachers used to impart knowledge on their African American

students. Romanowski (2005) explored current practices and perceptions of the character education program in a high school. Seidl (2007) described a course designed to teach future educators more about the infusion of race, racism, and culture into the educational realm while Tinkler (2006) highlighted the roles mentoring and modeling can play in demonstrating caring attitudes in teacher education seminars. Each of the authors in this portion of the review focused on reflecting on the practices of teachers and programs in an effort to, ultimately, improve the delivery of education to public school students.

Summary

The literature presented in this review presented evaluations on 21st CCLC and demonstrated the theoretical foundations relevant to this dissertation: afterschool programs, caring, culturally relevant pedagogy, and character education organized around themes of the empowerment of marginalized groups through creative programming and pedagogy, building partnerships with communities, teacher perceptions of their praxis, and the preparation of future educators. Although different in approach, purpose, and method, their general goals were synonymous. Each study's intention was to improve the educational services provided to all students regardless of race, gender, class or ability. In addition, each empirical article seemed to capture the notion that many educational techniques and programs are contextual and therefore, require teachers to learn about their students' home lives, culture, and personal values. These connections foster trust, parental involvement, and community support.

Through caring in education, culturally relevant pedagogy, and character education, teachers provide students with tools that increase their academic knowledge. By demonstrating an ethic of care, teachers provide a safe and comfortable space for

learning where students feel valued and appreciated. Through the infusion of cultural traditions and rituals, teachers may also construct an influential bridge between students' home life and school life. The infusion of this pedagogy may disrupt the popular instructional practice of expecting all students to adhere to Eurocentric ideals of education. In addition to these ideals, instruction in character education can help instill lifelong skills that will allow students to become productive members of society.

Although some studies investigated two of the pedagogies in their investigations (i.e. culturally relevant caring, caring and character education, and culturally relevant character education) all three were never studied in one investigation. This dissertation investigates how an afterschool program utilizes a combination of the ethic of caring, culturally relevant pedagogy, and character education. This study will help inform afterschool policy while addressing the instructional needs of students.

CHAPTER 3

METHODOLOGY

Introduction

With current U.S. Department of Education (2007) programs, such as the Striving Readers and Rural and Low-Income School Projects, being overwhelmingly devoted to the advancement of standardized test scores, one particular afterschool program, 21st CCLC, has dedicated time and space to improving the academic *and* character development of its students (Bennet, 2004; Hill, 2004). Because of the program's distinctiveness, the results of this qualitative study revealed that teachers and staff members demonstrated caring toward their students within a statewide 21st CCLC afterschool program. In this study, I also explored how culturally relevant pedagogy and character education intermingled with the ethic of caring exhibited by the teachers and staff members in the program. These objectives, both implicitly and explicitly stated, are paramount within the 21st CCLC programs statewide. Through qualitative methodology, I was able to gather the perspectives of the teachers and staff members that interact with the students on a daily basis.

Methodological Orientation and Research Questions

For this multiple case study, I used the naturalistic paradigm of qualitative research. According to Patton (1997),

> Qualitative data consists of detailed descriptions of situations, events, people, interactions, and observed behaviors; direct quotations from people about their experiences, attitudes, beliefs, and thoughts; and excerpts or entire passages from documents, correspondence, records, and case histories (p. 273).

As the researcher, I admitted and documented my biases so I would not employ any preconceived assumptions or propositions as Yin (2003) suggests. Instead, I approached the study as an inductive investigation that built "abstractions, concepts, hypotheses, or theories rather than test existing theory" (Merriam, 1998, p. 67). My focus was on individual, person-to-person interactions with staff members in their natural settings, the afterschool centers. By offering thorough details, or "thick descriptions" (Geertz, 1973), I allowed my participants to voice their perspectives. My study did not render judgments about my participants or their specific programs but rather described, classified, and interpreted the caring programs and people within the realm of the afterschool program.

The research questions I addressed in this study were open-ended and non-directional. Although they guided the study, I allowed myself to be open to all the analytical possibilities the data had to offer. The main research questions were as follows:

1. How do the teachers and staff in the 21st CCLC afterschool program demonstrate caring?
2. What role does culturally relevant pedagogy play in the 21st CCLC program?
3. How has the 21st CCLC afterschool program staff included character education into their curriculum?

Case Study Research

In this study, I used a case study approach. Case studies researchers investigate a contemporary phenomenon in its natural or real-life context (Yin, 2003) and can explore many concerns or interesting issues. A case study consists of a bounded system where

there is a proscribed end to the number of people who are interviewed and/or observed. Qualitative case studies allow for a vast array of data collection techniques and "can be characterized as being particularistic, descriptive, and heuristic" (Merriam, 1998, p. 29). Merriam states that case studies are particularistic when they focus on a particular situation, event, program, or phenomenon. They are descriptive when the results offer a rich or "thick description" of the phenomenon under study. Lastly, qualitative case studies are heuristic because they can contribute to new meaning and assist readers in their quest for more knowledge. Stake (1995) also described the characteristics of a case study as research that

- Explores a case or multiple cases
- Involves detailed, in-depth data collection involving multiple sources of information rich in context
- Explores a bounded system connected by time and place. (p. 54)

This qualitative study on 21st CCLC met Merriam's, Stake's, and Yin's criteria for an effective case study. This investigation explored a contemporary phenomenon and addressed educational issues derivative of current legislation. The study is bounded in that the only sites included in the sample were those that were funded from the state. As with many qualitative studies, I have described my results using rich language and have included specific details and verbatim quotations from my participants. Finally, the results from this study will help inform policy makers and afterschool advocates of the opportunities 21st CCLC provides for its students.

Research Setting and Participants

The research setting for this case study included eighteen 21st CCLC afterschool programs around the state. The original sample included 20 afterschool programs, but during the course of data collection, two of the sites withdrew from the study. One with-

drew because of staffing constraints and the other site experienced a lethal hurricane in the community where the program existed. (See Appendix A for the list of participants.) Although there were multiple sites, the 21st CCLC afterschool program was the holistic unit of analysis. I chose a purposeful sample of programs based on the following four criteria: (a) grant award year, (b) type of grantee, (c) amount of centers, and (d) grade of students. I chose these criteria based on factors directly related to 21st CCLC programs. The grant award year refers to the year the state provided funding to individual programs. The range in years is from 2002-2006. There are many different types of grantees. School systems encompass the majority of 21st CCLC grantees; however, community centers, faith-based organizations, universities, and government agencies manage many as well.

Because 21st CCLC grants offer opportunities to all grade levels, the programs can range from kindergarten to 12th grade. It was important for me to visit programs targeted for elementary, middle, and high school students as they each provided different grade-appropriate activities. I also based the amount of time I spent with each program on their amount of centers. For example, the program in Reagan County had two centers (one elementary and one middle) so I spent a day at each center, while the program in Waller County had one high school center so I was able to complete the visit in one day. Through purposeful sampling, I achieved a sense of balance and included programs in the study that represented these criteria[19].

The participants for the study included most of the stakeholders typically associated with 21st CCLC programs. I received participation from program directors, site coordinators, teachers, paraprofessionals, and other staff members from each program. In

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[19] Please see Appendix A for the sampling plan.

addition to the program staff, adult participants, parents, community partners, and local evaluators also became participants in the study.

Negotiating Access

Gaining access to sites and participants can be a long and at times uncomfortable experience. In most cases, the researcher has to gain permission to conduct a study by an administrator or "gatekeeper." However, in this case, a specific funder requested the study and was therefore open to the experience. Although the funder granted permission, I explained the study to the selected program directors and allowed them to express any questions or concerns in advance. Bogdan and Biklen (2007) stated,

> Even if permission is granted from up high without first checking with those below, it behooves you to meet those lower on the hierarchy to seek their support. Your arrival on the scene with a research permission slip from the central office is likely to ruffle feathers, unless you do the necessary work first to court your potential subjects. (p. 85)

Before the study began, I sent letters to the selected programs and provided a brief summary of what the study was about, the estimated time it would take to complete the study, and whom I had targeted as participants. I explained how I intended to conduct the investigation and what I envisioned the roles of participants to be. After I sent the letters to the afterschool programs, two program directors contacted me with questions and concerns about how many people would be conducting the study at their locations. They were adamant about not interrupting the instruction and activities in the center and were worried that too many researchers would cause an unnecessary distraction. I assured them that I would be the only researcher at their sites and allowed them the time to express any other suggestions and comments, as they were participants but moreover, caregivers and protectors of the students in their programs. The program directors seemed relieved by my responses to their questions and now welcomed the idea of the study. By discussing

and incorporating their thoughts and opinions, I increased their comfort level and, therefore, released any apprehensions about the study and my role as the researcher.

Researcher's Role

As the qualitative researcher conducting this study, my role was to provide a voice to the people I interviewed and observed. My participants operated the program on a daily basis but were also the people that rarely got the opportunity to speak directly to state and local policymakers. It was important for me to tell their stories as they were told to me. As the qualitative methodologist, I constantly reminded my participants that I was an active learner simply interested in their perspectives, opinions, and suggestions as they were the experts of their domain. The relationship I desired was one of mutual respect. Lincoln and Guba (2007) argued that, "the relationship between researcher and respondent, when properly established, is one of respectful negotiation, joint control, and reciprocal learning" (p. 17). I accepted this task with responsibility and fervor. Although I was the researcher, I understood that the staff members were the experts as they had first-hand knowledge of their students and the daily operations of the program. I thought of this knowledge as an invaluable asset to the study.

Throughout this study, I also served as a participant observer. While conducting this research it was important for me to remind others and myself that I was an active learner seeking to acquire more information about a phenomenon and not one with prior assumptions. My duality as insider and outsider may have been blurred because I became a participant in group activities and events, but I was always a researcher there for a purpose. For example, although I participated in performance art activities, seminars, and

health fairs, I was always mindful of my surroundings and was constantly absorbing information as possible data.

In addition, because of my race, class, and gender, at times my participants positioned me as an insider while at other times, an outsider. When I visited Durango County, the program director was quite nervous. She was a Black woman who was much shorter than I was and spoke in a heavy southern accent. Despite our shared race, our height (I am 5 ’10) and geographic differences (I am a northerner) was immediately apparent. She was visibly apprehensive about our upcoming interview. Noticing this, I asked if we could walk around the school for a brief tour. I wanted to build a rapport with her in the hopes that she would relax and feel more comfortable with the study. During the tour, I noticed a group of girls stepping[20], much like I used to do as an undergraduate. In an effort to be a participant observer, I asked if I could join the girls while they did their routine. The girls and the program director smiled and quickly obliged. I noticed that after the girls taught me some steps and I participated, the Black program director seemed to accept me as a racial insider and continued the study with ease. Much like the classic ethnographer, Elliot Liebow, who wrote *Tally’s Corner* (1967), it was my goal to achieve a sense of balance while conducting this study. Liebow stated,

> On several different counts, I was an outsider but I also was a participant in a full sense of the word. The people I was observing knew that I was observing them, yet allowed me to participate in their activities and take part in their lives to a degree that continues to surprise me. (p. 164)

During the observations I conducted for this study, I was always cognizant of the power relations that existed between the program staff and myself. For example, although the

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[20] The act of stepping originates from African tribes. Black sororities and fraternities often participate in this practice at colleges and universities worldwide.

participants in the study "agreed" to be involved, I understood the power dynamic that may have influenced their decisions. They knew the identity of the funder and even though I repeatedly explained that I would not publish responses from any who declined to participate, some participants may have feared covert or overt repercussions anyway. I realized that in negotiating access into each afterschool program, my position as researcher may have further communicated an unintentional power dynamic; however, I attempted to ease any concerns regarding my status through communication and careful explanations of my purpose.

Because 21st CCLC addresses a character and academic need, it was important for my participation not to interfere with the much-needed instruction the teachers provided. As a former public school teacher, I appreciated and respected the importance of their implicit and explicit instructional time. I did not interrupt that process. Through my words and actions, I made every effort to limit my participation to activities that were appropriate.

Data Collection Plan

Over the course of several months, I implemented a study comprised of multiple forms of data collection. Such triangulation was intended to ensure that I captured a complete picture of the participants and their environment. Triangulation goes beyond the limitations of a single method by combining several methods and giving them equal relevance (Flick, 2006). One of the first methods of data collection I used was the collection of documents. After gathering a purposeful sample[21] based on new and expansion grantees, I sent them a letter requesting the following documents: (a) list of

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[21] Please see Appendix A for this sampling plan.

activities, (b) calendars and schedules, (c) program manuals, (d) publications and articles, (e) professional development opportunities, and (f) marketing information. In addition to the letter, I also sent them a postage-paid envelope[22] to return the materials in and a checklist that would help them remember what documents I requested[23]. Because their opinions and perspectives were important to me, I followed up the letter and checklist with a personal phone call to each program director. During this conversation, I asked them if they had access to the documents I requested and talked to them about any apprehensions they may have had about the document review process. Each of the sites understood the process and sent me their materials within a month's time.

A second measure of data collection came from 98 semi-structured interviews. The participants interviewed fell into 13 categories: adult participant (3), bus driver (2), community partner (6), evaluator, local (1), family services coordinator (4), parent (11), parent liaison (1), principal (11), program assistant (3), program director (17), program liaison (1), site coordinator (22), and teacher (16). Interviews were an important aspect of this study as the voices of my participants were the focal point of my data collection efforts. The typical interview length ranged from 45-60 minutes. In an effort to accommodate schedules and teaching conflicts, I also conducted six focus groups. These group interviews ranged in length from 45-90 minutes. With assistance from the research team, I developed an interview guide that I periodically used to aid conversations with participants. I included general questions about afterschool activities and program perceptions on the guide but also allowed for fluctuations in the conversation as different

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[22] The funding supplied from our contract paid for the cost for this postage.

[23] Please see Appendix B for the checklist.

discussion topics arose. I encouraged the reciprocity of communication and "maintained awareness of how the interview was flowing, how the interviewee was reacting to questions, and what kinds of feedback was appropriate and helpful to maintain the flow of the interview" (Patton, 1987, p. 127.).

My third measure of data collection included 22 observations. I observed and at times participated in various program activities such as teacher and student-led lessons, enrichment activities, family events, and group discussions. In addition to program activities, I observed staff meetings, parent groups, and board meetings as well as any other gathering that addressed the 21st CCLC afterschool program..

In the midst of these methods of data collection, I composed reflective memos about my experiences with the program and its participants. These personal comments, thoughts, and observations provided the time and space for me to gather my ideas on how I shaped my experience and allowed me to be as descriptive, controversial, and thought provoking as I wanted to be. This process helped me to "reflect on my own beliefs and to understand the nature and context of my general ideas" (Mills, 2007, p. 26).

Photographs

In an effort to document my observations further, I also took 112 pictures of the student and family activities taking place at each center. As a method of data collection, "photography has been closely aligned with qualitative research and can be explored and used in many different ways" (Bogdan & Biklen, 2007, p. 141.). The variations in its use has been addressed by several scholars (Bateson & Mead, 1942; Becker, 1974; Byers, 1964). For example, educational researchers have used photography to create photographic documentaries and ascertain spatial, neighborhood, and population

distribution dynamics (Donaldson, 2001; Harper, 1997; Nicotera, 2007). By showing photographs to participants or allowing them to take their own pictures, some educational researchers have also used photographs to elicit data by evoking participants' memories and perceptions based on images in a photograph (Douglas, 1998; Oliffe & Bottorff, 2007). Despite all the variety in this method, Bogdan and Biklen (2007) argued that perhaps the most prominent use of the camera is in conjunction with participant observations. They offered this discussion:

> Photographs in this capacity are most often used as a means of remembering and studying detail that might be overlooked if a photographic image were not available for reflection. Photographs taken by researchers in the field provide images that later can be closely inspected for clues to relationships and activities (p. 151).

Incorporating images into the data collection process was a useful tool as I was able to capture activities, groupings, interactions, environments, and facial expressions I may have forgotten or overlooked during the course of the study. Prosser and Schwartz (1998) argued that "even when we become weary or muddled the camera can continue, so long as film and batteries are refreshed" (p. 122). Because the students in the 21st CCLC program were involved in instructional activities, I remained cognizant of the interruptions a camera might bring to the classroom. It was only after I had observed for a period that I took pictures of the program's activities, classrooms, and participants.

Digital Diaries

Social scientists speak in many voices that often remind readers of their humanistic nature (MacDougall, 2006). Qualitative researchers are no different as we are human beings with opinions, thoughts, ideals, and prejudices. The difference in this paradigm, as opposed to the more objective nature of quantitative research, is that there is an outward attempt to bring these biases and personal attributes to the forefront of

studies. This discussion of subjectivity documents how personal perspectives have shaped the interpretation and analysis process.

A digital diary is a methodological tool I created to capture the thoughts and perspectives of qualitative researchers in the midst of their data collection efforts. Most qualitative methodologists are familiar with writing observer comments (OC). Researchers typically write an OC in the margins of typed or written fieldnotes. At the conclusion of writing fieldnotes, authors take the time to contemplate the day's experiences by jotting down additional information that further explains the written text (Emerson, Fretz, & Shaw, 1995). I created digital diaries to use in conjunction with fieldnotes and OCs.

At the conclusion of each daily observation, I audiotaped my perspectives using the same digital recorder used for the interviews. This method allowed me to gather and record my thoughts and emerging interpretations immediately without having to locate a private space to type them on a computer. Much like writing memos and OCs, my digital diaries allowed me to be reflective; however, they differ in that I was able to capture the rich data *before* the time lapse between the site visits and my computer. Bogdan and Biklen's (2007) explanation of reflective fieldnotes can also apply to my use of digital diaries:

> [These reflections] contain sentences and paragraphs that reflect a more personal account of the course of the inquiry. Here you record the more subjective side of your journey. The emphasis is on speculation, feelings, problems, ideas, hunches, impressions, and prejudices. Also included is material in which you lay out plans for future research as well as confess your mistakes, your inadequacies, your prejudices, your likes, and dislikes. Speculate about what you think you are learning, what you are going to do next, and what you think the outcome of the study will be (p. 122).

By speaking directly into the recorder, there was no transference or loss of thought between my reflections and the written text. Although I used this method at the conclusion of each site visit, I also wrote detailed field notes and added observer comments to transcribed interviews to emphasize facial expressions, gestures, and habits that were important to the study. For studies conducted at sites without computers or laptops, using digital diaries to document thoughts could also be helpful. Because they are recorded, authors can transcribe them or have them sent for transcription like interview data. In essence, digital diaries can add rich data to studies that researchers can analyze in conjunction with other reflective methods.

Data Management Plan

I managed all the documents I received by recording them onto a spreadsheet that included the name of each program, the administrators' name and title, contact information, and actual materials received. I placed the actual documents in a binder labeled with each program's name. These binders were located in a locked storage cabinet with the key on my personal key chain. While conducting interviews, I used a digital recorder to capture the exact phrases and comments of my participants. A reputable transcription company transcribed the audio tapes verbatim and then I stored the actual recordings in a locked storage cabinet. The transcription company returned the transcriptions to me as electronic word processor files, and I saved them on a password-protected computer.

Content Analysis

Qualitative researchers use content analysis when there are large amounts of written or visual data. This process requires the researcher to sort systematically through an abundance of data and condense it into smaller categories or themes. With this form of

analysis, researchers can also enumerate data by identifying word frequencies and key words in context. I coded the documents not accessible via electronic submission by hand by organizing information with colored flags, markers, and a spreadsheet. To categorize this data I used open coding. “The idea [of this method] is to become grounded in the data and to allow understanding to emerge from close study of the texts” (Bernard, 2002, p. 460). After using open coding, I then used axial coding. This process allowed me to reassemble the coded data into newer, more specific categories and themes (Bhana, 2005).

Through content analysis, I was able to identify some thematic codes and gather a more complete picture of the programmatic documentation (Grbich, 2007). To analyze the documents, I initially organized the materials by creating a spreadsheet that documented what I received from the programs. I began by reviewing documents, from the entire sample, that directly identified key components that addressed 21st CCLC programs statewide. After analyzing those documents, I specifically focused on the 20 afterschool sites included in the purposeful sample. Initially, I analyzed the documents to learn more about the relationship between program characteristics and program quality, but I later revisited the documents to identify aspects related to caring, character education, and culturally relevant pedagogy within the specific programs.

Visual Analysis

Visual images can provide another source of data in a qualitative study. These images provide a sense of realism as they depict actual events and activities that pertain to a specific study. According to Grbich (2007), visual images can add to other forms of analysis by asking important questions such as

1. What is the image of?
2. How does the image convey meaning?
3. What is the most obvious reading of the image?
4. What alternative readings can be made?

For this study of 21st CCLC programs, the photographs I took of student groups, enrichment activities, wall decorations, staff-student interactions, and student products added to the richness of the interview, observation, and document data I also collected. Much like Patton (2002), " Looking at photographs during analysis helped me recall the details of certain activities that I had not fully recorded in my written notes…I relied heavily on photographs to add details to descriptions of places where critical events occurred" (p. 308). I explored the aforementioned questions during this phase of the analysis and was able to understand the complexities of student groups and activities as they related to the aspect of caring in the afterschool context. The photographs I took helped me answer all three of my research questions, as I was able to visualize the staff's caring gestures, culturally relevant pedagogy, and character education curriculum.

Atlas. ti: The Knowledge Workbench ®

Before the use of Computer-Aided Qualitative Data Analysis Software (CAQDAS), qualitative researchers manually analyzed data by "marking up" fieldnotes with markers, colored pencils, pens, index cards, post-it notes and flags, and the like. Traditionally, the coding process has involved cutting and pasting marked segments into thematic categories and manually creating lists, tables, and charts to visualize data but in the new age of computer technology, these functions can be accomplished by using

computer software packages. Beginning in the early 1980s qualitative software programs began to appear. According to Fielding and Lee (2002),

> From its origin, the notable thing about software and textual analysis was that it was developed by social scientists, not commercial software interests. Development was often in response to data management or analysis requirements on specific projects and was closely informed by what researchers themselves regarded as essential to support qualitative data analysis. (p. 198)

These early programs contained the ability to use a wide range of different analytic strategies while effectively managing data (Lee & Fielding, 1996). QUALOG, The Ethnograph, and NUD*IST were among the first software packages available to qualitative methodologists. These programs supported theory building and assisted researchers with the visualization of their data. In an attempt to improve upon the existing software packages, new programs began to emerge (Fielding & Lee, 1991; Kelle, 1995; Peters & Wester, 2006). According to Lewis and Silver (2005), there are many software packages currently available, including HyperRESEARCH, QSR N6, MAXqda V2, Atlas V. 5, NVivo 7, XSight, InfoRapid, QDA Miner V1.3, QUALRUS, TRANSANA 2, and Kwalitan. Lewis and Silver also created a list of questions qualitative researchers should ask themselves before choosing a specific package, including

1. What kind(s) and amount of data do you have, and how do you want to handle it?
2. What is your preferred style of working?
3. What is your theoretical approach to analysis?
4. Do you have a well defined methodology?
5. Do you want a simple to use software which will help you manage your thinking and thematic coding?
6. Are you more concerned with language and terminology?
7. Do you want both thematic and quantitative content information from the data?
8. How much time do you have to learn the software?
9. How much analysis time has been built into your project?
10. Are you working individually or part of a team?

I analyzed all the interviews, photographs, digital diaries, memos, and other electronic documents for this study using the qualitative software program, Atlas.ti: The Knowledge Workbench V.5.0 (Muhr, 2005). Atlas.ti was initially developed at the Technical University of Berlin by the psychology department, linguists, computer scientists, and potential users in 1989. Thomas Muhr and Scientific Software Development GMbH then developed the program. This same company continues to develop and support the software with frequent suggestions from actual users. The functionalities of Atlas.ti allowed me to analyze, code, and cross-check various types of data on one screen. According to Muhr,

> Atlas.ti's knowledge management capabilities transfer data into useful knowledge. [It can] manage, extract, compare, explore, and reassemble meaningful pieces of data in creative, flexible, yet systematic ways. Users can connect selected passages, memos, and codes into building stones of emerging models using the program's graphical network editor.

Atlas.ti is based on the grounded theory approach (Glaser & Strauss, 1967); however, it was created for all qualitative methodological approaches. It provides many helpful tools for qualitative researchers to navigate through the textual data received. Atlas.ti is capable of the following functions:

- Manage, arrange and rearrange material
- Code text systematically and develop a system of codes for research studies
- Retrieve and browse text on the basis of coding and the different ways you've arranged the material
- Visualize your findings and interpretations in diagrams, graphs, and maps
- Create families and networks using the codes, memos, and quotations from your data
- Export data into quantitative software packages such as SPSS, SAS, and Excel
- Print codes, memos, quotations, charts, diagrams, and graphs
- Write up your research piece by piece within the program as you go along (European University Institute, 2003)

Using this program, I was able to code in many different ways. I used open coding as well as in vivo coding. I was even able to code data from a list that I created. I also inputted all of the photographs I took and coded them using the multimedia functions for audio, video, and pictorial analyses. The process of reflexivity is also accentuated with the use of Atlas.ti. Through this program, I was able to capture analytic reflections and insights and make them readily available for further thought and analysis (Emerson, Fretz, & Shaw, 1995). I was able to attach memos to specific quotations from interviews or simply write a free memo from my personal thoughts and reflections. This function of Atlas.ti was most useful to me because I was able to document my thoughts without having to separate from the data. Because the program is easy to manipulate, I did not have to create a new document. I never lost my train of thought, and I was able to navigate seamlessly between the screens.

CAQDAS does not replace the analytic work of the researcher. The researcher is still the most valuable tool, and it still takes a considerable amount of time to conduct qualitative data analysis. As with any other computer packages, some of the programs do have their limitations:

1. Documents may have to be in either plain text or rich text formats.
2. Researchers may not be able to exchange data easily.
3. Most programs do not have spelling and grammar check functions.
4. All programs require a substantial amount of training and practical experiences.

Indeed, none of the packages advocate for its exclusive use as certain aspects of data analysis must be done by hand. However, for the researchers that completely rely on manual data analysis techniques, it should also be understood that the realm of qualitative

data analysis is moving toward the increasing integration of computerized software packages. According to Richards (2002), “The research community, in partnership with its methodologists, now needs to study [computerized software] tools, and like composers for the newly invented piano, study the new expressiveness thereby gained” (p. 214). Whether one decides to use a CAQDAS package such as Atlas.ti or to code and categorize data manually, a researcher still must engage in the process of interpretation.

Positionality

As with most qualitative studies, I moved beyond simply analyzing the language structures in the text toward the broader realm of interpretation. According to Wolcott (2001), this process is often based on human activity that includes intuition, past experience, and other personal attributes and subjectivities. This study is no different. Through the process of bracketing, or visualizing subjectivities, and writing reflective memos, I was able to outline how my personal experiences and background have helped to shape my study.

When I began my teaching career in 1999, I believed I could make a difference in the lives of my students. As an African American woman teaching a class in which 90% of the students were African American, I employed many different teaching strategies in the hopes that all of my students would benefit from my instruction. Throughout my 6 years teaching fourth grade in the public schools, I approached every day as a challenge and I truly enjoyed being there. Admittedly, there were some days that presented more of a challenge than others, but despite those occasions, I believed in my students and I believed that I could make a difference. I enjoyed my students and felt it an honor to be in their company. They were funny, inquisitive, and honest—all the qualities I admire in

people, regardless of their age. Even before I became a mother, I felt like one. My students were my babies, and I cared about their overall well-being. To my students, I was not only a teacher but also a person that understood them. I was a Black woman that related to them on a daily basis. I was special. We were special.

Like many other teachers, I understood the fact that many educational programs would come and go and therefore, I did not have a utopian sense of what my job entailed. As the years progressed, I knew that my job, according to educational policy makers, was to teach the students so they would do well on standardized tests. Despite this shift in education, I remained true to my self-prescribed job description, to care about the overall well-being of my students. Not only did we discuss the mandatory character word of the day but we also role played different scenarios. We had open forums for them to voice their questions and concerns and shared stories of how *all of us* could have handled certain situations better. I even held private conferences on Friday afternoons for those students who wanted to share something with me in private[24]. Although they did not always use that time, they knew it was there for them if they needed it. I also consistently incorporated culture into my daily routine. Not only did we read and discuss authors from a variety of cultures but in my lessons, I made references to popular culture, music, and African American family traditions. Every time I knew even the smallest fact, such as a new R&B song that was on the radio, their faces lit up with excitement and amazement. I remember how big their smiles were when I could hum along with them to a Beyoncé or Mary J. Blige song.

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[24] I always let my students know that although these sessions were "private" I would have to let our school counselor know of any abuse or neglect they shared with me. In fact, that happened one year and I stayed at the school until 9:00pm with that student until the situation was temporarily resolved.

Because my students trusted me and knew that I cared about them, they never interpreted my knowledge of popular culture as a weakness. It made them interested in me and therefore interested in the lessons I taught. Interestingly enough, it made them want to do their best on their assignments; which is the crux of my argument for this study. Because of this reciprocal level of respect, caring, and trust, my teaching career ended much as it began. I still believed that I made a difference in the lives of my students. I still, even now, believe that if teachers genuinely care about their students and discuss topics that are meaningful and culturally relevant, students will be more apt to learn the subject areas that standardized tests typically assess. It is with this lens that I interpreted my data. I had and still have the utmost respect for the teachers and staff in the 21st CCLC afterschool program. Because of my teaching background, I understood the complexities of their positions and could relate to their professional experiences. These teachers *chose* to work after the regular school day and therefore *chose* to teach the students that would benefit most from their instructional expertise. Although they chose their positions for various reasons, it was obvious that the staff cared about their students. This demonstration of caring reminded me of my teaching background and made me want to learn more about how they exhibited caring and taught character education using culturally relevant pedagogy.

Confidentiality and Ethics

The adults participating in this study provided consent to participate in the statewide evaluation when they either (a) accepted employment or (b) enrolled their children in the program. As a federal program, 21st CCLC program employees and parents were aware that evaluators might request their participation in an external

evaluation to improve upon existing services. Although I reminded the participants of their rights to refuse participation in the study without repercussions to their employment or enrollment status, none of them did[25].

Another strategy I used to ensure the confidentiality of my participants was to assign each of them and their respective centers a pseudonym that I employed throughout the study. I did not mention their real names and center locations in my study because ensuring their privacy was important to the integrity of this work. Throughout the study, I also never revealed the identity of "the funder" as their privacy was equally important. Before each interview, I reminded the participants that although I was recording our conversations, I would not share the audio files with anyone other than other members of the university research team and the transcription company.

Trustworthiness

Establishing trustworthiness in qualitative research is parallel to achieving validity, reliability, and objectivity in the "conventional paradigm" (Lincoln & Guba, 2007, p. 18) found in quantitative studies. "Qualitative researchers can establish the trustworthiness of their research by addressing the credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability of their studies and findings" (Guba & Lincoln, 1981, p. 81). To establish credibility (internal validity), I triangulated my data by conducting interviews, observations, and document analyses. Yin (2003) called this process a "chain of evidence," and Merriam (1998) referred to it as an "audit trail"; however, despite the various names in the field, each definition equated to the idea of gathering multiple forms

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[25] As previously mentioned, their choice to participate in the study may have been influenced by their fear of the funder.

of data. I also remained persistent in my observations of program activities and sponsored events.

I used member checking as another form of credibility. Member checking requires researchers to allow participants the opportunity to read and discuss the data gathered during the study. While conducting site visits, I informally solicited reactions to my preliminary findings. Even though my original focus was not on the caring aspect of the staff, I found myself discussing this phenomenon with them at length as it encompassed a large portion of my analysis and interpretation. By inviting participants to engage in conversations about my interpretations, they were privy to my emerging themes while partaking in another role in the study besides that of participant.

I addressed transferability (external validity) by writing descriptively. I incorporated verbatim quotes into my findings that illuminated the themes I discovered. These statements included clear and detailed descriptions of specific topics (Gay, Mills, & Airasian, 2006) and provided a visualization of the programs in the study. I acquired dependability (reliability) by conducting what Lincoln and Guba (1985) called an "inquiry audit." This is when "reviewers examine both the process and the product of the research for consistency" (Lincoln & Guba, p. 317). By consulting with the other members of the research team over the design of the study and by continuously updating them with my preliminary results and findings, I ensured that I conducted a dependable study.

Finally, I achieved confirmability (objectivity) by remaining neutral for the duration of the study. "A researcher who is neutral tries to be non-judgmental and strives to report what is found in a balanced way" (Hoepfl, 1997, p. 7). Although I aimed to develop a rapport with my participants, I did not allow myself to be visibly shocked, hurt,

or embarrassed by any comments, gestures, or suggestions they made. I wanted them to speak freely without being ashamed or embarrassed about their perspectives. I tried to remember my subjectivities throughout the study by frequently writing memos, so that I was always able to stay abreast of how my personal biases could influence the study.

Limitations

As with all research, albeit quantitative or qualitative, this study had some limitations. As previously mentioned, this study was not originally on the ethic of caring, character education, or culturally relevant pedagogy. Because the original study was on afterschool program quality, data on these phenomena were readily available; however, it was not the intended purpose. Also, as this study relied on consent received through employment and enrollment packages, students did not sign an assent form and were therefore not permitted to be involved in the study. Although I recognized that students possessed a voice that deserved to be heard, their perspective could not be captured within the scope and time frame of this funded study.

Another limitation to this study reflected the power dynamic that may have existed between program staff and me, the researcher. As this study was originally an evaluation of program quality, the purposeful sample included specific sites rather than specific participants. All of the participants in the study agreed to be interviewed and/or observed; which caused me to wonder if they felt forced by the hand of the funder. Despite my consistent rapport building and conversation-style interviewing techniques, some staff members may have felt obligated to participate rather than choosing to on their own free will. Lastly, as much as I would have liked the staff to perceive me as a neutral being, some staff members' fear of the research process may have caused them to doubt

my neutrality and assume I was there to document inadequacies. To combat these issues with power, I remained open to frequent communication and shared the transcriptions with each interviewee through the process of member checking.

Summary

In this qualitative study, I explored how teachers and staff members demonstrated caring toward their students within a statewide 21st CCLC afterschool program. To understand this phenomenon, I used a case study approach and triangulated my data with interviews, observations, and document analyses. I also reflected on the process of data collection and analysis by writing detailed memos that depicted my perceptions of the study. Throughout this study, I respected the confidentiality of my participants and maintained the integrity of my study by assigning pseudonyms to all of my participants. I conducted data analysis using the qualitative software program, Atlas.ti. This computer program helped me to organize the large amount of data I collected during my time in the field and assisted me with the visualization of themes. This process of coding, organizing, and categorizing led me to a deeper interpretation of the data I collected.

CHAPTER 4

FINDINGS

Introduction

Most students do not acquire the skills they need to be democratic citizens on their own. Life lessons about democracy occur through a village of intersecting institutions, such as culture, family, church, and school. Because public school students spend approximately 7-8 hours in school each day, teachers in the village have the opportunity to educate their students on a multitude of subjects. Most recently, these lessons have focused on the basic subject areas; however, many theorists and researchers (Dewey, 1916; Gutmann, 1987; Kelly, 1995) have argued for the inclusion of democratic lessons and discussions in an effort to increase the likelihood of producing intellectual yet responsible human beings. Accomplishing this goal is not an easy task (Dueschle, 1999). It requires that teachers and staff members look beyond the political confines of the regular classroom toward the acquisition of caring attitudes and atmospheres. In fact, according to Smith and Emigh (2005),

> An elucidated model of caring could potentially clarify the role of caring in education as it has in the field of nursing, where its long-term benefit is clearly recognized. Educators may then look beyond the short-term goal of academic achievement to the long-term outcome of producing productive, capable, and relational skilled individuals. Teacher educators must recognize the role of caring in education to the point that caring concepts are included as outcome goals in teacher preparation programs and pedagogy is developed. (p. 37)

Afterschool programs provide the opportunity for teachers to demonstrate an ethic of caring and for students to feel cared for. In this setting, teachers have more freedom to be creative and convey an atmosphere of care. One of the participants discussed the caring opportunities available in afterschool programs:

> You know there is a connection between us and them. They know that we have a vested interest in their life. And that to me is what the average school is missing. In the regular school it's like . . . I teach you, you're a nice kid, we get along, but go find another class next semester. And here, we know that we're with them for the duration. We're here for you emotionally, we're here for you physically, socially. We're here to help you find a career, to help you find a mentor, to help you find a job (B. Kerrigan, personal communication, February 24, 2007)

In this chapter, I examine how the participants in this study demonstrated caring, culturally relevant pedagogy, and character education while interacting with students in a 21st CCLC afterschool program. I begin the discussion by introducing the ethic of caring exhibited by the teachers and staff members and then continue the discussion with an explanation of the role culturally relevant pedagogy played in the lessons, activities, and clubs supported by the program. Lastly, I present how character education was implicitly and explicitly taught by the teachers in the program. By incorporating these factors into the 21st CCLC afterschool program, the participants in the study believed they were increasing the likelihood that their students would also achieve academically. As a matter of confidentiality and respect for their professions, I refer to my participants and locations by pseudonyms.

Staff Members Who Care about the Whole Child Educate the Whole Child

"We know that healthy families do much more than feed and clothe their children. Similarly, schools must be concerned with the total development of children (Noddings, 2005, p. 11). Noddings was calling for an educational system that cares about its students

at a level that goes beyond the stipulations of public school politics and bureaucracies. While the regular school day does not always lend itself to these opportunities, after-school programs provide the time for teachers to expand their pedagogical repertoire through innovative lessons that address character and academics. In fact, many studies over the past two decades point to the links between afterschool programs and educational success (Fashola, 2002; Miller, 2003; Noam et al., 2003; Posner & Vandell, 1994). According to Slavin (2002),

> In a time of increasing accountability based on test performance, in which children may be retained in grade if they do not achieve at acceptable levels, afterschool and summer school programs are often proposed as a means of giving children a second chance to make up lost ground. If they fail to do so, children suffer and the programs themselves are deemed failures. (p. ix)

Teachers in the 21st CCLC afterschool program accepted the afterschool opportunity with vigor and seemed to understand the connection between caring and academic advancement. Noddings (2005) stated, “First, we should want more from our educational efforts than adequate academic achievement and, second, we will not achieve that meager success unless our children believe that they themselves are cared for and learn to care for others” (p. 675). The teachers in the 21st CCLC program believed that their demonstrating care towards the students would make the students more apt to trust the staff and, therefore, to feel a sense of security that led to increased learning. One project director stated, “Learning actually takes place when the teacher loves the students. So if love is involved, [the students] open up to the love and then they’ll learn” (M. Grattick, personal communication, February 8, 2007). Through this study, I have found that in an effort to educate the whole child, teachers in the afterschool program were caring individuals that familiarized themselves with their students’ school life and home life.

They also focused on building trust amongst the students and their parents, which supported their goals of increasing parental involvement.

The Caring Teacher

Finding high quality, caring, motivating, and encouraging teachers is of the utmost importance for school administrators. Caring teachers help children like who they are, relate well to others, and feel a sense of control over their own lives (Buber, 1965; Mayeroff, 1971; Noblit, Rogers, & McCadden, 1995; Rogers, 1994) These teachers are able to help children be comfortable, happy, responsible, and interesting persons. According to Bender et al. (2000),

> [caring teachers] are a combination of the many stages in their own development. They still have the curiosity and playfulness of infancy. They still have their early childhood capacity for warmth and close relationships. They still have the humor, independence, and intellectual drives of their school-age years. But these are now combined with increased knowledge, mature judgment, the capacity to give and share, and a personal stability and sensitivity. (p. 93)

In this study, the project directors and site coordinators in the 21st CCLC afterschool program were adamant about finding teachers that could not only teach reading and/or math but also those that could "reach the students" in ways not done in the regular day school. When asked about the qualifications they look for in afterschool teachers the participants overwhelmingly "looked for teachers that love kids above all else" (D. Roster, personal communication, February 12, 2007). Other administrators stated,

> I look for people that want to get to know the children they're working with. If they know their kids and they know their heart then they can better guide and direct them. Teachers in this program have to connect with the children. If they can't connect with them then they really shouldn't be doing it. (J. Banks, personal communication, February 15, 2007)

> I look for somebody who would be very interested in the students and who could communicate with them very well. Someone who would be patient

> with them, structured but not strict. That kind of person. (B. Norsworthy, personal communication, March 27, 2007)

Both of these administrators place showing interest in the overall student as a high priority when looking for program staff. These connections are important to them, as they believe that the connections foster greater communication in a relationship that can be strained during the regular school hours. For example, during an observation in Waller County, I noticed that staff members were eating snacks with the students during their scheduled break. Although it was not required of them, most of the teachers sat down with the students and asked them about their day and their peer relationships. I noticed the teachers' laughing with the students and talking with them in a very relaxed and comfortable atmosphere. Often times, these informal conversations translated into the teachers assisting students with their assignments. In fact, I was able to capture this in one of the photographs[26]. After sitting at a table to talk with two students, the teacher began to work with them on a difficult assignment while the rest of the class enjoyed their "free time". It appeared that the teacher's level of caring translated into the academic advancement of the students. The communication that transpired between them seemed very warm and genuine.

It was evident during interviews that not only did administrators desire caring teachers to work in the program but the teachers discussed the importance of it as well. When asked what advice they had for potential instructors in the program, many of them suggested getting to know the student population, exhibiting passion for learning, and

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[26] Please see Appendix F for this photograph.

focusing on getting the children to believe in themselves, all qualities representative of caring, nurturing teachers. Some of interviewees stated,

> First of all, they need to love children. I mean really love children. I think being a parent made a real difference for me. I really do because now my first thoughts are like okay, what would you do if this was your child? You know, [as if she was speaking to herself] there's a mama out there that loves this child just as much as you love yours and what would you do if this was your child? So I guess to be an afterschool teacher, you've got to be patient, you've got to love children, and you need to be creative because you just can't put them through the same thing over and over again; especially if they are struggling in it. (C. Farrs, personal communication, March 27, 2007)

> I would tell them to definitely stay open minded and to care about what they are doing. So the advice I would give is to really care about the students and try to enjoy the work and really just know that we're trying to raise the future so it's our responsibility to lift as we climb. I think that's why I'm still here because I'm lifting as I climb. I'm about to go to graduate school but I know I need to bring them up as I climb up my success ladder so I think that's really important for future teachers too. (M. Muhammed, personal communication, February 8, 2007)

In afterschool programs, many staff members become interested in the financial gains afforded to them by teaching after the bell rings. According to interviews, however, caring afterschool teachers teach in the program for reasons that extend beyond the financial realm. During the interviews, the issue of money came up in several different ways. Some teachers stated that although the additional money is an important factor for teachers to be involved in the program, staff members that apply strictly for that purpose will "never be successful at getting to know their students. They will never go the extra mile it takes to really teach them" (S. Trace, personal communication, March 26, 2007). Administrators believed that the teachers making the most impact were those not there for the money but rather for the children. They believed that both their administration as well as the students easily detected motives that were not sincere. Some of them stated,

> We try to look for people that really love what they're doing. In the conversation, you can tell when people really do care about children when they're talking about the kids. You know, it's in their tone or they're body language. If they really aren't child focused you can completely tell so, we try to get people that really love the work they're doing. (M. Grattick, personal communication, February 9, 2007)

> I have to hire staff that is dedicated, organized and committed to the overall growth of children. Kids can tell when you're not organized or when you're not really caring about what you do. You have to show some interest in what you're teaching them to get them to be motivated to do better. (V. Brown, personal communication, January 29, 2007)

> I've realized that students understand and they see the difference between a teacher who's coming in just to teach and make a paycheck. They know when you're there because you care about them and love them and you want to make a difference in their lives. They can feel it and they will tell you. They know. (M. Muhammed, personal communication, February 8, 2007)

These participants believed that the monetary gains afforded to the teachers in the program were secondary to the gains they would experience after interacting with the students in the program. Caring teachers were those staff members equipped with the desire to be an agent of change rather than those interested in making extra money. For one particular teaching assistant, the rewards from caring about the students in the program far out weighed the payment she received. She stated,

> A lot of times I can come in here stressed out from being in [the regular] school, come in and just be sitting with the kids and it's like I'm gone for a while. It's like even though it's stressful at times dealing with them, the other stress melts away. I'll walk out and then it's not the same. It's really strange. (J. Banks, personal communication, February 15, 2007)

Ms. Banks thought that spending time with the students in the program made the stress from the regular school go away, if only for a short period. She cared about the students and, much like me, felt it an honor to be in their company. According to the Harvard Family Research Project (2006) a connection to students, such as this, can come from caring about students' school life as well as their home life.

Life at Home

Caring teachers are nurturing individuals who care about students' overall well-being. Not only do they inquire into their student's academic successes but they also are interested in students' lives outside of school. Caring teachers want to know about their students' families as well as how these families influence their students' thoughts and decisions on a daily basis. Knowing this information prevents a mismatch between the school culture and family culture (Patterson, Hale, & Stessman, 2007). For teachers to get to know their students at this depth, they need to exhibit caring overtures that are genuine. When caring is instituted sporadically, students receive it with skepticism and resistance (Pitman & Zorn, 2000).

Valenzuela (1999) and Noddings (1986) referred to this superficial caring as "aesthetic caring" in that it only occurs on the surface. However, when teachers move beyond this level of caring they demonstrate "authentic caring" (Noddings; Valenzuela). "This form of caring emphasizes relations of reciprocity between teachers and students" (Valenzuela, p. 61). This type of caring often creates an atmosphere where students are more apt to sharing information about their home lives and family structures and situations. During a focus group in Durango County with a group of teachers, I asked about the socioeconomic status of the students in their program and in response, they discussed their knowledge of their students' home life:

> When some of our students come to school, sometimes they get their only meal. The only decent meal they get. So, a lot of the students that stay for afterschool, I will tell you, they live in some of the most poverty stricken areas. I have found myself making sure that I have extra snacks in my classroom because I get so worried about them being hungry. (D. Johnson)
>
> Yeah, . . . I do that too. I feel so sorry for them sometimes. I find myself thinking about them when they go home. Sometimes I have called their homes and visited them because I wanted them to know that I care about

> them and their families. At first it was weird, but now their parents know me and they know that I love their kids. (F. Dean)

When I asked how these perceptions affected them as teachers, Ms. Johnson responded,

> Well, I love my kids. I really do. I care about them when they are in my class but, as my husband will tell you, I care about them when they are home too. I worry about them but at the same time, I know that all I can do is love them the best way I know how.

In another interview, a teaching assistant stated,

> Getting to know each one of the students and their direct circumstances helps you know, well maybe this is the reason why they're not doing so well. Or maybe this is why they're having a bad day today because, you know, there's something going on. By knowing a little more about them you know more about how to deal with them. I think all teachers should do that . . . not just the ones in this program (J. Banks, personal communication, February 15, 2007).

These teachers cared about their students in a very deep sense of the word. They bought food for them with their own money and took the time to call or visit their homes to demonstrate how much they cared. By getting to know their students successes and tribulations, they were able to adapt their lessons or discussions to their students' day-to-day needs. One of the photographs I took captured a teacher working one-on-one with a student[27]. The student was writing an essay about the love and support she received from her grandmother and the teacher (a volunteer minister from a local church) was talking to her about the essay's content as well the grammar. This level of caring for students placed the teachers in positions that resembled that of extended family members.

By their own admissions, some teachers and staff members were naïve to the family structures some of the students had. Although they cared about their students and wanted to know more about them, their middle class socioeconomic status prohibited

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[27] Please see Appendix F for this photograph.

them from truly understanding their student's family structures. Some teachers in the program had to learn more about where their students lived and who was important to them in their homes. One high school principal stated,

> When I first became a teacher, I couldn't believe that we had kids who were on track to be the first one to go to college in their family. I know a lot of people already knew that but I had to learn that my students' world was very different from my own. I had to step out of my ivory tower and really get to know what my students deal with everyday. I really believe this helped me get to know who my students really were. (A. Trent, personal communication, February 12, 2007)

Although this principal cared about his students, it was not until he "learned the depth of his experiences" (Dueschle, 2005) and reflected about his own subjectivities and biases that he felt he was truly knowing his students. This "knowing" helped him to care about his students, which in turn, led him to demonstrate a deeper ethic of caring. Another teacher mentioned that it shocked her when she found out how many of her students came from single parent households. She stated, "I was talking to this little girl one day about maiden names and I asked her what her mother's name was before she got married and she gave me the weirdest look. I learned a lot that day" (D. Quinn, personal communication, February 24, 2007). This teacher's honesty about her personal subjectivities, allowed her to learn about her student's home life and truly see how her personal subjectivities intermingled with her teaching practices. Not only was she able to care for her students but by engaging in candid conversations about her students' home life, she helped establish a relationship of trust between her and her students.

The Creation of Trust

By caring about students, teachers have the ability to create an atmosphere of trust. Morris, Taylor, and Wilson (2000) described the importance of establishing an ethic of caring and trust between teachers and students:

> To build such basic trust with children, teachers need to exhibit an attribute called "caring." Caring can be defined as feeling and exhibiting concern and empathy for others. This definition also encompasses giving close attention to, and having watchful oversight and compassion for others . . . teachers must be more than "tellers" or dispensers of knowledge and skills; they must have compassion for their students and must be able to exhibit this concern in order for students to learn to trust them, to develop a rapport with them, and eventually to believe what educators want to teach is important. (p. 42)

The leadership team and program staff in the 21st CCLC program constantly worked to build trust among the students in their care. The staff seemed to know that establishing trusting relationships was crucial to the success of the afterschool program. One middle school site coordinator stated,

> These students have to trust you. Not just because you are their teacher but as a person . . . especially here in middle school, relationship becomes the hallmark. This age group does not care about title or position, they leave that at elementary school. They're like so what? You're my teacher. They don't care about that. They care that I care about them and if they don't get that connection they will be like suspend me, I don't care because you don't care. But if they understand that you are the person who cares about them, I mean, it really does matter. You can tell them, you know what? That bird's flying upside down, they're not even going to question that. That's an upside down bird because you said it and I trust you. (F. Dean, personal communication, February 20, 2007)

Mr. Dean was expressing how the students in the program learn to trust teachers and other staff members. To him, students need to get to know teachers as people in order for students to trust them. As a middle school staff member, he recognized the lack of trust inherent in middle and high school students (Harvard Family Research Project, 2006) and noted that in order to combat this, teachers need to be caring adults that are interested in making connections with the students in their care.

While in Gate County, a middle school girl came in to talk to the site coordinator, J. Notting. The young girl was African American with very long hair and an enormous smile on her face. As soon as she came in, she asked to speak to Ms. Notting. Although

we were in the middle of our interview, she excused herself to go speak to the young girl. She apologized to me for the interruption, and I told her not to worry about it as I could not help but to be intrigued on many levels. On one hand, I really wanted to know what made this young girl so happy while on another, I took note of how much the students meant to Ms. Notting. To her, this student's need to talk to her was more important than the interview we were doing.

When Ms. Notting returned, I asked, "Is everything okay?" She smiled and said, "Yes, I'm sorry . . . everything is great!" She went on to tell me that this young girl was feeling oppressed in her second period math class. The young girl, whom Ms. Notting affectionately called Cee Cee, felt that her teacher did not like her and was therefore, not attending to her questions or comments in class. Ms. Notting promised Cee Cee that she would look into the matter. Without going into any more detail then she thought was necessary, she told me that she talked to the teacher and it was "mutually decided" that the young girl should switch teachers. Cee Cee had her first day of class the day of our interview and wanted to thank Ms. Notting for helping her. Ms. Notting and I discussed how students learn to trust staff members based on them following through on promises. In an era where our youth have a difficult time believing and trusting adults (Dempsey & Noblit, 1993), following through on promises becomes an important aspect of establishing trust. Ms. Notting stated,

> Well, I think a lot of these kids, they're so used to somebody asking them what they want and then they don't get it. These staff members don't follow through, then these adults still do whatever it is they want, without caring what was promised to the kids. I think the kids are used to seeing that and when they do, oh gosh, you know they're thinking, I went to talk to her and I trusted her now look? But if the teacher listens and puts actions to the promises, there's going to be a trust factor involved and you

> know, there will be a better rapport and a better relationship with the students (J. Notting, personal communication, January 25, 2007).

Ms. Notting was an example of how following through with promises promotes increased trust between staff members and students. The trust she was granted seemed to be a direct result of the deep level of caring she exhibited toward Cee Cee but also showed this young impressionable woman that some teachers do follow through and can be trusted.

Parental Involvement

A growing body of research supports the importance of parental involvement to students' school success (Epstein & Dauber, 1991; Swap, 1992). When parents demonstrate interest in their child's education, the child increases his or her stake in their education and wants to please himself or herself as well as those who care about the child's success. Although the majority of the parents in this program worked during the afterschool hours, the administrators, teachers, and staff members diligently worked to find ways to get them involved. The document analysis revealed many items that promoted parental involvement. Flyers to attend speaking engagements, motivational seminars, and hands-on activities at the conclusion of the afterschool hours permeated almost all the documents in the analysis. Program staff invited parents to workshops on student-focused topics, such as the CRCT, homework assistance, and peer relationships, but they were also invited to seminars for their betterment. Parents had options of various seminars such as increasing their credit scores, obtaining checking accounts, getting health screenings, and searching for employment. Because many of the parents had younger children, some programs advertised free in-house childcare services and meals during the workshops and seminars.

I had the pleasure of attending a parent workshop at Turner University[28]. The following excerpt is from the digital diary I recorded that day:

> The meeting was located in a large classroom with several desks, tables, and student chairs. The room was filled to capacity so I had to pull a chair into the room, along with several other parents, just to get a seat. This, in itself, was amazing to me. I was immediately impressed with the amount of parents in the room and was interested to know what the topic of the day was. As soon as those thoughts rambled through my mind, I noticed an older gentleman meandering through the tightly spaced furniture. He was wearing a blue-grey suit and was taking the time to speak to all the parents in attendance. Again, I was impressed because he seemed to care a great deal for the parents, yet I was also eager for him to make his way over to me. When he did, I met his smile with one of my own and he told me that he was a pastor from the local Baptist church. He told me he was there to talk to "us" about motivating "our" high school children. He was positioning me as an insider for this meeting but was it because I was Black or because I looked like a mother? He then asked me what school my child or children attended and I said Sunbrook Academy, my son's preschool. He turned his head in confusion, laughed, and then conveyed through nonverbal communication, that I now intrigued him. I immediately told him who I was and briefly explained the purpose of my visit. He thanked me for coming and I thanked him for allowing me to listen. (C. Davis, Waller County, February 24, 2007)

During the meeting, the parents were listening attentively to the strategies presented and asked many thought provoking questions. At the conclusion of the meeting, one of the parents explained how she felt about the workshop as well as the program. She told me that the workshop was very helpful to her as her son just began his high school career. She continued the conversation by telling me how she felt about the program:

R. Brown: I love it. I'm going to be honest. At first I thought I wouldn't because of all the gimmicks out there but I really love it.

Corrie: What about it do you love?

R. Brown: I would have to say the family oriented aspect of it, the structure, the teaching, the family nights, I love that. I really love the family nights because it lets me know that

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[28] Please see Appendix F for this photograph.

they [the staff] care about me too. I have not missed one, I've been to all of them. I usually volunteer.

Corrie: What makes you want to volunteer?

R. Brown: They always say it takes a village to raise kids so I do all I can while I'm here.

Through our conversation, I learned that Ms. Brown did not originally trust the program. She was skeptical of it and thought of it as a "gimmick" until she interacted with the program administrators, teachers, and staff. According to her, the connections the staff makes with the parents and families are the most important programming aspect. It is during these times that she experiences the care that staff have for her child and his family. Much like I previously stated, Ms. Brown noted that it takes a village to raise a child. By her volunteering, she believed she was an active member of that village.

Y. Jackson, also from Turner University, was another leader in this community of caregivers. Ms. Jackson made it her mission to get the parents in her program involved as much as possible. As an African American, 62-year-old woman, Ms. Jackson spoke like a wise grandmother and prided herself on treating everyone like a grandchild, regardless of his or her age. Her main job responsibility was to communicate with parents, create family-focused events, and evaluate the effectiveness of the programs she suggested. As part of her initiatives, Ms. Jackson single-handedly conducted research on available GED programs in her county and secured scholarships for the parents to attend. After speaking with her, I learned that many parents in the program that could have benefited from the GED courses were initially too embarrassed or ashamed to admit they did not finish high school. According to Ms. Jackson, making parents as comfortable as possible was the key to her success. To her, getting to know the parents on a personal basis meant that she

would eventually gain their trust and respect. She spoke with delight about one particular grandmother she helped:

> There's a little boy here now, his great-grandma is raising him. She says, Ms. Jackson, I sure wish I could get an education and I could read and apply for jobs, Ms. Jackson, I sure wish I could do it. I said, you can do anything you want to do. So when the scholarship went through, I called and said, okay you ready? She said, ooh darling I'll cook you a cake if you – I said, don't cook me no cake, just get your behind in school. Because she doesn't have a high school education, she doesn't have a GED. So now she is getting a GED and she said, when her grandson asks for help with his homework she'll be able to read it. She'll be able to comprehend what she's reading. She's the happiest grandma in town because she is now back in school. (Y. Jackson, personal communication, February 9, 2007)

Through her caring attitude and tenacious spirit, Ms. Jackson was able to help this grandmother be a support system for her grandson. By establishing trust with her, she was able to empower the grandmother to achieve a goal that was personally fulfilling. These connections are important and long lasting. A site coordinator from another county talked about the connections she built and maintained with the parents and families in her community:

> When I see these kids they are thinking, you taught my uncle, you know my mama, you know my cousins, and my daddy. When you get those kinds of connections and ties together with these parents, we end up working as a team. It's like I move, you move. There's a little song that says, *when I move, you move, its like that*. And so that's kind of how it is, we end up tangled up together but in a good way, you know? These are the kind of connections we want because if the parents are involved, the kids do better. (T. Granger, personal communication, March 26, 2007)

Because Mr. Granger made connections to the parents in the program, he was able to build relationships with other family members as well. According to him, these connections increased the likelihood that the students would continue to strive for personal and academic success.

Using Culture as an Asset Increases Students' Desire to Learn

The public school expectation is for students to matriculate through 12 years of courses and graduate with a plethora of skills and knowledge that equate to becoming responsible, democratically adept citizens. Teachers convey a vast array of information in the hope that their students will absorb the lessons and yearn for more. However, in order for students to digest all the information they receive from their instructors, they must be able to process the information in ways that are creative, meaningful and relevant to them. Because students have cultural variations in oral and written expression (Perry, Steele, & Hilliard, 2003), it is imperative for teachers to capitalize on these differences and infuse culture into the daily curriculum. As one of my participants stated, "Don't criticize how our students are doing if you're not going to teach them the way they learn best" (Y. Donovan, personal communication, February 24, 2007).

"Culturally relevant pedagogy empowers students intellectually, socially, emotionally, and politically by using cultural referents to impart knowledge, skills, and attitudes" (Ladson-Billings, 1994, p.18). By addressing race, racism, and culture, teachers and students are able to use their realities to inform their educational experience and move past the colorblind structure of multiculturalism (Cuban, 1972; S. Giroux, 2006). By using race and culture as a site of learning, students internalize a sense of identity that transcends from their home life to their school life and are more apt to learn the skills our teachers so badly wish to teach (Boykin, 1986; Nobles & Goddard, 1992). In the 21st CCLC afterschool program, the teachers used the strengths of culturally relevant pedagogy through their implicit and explicit curriculums, performing arts activities, family connections, and pedagogical freedom. Although many teachers and staff members ex-

hibited these qualities, some did not capitalize on the value of culture and were therefore, functioning within the dominant culture's definition of an appropriate education.

Curriculum

In the midst of all the arguments on student achievement, "parents and teachers are left with the task of selecting and implementing curricula for students who ultimately must be prepared to survive and thrive in a democratic and multicultural society" (Ladson-Billings, 1994, p. 80). Although some 21st CCLC programs used a formal curriculum, most teachers and staff members had the freedom to vary their instructional practices and adjust their teaching styles in an effort to incorporate culture, race, and ethnicity. By incorporating culture, the students hear names, ideas, and words that are typically not part of the standard curriculum (Noddings, 2005). For example, when asked how she incorporated culture into her daily lessons, a teacher at Turner University stated,

> I don't always have complete lessons on culture but in this program, I am able to do more with it. For example, in my science class, we were creating boats and because of that, we talked about civilization. The real story of civilization. After this, we discussed buoyancy and then created some boats of our own. See, people think these kids can't handle the truth but its all about how you deliver it. They are smart enough to understand history. We teach it to them everyday. Why pick and choose which history to tell them? I have black kids and white kids in my class and they are all interested in hearing the stories that are not in the textbooks. (F. Johnson, personal communication, February 8, 2007)

The small class sizes in the program enabled the teachers to individualize the curriculum and customize the instruction they delivered to their students. At times, these small classes materialized into formal and informal "clubs".

Clubs

In many of the programs, small groups of students would meet during the regular afterschool hours to express themselves in many creative ways. Some of the groups

included Salsa Dancing, African Dance, Stepping[29], and Cross-Stitching. Another club, the Cooking Club in Jackson County, allowed students to discuss different cultures; with an emphasis on the food typically consumed by its people. Each month, the students learned about a new culture and would then culminate their unit by cooking a representative dish. When I met Mrs. Farrs, the cooking teacher, they were studying Italian cooking. She told me, "We've already covered Jamaica and Thailand. We have plans to explore China, Nigeria, and Haiti in the near future" (C. Farrs, personal communication, March 27, 2007). The Spanish Club, in Durango County, was another club designed to increase the cultural awareness of the students. The club was originally a class designed for homework assistance for low performing and ESOL students. The teacher, Mr. Wasset, noticed that half the class of eighth grade students was Latino/a while the other half were White. After speaking with the students, Mr. Wasset decided to create a learning atmosphere for the students in his care. He stated,

> Since we had such a diverse mix of kids, I decided to let my Spanish speaking kids take on a leadership role. I let them teach the other kids Spanish while the White kids help them with their English language skills. You should see them, they love it. They smiled from ear to ear when we first tried it. It's now a very popular club. We have discussed music and family traditions too. The Latino kids love being able to teach someone something about their culture and the White kids, who ordinarily are at the lowest of the low, can help the ESOL kids learn better English. Some of the Latino kids even try to explain what their life is like in this society dealing with racism. It's a win-win and I love watching them interact with each other. They learn so much from each other. (R. Wasset, personal communication, February 20, 2007)

Mr. Wasset seemed to understand that learning takes place in many forms. Although he was the instructor of the course, he respected the knowledge and capabilities of his stu-

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[29] Please see Appendix F for this photograph.

dents and allowed them to serve in a capacity they, most likely, rarely got to experience in the regular day school. This unintentional curriculum seemed to be beneficial to the students as the Latino/a and White students were able to discuss race and racism while sharing information about their language, customs, and culture. The day I observed, the students were singing songs in Spanish that involved movement and poetry. The photograph I took documented the students practicing one of the songs they learned from the club[30].

Another 21st CCLC afterschool club, Boys to Men, addressed the needs of the African American middle school students in their school. Confronting the needs of this population is important, as educational policy makers have traditionally overlooked them in both theory and practice. In fact, Fashola (2003) discussed the lack of afterschool programming for African American male students. She stated, "Some after-school programs have focused on cultural issues and athletics, but few, if any, of these have special components of their program dedicated to addressing the educational advancement of African American students and African American males in particular" (p. 401). I had the pleasure of observing such a group in Mercer County. I documented this observation with photographs[31] and a digital diary:

> I observed this group of young African American males as they sat in a small room with a rectangular table and chairs. The instructor, the physical education teacher during the regular school day, was standing up while the eight students sat, quietly and respectfully, in their chairs. When I arrived, the teacher, Mr. Lawrence, was circling around the room and directing everyone's attention to the laptop he had set up at the head of the table. The image he was showing the students was a picture of the first two African American coaches in the Superbowl, Lovie Smith and Tony

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[30] Please see Appendix F for this photograph.

[31] Please see Appendix F for this photograph.

> Dungy. Mr. Lawrence asked the students to speculate as to why they thought African Americans had been subtly and unsubtly deterred from NFL coaching positions. All of them said, "Because they are Black". These students understood institutional racism.
>
> With this historic event on the horizon, he then asked the students to reflect on their futures and where they would like to see themselves in 10 years. Mr. Lawrence asked them to write their responses down on a sheet of paper. As some of the students looked up to the ceiling to ponder this question, I decided to walk around the room. During this traditional "teacher's walk" I noticed that some of the students had a very long list while others were struggling to write their first item. The students with the long lists wanted to be dentists, physicians, professional athletes, lawyers, and musicians – anything they could do to become "millionaires." The students with the short lists said they either didn't know or they couldn't think that far into the future. (C. Davis, March 2, 2007)

We discussed this phenomenon in our interview:

Corrie:	I noticed that some of the boys in your group had great aspirations for the future while others, couldn't seem to picture themselves in the future.
Mr. Lawrence:	Yeah, isn't that interesting. That's why I started that group. Those kids that you just saw have been up against a lot…in this school and in the world. I know that some of them probably wanted to write that they would be dead or in jail but because they know I want more from them, they didn't write that.
Corrie:	Oh, . . .
Mr. Lawrence:	Yeah, I know what they wanted to say but I'm just glad that I'm helping them come up with at least one positive thing they could be doing in the future. I try to talk about things they know about first to get their attention and then I bring them back to the lesson. If I was to just talk about appropriate behavior and being respectful they would probably tune me out or say, "Yes . . . No . . . I don't know" but because I talk about the latest videos, rap songs, and TV shows they listen to me. Like today, I talked about the Superbowl. Did you see how quiet they were? They love to talk about things like that. And just when I got their attention, we talked about the lesson for today which was goal setting and planning for the future.

The Boys to Men club seemed to be a refuge for the African American boys in attendance. Mr. Lawrence's curriculum focused on life skills but he knew, whether

through professional or personal experience, that he had to illuminate the culture of the students in order to get them to genuinely participate and absorb the information he presented. By infusing their culture into their curriculum, Mr. Lawrence had a captive audience.

Literacy

Many researchers have also discussed the importance of incorporating culturally relevant literature into reading curriculums (Dowd, 1997; Kim, 1976). Identifying with a student's own culture through textbooks, novels, and other supplemental reading materials allows for the feeling of authenticity and connectedness. According to Gay (2000), this ethnically diverse literature also has the potential to expand students' knowledge of other cultures. She states,

> [Ethnic literature] is a powerful way to expose students to ethnic groups, cultures, and experiences different from their own to which they may not have access in their daily classrooms and lived experiences of students outside of school improves the mastery of academic skills as well as other dimensions of learning, such as interest, motivation, and time-on-task. Ethnic literature and trade books are conduits for achieving these goals, as well as reducing fear and prejudices toward unfamiliar others. (p. 118)

Students in the 21st CCLC afterschool program had many opportunities to read literature for and about a variety of cultures and races. The ability to read and comprehend is essential to the understanding and mastery of every school subject but also plays a crucial role in students' social and economic lives (Snow, Burns, & Griffen, 1998). By choosing books that are culturally diverse, students gain a sense of identity that may lead to them to want to read more.

For example, one 21st CCLC afterschool program used literacy circles for elementary students. All the students in the program were able to matriculate through the class during the week because the instructor assigned different grades (first through fifth)

a specific day. The teacher conducted the literacy circle in the library so the students could be among many different literary choices. After the observation, I recorded these notes:

> When I arrived, the students were sitting in a circle, eagerly awaiting the story the teacher, Ms. Ngueyen, was about to read. This look of interest and awe made me smile because as a public school teacher, I thoroughly enjoyed seeing my students look at me in the same manner. The story Ms. Ngueyen read was about a Mexican family that was getting ready for a family vacation. The author, I cannot recall his name, was very descriptive as he discussed the neighborhood school, church, and community. After the story was over, the teacher asked the group what they thought of the story. A little boy immediately raised his hand. He appeared to be Latino and was wearing blue pants with a yellow shirt. The teacher did not immediately call on him so like many other elementary school students that want attention, he raised his hand higher in the air and said, "Ooh…Ooh…Ooh!" Realizing that this young man really wanted to contribute to the discussion, she decided to call on him. The little boy could barely contain his excitement as he told the group that he was from Mexico and the book reminded him of home. The teacher asked him what about the book reminded him of home and he explained that the church and surrounding neighborhood looked like his. He was so happy. Even though I don't know him, and will most likely never see him again, I was happy for him, too. (C. Davis, Turner University, February 9, 2007)

Because of the short story, this little boy felt a sense of identity. The words and coinciding pictures made him feel special in a society where his culture plays a secondary role (Boykin et al., 2005). This was definitely culturally relevant pedagogy in practice.

In Reagan County, the teachers and staff also viewed culture as a literary asset. In addition to choosing novels and supplemental reading materials that represented the dominant culture, the site coordinator and program director chose a series that depicted stories of race, multiculturalism, and racism in a school and community setting. The books each depicted a different culture on the cover with current pictures and illustra-

tions[32]. When I asked Mr. Upston, one of the site coordinators, about the novels he smiled with excitement:

Corrie:	During the walk through I noticed a section with the multi-cultural novels. Is that a part of your program?
Mr. Upston:	Yes, they are a big part of our program. This is what happened. Our school has a program called AR [Accelerated Reader]. Are you aware of that? I'm sure you are.
Corrie:	Yes, I am familiar with the program.
Mr. Upston:	Well, our school really pushes it. The kids earn points and rewards from it so it is something they really try to do.
Corrie:	Okay.
Mr. Upston:	Well, as you know, we have to run reports on how well our students are doing. I noticed that my kids weren't reading the books like they should so I asked a few of them why they weren't reading them. They told me that most of the books were boring and didn't talk about anything real. Well, I found this foundation that was donating all these books that were about all these different cultures and how students can get past racism. All I had to do was ask for them and they started coming. For free. We paid nothing. The kids love them. Our librarian was nice enough to load them into our AR program so now all the kids can take AR tests on them.
Corrie:	Wow. . . . That's nice.
Mr. Upston:	Yeah, now we have to make sure that we keep them up.
Corrie:	What do you mean?
Mr. Upston:	Well, now kids from other programs want to come and read our books. I don't mind but I have asked our librarian to set up a check-out system for them. Even though they were free, we can't afford to lose them you know?

The students in Reagan County had a great advantage in that they had a site coordinator who wanted them to succeed and was willing to find books that addressed the marginalization of minorities and their cultural diversity. By design, the Accelerated Reader program engages students in large amounts of reading practice that is authentic and

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[32] Please see Appendix F for this photograph.

relevant to their lives (Melton et al., 2004). Mr. Upston seemed to understand the importance of this program as well as the importance of the infusion of cultural opportunities.

Creative and Performing Arts

According to Hale (2001), "infusion of the creative arts into instruction increases the interest in activities and stimulates motivation to achieve" (p. 120). It seemed as though the 21st CCLC program capitalized on this notion. Every program I visited incorporated the arts into their curriculum, often combining both the creative and performing arts. Whether through field trips, speakers, or student activities, the program definitely saw the combination of culture and the arts as an asset. Many programs also made connections with the families of their students by inviting them to attend nightly events. As previously mentioned, incorporating parents into educational practices helps increase the academic advancement of students. Noam et al. (2003) said educators should "seize upon all available opportunities to reinsert families and communities into children's experience of learning. [This practice would] simultaneously help children acquire knowledge about their environment and their heritage as well as state-mandated subject matter" (p. 73). For example, students attending the Umoja Group presented a play for their families entitled "Take A Walk In My Shoes" about the life of Harriet Tubman. These same students also took a field trip to see the West African Children's Ballet and were able to invite one member of their family to attend.

At the Carter Youth Detention Center (YDC) 21st CCLC program, the students (all female) were able to choose from a list of enrichment courses offered every 6 weeks. The instructors provided the high school students with flyers that advertised their courses

and the students, who were incarcerated, were able to choose which courses appealed to them. One of the flyers was entitled, *Reading and Counting to a Different Beat*. The flyer included a thorough course description with objectives and instructional delivery methods. The teacher's intention was to use various teaching methods to help the students understand the importance of problem solving and mathematical concepts. When I asked Ms. Yemens, the teacher, to explain her objectives, she told me that the third objective on her flyer, "Recognize and apply mathematics in contexts outside of mathematics" was very important to the success of the class. According to her, because the majority of the students in her class had negative perceptions of school, it was crucial for her to use cultural examples of how numbers related to their everyday lives.

Music played a very important role in the teachers' lessons and activities. Popular culture, like music, can be "a reference for understanding how experience is organized, produced, and legitimated within cultural forms grounded in the dynamics of everyday life" (H. Giroux & Simon, 1988, p. 17). During observations, students were learning math and reading by replacing lyrics with academic facts and figures. Some programs capitalized on the strength of music more than others. The afterschool program at Southeastern State University had an in-house music studio for the students to enjoy. The "Music and Lyrics" class was comprised of 12 African American high school students. According to the instructor, Mr. Eaton,

> These students are getting songs together. Some of them are writing original lyrics while others are imitating some songs from the radio, those that are appropriate that is. You should hear how these students have turned their classwork into music. Some of them have a real talent for this. We are going to make a CD at the end of March or the beginning of April, depending on how hard they work. (C. Eaton, personal communication, March 15, 2007)

The students in this program not only used music as a site of learning but also created a product based on their creativity; "thus, while the students were comfortable using their music, the teacher used it as a bridge to school learning" (Ladson-Billings, 1995, p. 161). One of the photographs captured a group of high school students creating music and lyrics for a song about algebra[33]. Two of the students wrote and played the music while two others wrote and sang the lyrics. While these students were practicing, one student sat in the background and acted as the group's manager. These students were learning algebraic concepts through the performing arts with interwoven lessons about roles and responsibilities. This type of learning is beneficial for both students and teachers, as it allows for a freedom from the rigidity inherent in our current public school system.

Pedagogical Freedom

With culturally relevant pedagogy, the teachers in the 21st CCLC afterschool program had the freedom to incorporate culture into their lessons and activities. Feeling restricted by the politics of traditional public school education, the teachers in the program seemed to enjoy being able to expand their pedagogical repertoires by discussing different information that may not necessarily be in the average textbook. One teacher stated,

> I like the 21st CCLC program because I'm not so – at school, I'm very structured in what I can do. Very controlled. The administration controls what you can say and how you have to go about it. Here, it is more free, but still organized. The kids are allowed to have fun and make noise while they are learning. You can't make noise at school so teaching here gives me a chance to be more creative. We can talk about their home lives, be creative, have a good time, and still learn without anyone getting upset.

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[33] Please see Appendix F for this photograph.

> That's what I like about it. (H. Harrison, personal communication, February 28, 2007)

Another teacher stated,

> There are so few people in this profession that are really committed to the struggle of children, particularly African American children. So it's hard to even talk to other teachers during the day because all they want to do is complain about what the kids aren't doing. They never want to talk about what they could do to help them though. So when I come here, it's a relief for me, you know? The teachers here want to be here and they want to help these kids that everyone else has written off. We can explore so much with them here. Their regular teachers don't try to talk about things they like, that would take too much effort. (T. Perry, personal communication, February 24, 2007)

Both of these teachers felt a sense of freedom from teaching in the 21st CCLC afterschool program. Instead of maintaining the status quo of the traditional public school system, they wanted to be agents of change. They seemed to understand the opportunities culture infused lessons and activities afforded to their students and spoke with excitement about being able to teach in a different format than the regular school would allow. In fact, when asked what advice they would give to a teacher interested in working in the program, these teachers from Armando County stated,

> I would say, if you are looking to have fun, to enjoy being around people that love children, and you are willing to give back, and teach students using their music and tv shows then this is the place for you. If you are ready to think out the box, then come on. (S. Peterson, personal communication, March 1, 2007)

> I agree but they also need to be involved. That is what I would tell them. Please be involved in the program, in the kids lives, and in their communities. Build links between you and each student's family. I know teachers are encouraged not to that nowadays but here you can. Get to know them and get to know what they do, what they listen to, what they like. Our kids really love that we know them, I mean we really know them. (R. Yarman, personal communication, March 1, 2007)

These teachers recognized the importance of understanding their students and felt strongly about having other teachers in the program that valued culture as an asset. It

seemed as though they referred to their regular day school as a site of oppression with the 21st CCLC program being emancipatory and empowering. This sense of freedom seemed to be attractive to the teachers and their words were almost pleas for others to join their causes.

Building Character Promotes Positive Change

The goal of character education is to help young people know, care about, and act on core ethical values such as fairness, honesty, kindness, respect for others, and responsibility (Krajewski & Bailey, 1999). With public schools being sites of increasing academic pressure, the regular school day may no longer be the most appropriate setting for character education programs to occur. According to Peterson, Roebuck, Betts, and Stuart (2005), "The question now becomes: Other than school, where and when can the community access young people to give them opportunities to discuss, experience, make mistakes, and have success in developing an understanding of their own ethics?" (p. 139). Afterschool programs serve as a viable option.

It is within the educational structure of afterschool programs that children, of all ages, can learn and practice the basics of ethics, citizenship, morality, and personal development. These values are important to practice and discuss as "children are moral beings" (Noddings, 2005, p. 12) who benefit from programs that promote virtuous behaviors. Students participating in character building programs are known "to fight less, engage in less-name-calling, are less likely to steal from each other, are more likely to consider the consequences of their actions, and cooperate better with each other" (Mulkey, 1997, p. 36). These programs also have the potential to assist students with their academic advancement.

By interacting with teachers who convey the democratic values that students will find useful throughout their adolescence and adulthood, students are more apt to strive for excellence in their academic careers (DeRoche & Williams, 2001; Seymour, 2004). As one of my participants stated,

> You can get so much more accomplished when you get a child to believe in themselves and let them know that you believe in them. You can get so much more . . . you set the standards a little bit higher and give them that extra push as opposed to just coming in there and being a body sitting in a classroom saying, okay now do this, now do that. Talk to them about real issues and let them know you are interested in their success. Not just their success at school but their success in life . . . they will do the work. They sometimes even do better. (F. Johnson, personal communication, February 8, 2007)

This dynamic interplay between caring and character education plays a crucial role in students' acquisition of character building lessons and values. As a principal in Habersham County stated,

> You know, the teachers in our program are caring human beings. They really are. They are genuinely interested in their students' success and they are always imparting some character education on them. It seems like it's in every lesson. (E. Masters, personal communication, February 12, 2007)

During interviews, teachers and staff members discussed their emphasis on character despite the recent shift toward test-based accountability. They also described their program's missions and how their explicit and implicit lessons shaped the future aspirations of the students in the program.

Missions and Goals

According to Alfie Kohn (1997),

> Character education, or any kind of education, would look very different if we began with other objectives – if, for example, we were principally concerned with helping children become active participants in a democratic society (or agents for transforming a society into one that is authentically democratic). It would look different if our top priority were

> to help students develop into principled and caring members of our community or advocated for social justice. (p. 434)

The teachers in the 21st CCLC afterschool program were adamant about creating democratic and caring educational environments where character education skills were equally or, at times, more important than the acquisition of academic skills. While conducting interviews, I discovered that many of the programs shared a mission that involved the improvement of the character of their students. Not only were they interested in challenging their students academically but also in challenging and encouraging them to become better citizens. For example, in Butler County, the school/program liaison stated,

> We have one mission and everything we do ties into that mission of preparing our students to be a part of the larger society. We want to give them an education that includes the opportunity to be productive members of society. (R. Jackson, personal communication, February 27, 2007)

An interview with Ms. Banks, from Connections Ministries, yielded a similar response:

> I know that the county would say the goals are to improve test scores, and maybe they are but I see the goals as being able to help children get better on track for studying, to help them down the line. And not just do it right now, but hopefully to maintain that, to learn good study habits and make positive lives for themselves. (J. Banks, personal communication, February 15, 2007)

Mr. Jackson and Ms. Banks spoke of their vision to improve the character of their students. Without a doubt, they understood the state and national focus on increasing test scores but they also associated academic advancement with the infusion of character education in their respective programs. Their goals were consistent with the goals of Benson (2006) when he stated that the goal of his work was “to shift the language about kids from a preoccupation with problems, deficit, and risk to a vocabulary of what we

need to do to promote a language of positive development" (p. xii). Ms. Pitts, from Learning to Live, also spoke of her program's focus on character in very explicit terms:

> The original vision of the grant, first of all is to empower the young people to tap into their inner spirit of nobility and to rise up to that nobility. We teach them that they were created for a purpose. So we help them look at building character and virtues in their lives and then we help them to implement those values and put them into place. That makes for a better person which in turn will make for a better student. So the foundation of our work is built on virtues and how to work on their inner selves. (C. Pitts, personal communication, January 29, 2008)

The teachers and staff members from the Learning to Live program were forthright in their mission to improve the character of their students in attendance. Ms. Dean, an elementary school site coordinator, also spoke with conviction about her program's emphasis on character. She stated,

> Our test scores have gone up every year since we've had an afterschool program. This year has been no exception. We've, most definitely seen growth in our test scores. We've also seen growth in individual students. Their character has improved. Their confidence levels go up, just an eagerness to be in school. Kids talk to you in the hallway that you have built relationships with. Because of this program's emphasis on character, the students are doing more work. I can't explain it, I think they care more. Now if you let someone else tell it, all we do is improve test scores but I tell you what, that is not what we are doing. We are improving their character. (F. Dean, personal communication, February 19, 2007)

This interview further demonstrated that teachers were acutely aware of the accountability associated with standardized test scores but were also cognizant of the power of learning character-building skills. Ms. Dean initially wanted me to know that her program contributed to the increase in test scores but then explained how the character education lessons and activities conducted at her sites influenced the students in her program. The variations in the participant's missions and goals alluded to the notion that there was an explicit and implicit character education focus among the grantees in the sample.

Implicit Curriculum

Because of the distinctiveness of 21st CCLC and the teachers' desires to aid in their students' development, staff members incorporated character education in many different forms. "Character education is a wide tent, covering a variety of different approaches to building good character" (Lickona, 1996). One way the teachers manifested this instruction was by seizing "teachable moments and bringing in some of the core principals of character building during academic instructional time" (V. Brown, personal communication, January 30, 2007). Many of the teachers in the program felt that character lessons intermingled with other subject areas even if a formal curriculum was established. One middle school program assistant stated,

> We talk to our kids about character ed but its really informal. We don't sit down with a textbook or some old brochures and read to them. No. If they are talking to their friends and I hear them being disrespectful I will talk to them about it. I have asked the kids in my class to say "yes ma'am" and "no ma'am" to me instead of saying "yeah" or "naw." I think they get it now. It's just regular old manners. If can get that across, you know at this age, than I feel like I've accomplished something. (P. Williams, personal communication, February 12, 2007)

Ms. Williams seemed to accept "teachable character moments" with excitement. To her, if the students demonstrated basic manners in her classroom, it would mean her efforts to help them were not in vain. By caring about fundamental concepts, such as manners, she was educating "the whole child" and preparing them for future character encounters. One parent echoed this sentiment, "The character lessons my child learns in this program will stay with him for the rest of his life" (E. Johnson, personal communication, February 12, 2007).

M. Muhammed was another teacher who capitalized on unintended character moments. Ms. Muhammed was a teaching assistant in the middle school program at

Turner Univerity. As an African American female graduate student working to achieve a medical degree, she explained that she enjoyed coming to the 21st CCLC afterschool program twice a week because she enjoyed being around the children in her care. She discussed the caring relationship she had with her students and how she influenced their character development:

> Sometimes I have to come to their level, and I think that's very important, because they need somebody to relate to. Even though I'm older than them, and teach them math, they still come and talk to me. I noticed that with this age group, they need somebody they can come to, it's a lot of peer pressure they have now. During my class the other day, we had an impromptu session where I was explaining a quote. The quote was "intelligence plus character equals good education". I think it was by Martin Luther King, I don't know if I said it correctly but I was trying to explain to them that they can be smart and get As but if your attitude is bad, you're not going to go too far. What I'm trying to do is give them the whole circle, not just the teaching part because they get that during the day. (M. Muhammed, personal communication, February 9, 2007)

Ms. Muhammed's official role in the program was to instruct the students in algebraic concepts but she seemed most proud of her role as an instructor of character. To her, the "whole circle" entailed the academic and moral development of her students. She also seemed to understand the benefit of the afterschool program because she recognized that her students did not receive the same democratic lessons during the regular school day.

As previously mentioned, students enrolled in 21st CCLC have the opportunity to participate in creative and performing arts. These activities were not only fun for the students but were also a creative outlet that at times included lessons in character. The Umoja Group offered many artistic opportunities. One of their groups, The African Dance Troup, met on Tuesday afternoons and included African American girls age 12-15. The group's teacher, Ms. Robinson, discussed how her class addressed character education:

Ms. Robinson: In my class, the girls can't participate if they don't have all their materials. I tell them, "Sure, you can dance without this or that but you won't. Not in my class."

Corrie: Why not in *your* class?

Ms. Robinson: Because I want them to know that the real world doesn't work like that. They can't show up late or unprepared and expect to get what they want. It doesn't work like that and I try to give them real life lessons when I can. I want them to do more than just dance when they come here. Well, they have to or I won't let them dance.

The implicit curriculum in Ms. Robinson's class encouraged her students to be responsible young women. Through her life lessons, the students learned the consequences of not demonstrating appropriate character. Although this instruction was informal, teachers and staff members conducted many planned activities.

Explicit Curriculum

Many programs incorporated a structured character education curriculum for the students in their care. Much like the program at Hyde Charter School, the 21st CCLC character education program was

> executed and implemented through formal, structured activities that challenged students to confront negative attitudes, identify productive and unproductive behaviors and reflect upon their actions and decision-making, while taking responsibility for those actions and asking the best of themselves. (HYDE School, 2007)

At the elementary school sites, many of the walls displayed motivational messages that teachers and students discussed during specific times of the day. At Connections Ministries, the students created a character quilt[34] of words, sentences, and pictures that they used to inspire role playing activities and counseling sessions. One elementary

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[34] Please see Appendix F for this photograph.

school principal elaborated on his school's infusion of character in the afterschool program:

> Every Friday afternoon we do whatever the character word for the week is. We do an activity, we do a story, and we do, you know, the full afternoon is studying that character. We then go back and see if they remember the words from before, and they do. Which is great. (A. Trent, personal communication, February 12, 2007)

Program administrators also created newsletters for parents dedicated to the improvement of character and displayed colorful posters in each classroom as a constant reminder of expected behavior.

As previously mentioned, middle schools are sites of adolescent change and discovery. It is during this time that many students fall prey to drugs, violence, and gang activity (Way, Reddy, & Rhodes, 2007). This was the foundation for the creation of the Junior Police in Durango County. This group functioned as a character-building club within the 21st CCLC afterschool program for middle school students and their parents. Students in this program participated in weekly discussions about topics pertaining to them and their community. The instructors for the Junior Police included afterschool program staff and two police officers that served as the club's partners. One of the officers spoke about the program's influence:

> Officer Paulson: When we come we talk about ethics, morals . . . just all the different things they are supposed to be doing. We talk about doing the right thing when nobody's watching and, you know, I've had children come and hand me you know, $20 or a purse during class time. Actually, we've made several arrests because they're like, you know, these guys are over there selling drugs. And the very minute I go to investigate, sure enough, there it is. Some of these kids only see the police during bad times, and I had to work through that but now, they are good.
>
> Corrie: I see they are wearing badges, do they get to keep them?

Officer Paulson: No, they don't. Let me tell you why. It's because my sheriff and I didn't want some kids flashing around a badge during the day trying to pull rank or worse, in their communities so they only get to wear them when we meet and on special occasions.

Corrie: What would be a special occasion?

Officer Paulson: Like when we had family night last month. All of the Junior Police officers wore their badges and we gave them each a shirt, too[35]. They loved being able to tell people who they were and that they knew police officers. It was nice to see.

This club seemed beneficial to the students enrolled, as they were able to learn about appropriate character traits from people who were paid to uphold rules and regulations, police officers. The fact that children felt compelled to report crimes to the officers demonstrated their acquisition of the character skills they learned.

The majority of the high school students participating in 21st CCLC afterschool programs were concerned with credit recovery. These students attended the program under the auspice that they would be able to work toward recovering academic credits not attained because of incomplete assignments, frequent absences or suspensions. At this stage in a student's academic career, "the process of learning has become unpleasant 'work'" (Ulfik & Lickona, 1997, p. 53), and they are only interested in investing their time in activities that are meaningful and relevant to them. Therefore, character education programs in high school settings promoted behaviors and actions dedicated to their future endeavors. Lessons on abstinence and etiquette were frequent topics discussed at these sites. One high school instituted a recycling program for both students and teachers. After learning about the effects of global warming and pollution in a science class, the students

[35] At the conclusion of our interview, Officer Paulson also gave me a shirt.

in Habersham County created receptacles dedicated to the collection of recyclable items. The principal from the school stated,

> They have a recycling program going on right now at our school. If I throw away a box, they come get me. I tell them, "Oops, I forgot." So they put a lot of effort into the program. I mean they haul tons of boxes to the county recycling center. (H. Stevens, personal communication, February 12, 2007)

At other high schools, the students were engaged in learning entrepreneurship. These lessons and activities were student focused as they capitalized on the interests of the students in the class. Waller County's program was entitled, "New You, the Entrepeneur." According to the instructor, the students experienced the creation of a business that spanned from their thoughts and ideas to the conception of their business plans. At Learning to Live, students also participated in activities that introduced them to the possibility of becoming an entrepreneur. I asked one of the teachers about the types of businesses the students were interested in starting:

> A lot of them are very traditional. You know, hair salons, barber shops for the guys. One student came up with a bookstore idea and another one wanted to do like a screen printing business for t-shirts and auto sales. So I'm just trying to expand their options. I just want them to know they can do it. They can make something of themselves if they want to. (P. Chatham, personal communication, March 26, 2007)

The students in this program thought of businesses that were important and relevant to them. These lessons were a testimony to democratic education as the students were learning traits and skills that would allow them to become productive members of society.

Summary

"When educators treat students with love and respect, encourage appropriate behavior, and correct wrongful actions, they show they care" (Krajewski & Bailey, 1999). The teachers in the 21st CCLC afterschool program combined caring with

culturally relevant pedagogy and character education in an effort to deliver effective lessons to the students enrolled in their respective programs. Teachers and staff members demonstrated an ethic of care by learning about their personal lives, building a relationship of trust, and creating an atmosphere where parents felt welcomed and important.

Instructional practices included the incorporation of culture. The afterschool curriculum allowed teachers the freedom to integrate race and culture in their lessons through clubs, literary efforts, and the infusion of the arts. Finally, the implicit and explicit character education efforts permeated throughout the mission and goals of the programs in the sample. The combination of these themes led to the promotion of democratic ideals, such as tolerance, respect, and social responsibility. Although many researchers have studied one or a combination of two themes in this study, none has created an amalgamation of all three. This study's distinctiveness illuminates the importance of caring afterschool programs.

CHAPTER 5

DISCUSSION

Introduction

Public schooling in the United States has long been characterized as the vehicle for upward mobility or the "great leveler" of social hierarchy (McMurrer & Sawhill, 1998). Educational institutions have long been the source of policy changes and innovations with teachers, parents, and communities searching for programs and services that best meet the needs of today's students. With the demands of the economy and education steadily increasing, afterschool programs such as 21st CCLC have served as a refuge for many families. In addition to providing quality afterschool care, the programs in this study addressed the academic and social needs of their students by caring for them and their families, by using innovative pedagogical techniques, and by instilling the character building skills that promote success.

Although not the initial focus of this study, the purpose of this study was to explore how teachers and staff members demonstrated caring toward their students within a statewide 21st CCLC afterschool program. This investigation revealed that the teachers and staff were dedicated to delivering educational practices and techniques aimed toward the upward mobility of their students' social, personal, and academic development. In this chapter, I review the most salient findings from the study and then articulate their significance. I also explain the study's policy implications and discuss how they contribute to the broader field of educational research. Finally, I will conclude this chapter

with a reflection of the limitations of this investigation and discuss the future research that could potentially derive from this study.

Review of Findings

Although the current educational focus is on standardized tests and their implications for school systems nationwide, the teachers and staff members in this study seemed to understand the larger aim of education (Romanowski, 2005), which included addressing the overall development of the students. To accomplish this task, the afterschool programs addressed the academic, social, and personal needs of the students enrolled in the program. Much like Smith and Emigh (2005) suggested, "Staff members in the programs looked beyond the short-term goal of academic achievement to the long-term outcome of producing productive, capable, and relational skilled individuals" (p. 37). Through qualitative data analysis, I was able to answer my research questions.

How Do the Teachers and Staff in the 21st CCLC Afterschool Program Demonstrate Caring?

Caring in education often resembles positive reinforcement, sensitivity to student needs, understanding, and respect (Dillon & Stines, 1999). This demonstration of concern is authentic (Valenzuela, 1999) and genuine, and it requires time, effort, and attention to details on behalf of teachers and other educational caregivers. In addition to academic gains, caring educators aim to cater their efforts toward developing the whole-child. Noddings (2006) suggested that, "a genuine education–an education for whole persons–must address social, emotional, and ethical issues, as well as academic" (p. 238).

Through this study, I discovered that administrators, staff members, and associated stakeholders cared about developing the whole child. This process began with

the selection of teachers for the program. As school and program leaders were searching for potential educators to teach in their respective centers, they intentionally sought those that demonstrated a sense of humor, a desire to get to know their students, and a genuine love for children. School leaders recruited those teachers and staff members that were compassionate and dedicated to the personal and academic growth of their students. The teachers working in the program wanted to be agents of change and believed their encouragement and constant motivation to be crucial elements of the students' education.

Staff members were cognizant not only of their students' needs while at school but also of the issues the students contended with at home. They inquired about their lives and experiences at home in an effort to build and maintain the relationships they believed were beneficial to academic success. They stressed that by learning about their students' experiences outside of school walls they developed a more in-depth understanding of how to tailor their lessons and classroom discussions. According to the participants, this knowledge was invaluable as it also helped them understand how their students' backgrounds and experiences shaped their view of the world. The connections staff members created allowed them to serve and be perceived as extended family members deserving of respect and trust.

Establishing trust was very important to the program's staff. The staff worked diligently to build a rapport with the students in the hopes that their relationships would transcend into positive academic experiences. Morris et al. (2000) agreed with this sentiment and argued that developing a rapport with students is integral to academic success because it eventually leads students to believing and trusting that what their teachers want to teach is important. According to the staff, teachers need to divulge some

information about themselves for trusting relationships to flourish. Staff members knew that they needed to keep their promises and follow through on changes they agreed to make. By doing these simple yet caring tasks, staff members believed their students learned to trust them and trust in the importance of receiving an education.

The 21st CCLC staff members cared about their students as well as their parents and families. Through constant recruitment and advertisement efforts, staff members consistently sought to increase parental involvement. Many researchers have discussed the importance of parental involvement to students' academic success (Epstein & Dauber, 1991; Swap, 1992). Program staff seemed to be aware of this concept as they offered daytime and evening activities and seminars geared toward issues that parents in their respective communities faced. Some programs offered adult literacy courses, GED classes, and financial seminars while others offered various speakers, arts and crafts, and family fun nights. These programs often reflected an understanding about the families' cultural backgrounds and experiences.

What Role Does Culturally Relevant Pedagogy Play in the 21st CCLC Program?

Culturally relevant educators intend to counter the dominant perspectives by empowering students, especially students of color, to reflect on their culture and cultural differences as assets. This pedagogy assists with the development of a critical consciousness and incorporates lessons into the academic realm that are culturally meaningful and relevant to students (Howard, 2003; Ladson-Billings, 1994). By moving beyond the confines of multiculturalism (Brown, 2007), culturally relevant pedagogy aids in the development of self-identity and promotes in-depth understandings of the intersection between culture and educational value.

Staff members in the 21st CCLC program seemed to be aware of the cultural assets their students possessed. They seemed to understand that students have cultural variations in oral and written expression (Perry et al., 2003) and incorporated this knowledge into their daily lessons and activities. By addressing race, racism, and culture, the teachers and students were able to address the oppressive, dominant, and subordinate structures occurring in their lives. The students' racial and cultural experiences were a welcomed addition to the curricula and were a frequent discussion in their acquisition of academic skills. The small class sizes allowed the teachers and assistants to explore topics not otherwise discussed during the regular school day. These smaller classes often materialized into clubs.

In the midst of the afterschool program were several smaller groups, or clubs, of students. These clubs were safe spaces for students to explore various cultural intricacies while engaging in cognitive and experiential activities. Some clubs taught African and Latin dances while others were the impetus for contemporary discussions on race and cultural matters. Regardless of their origin, these clubs allowed students the opportunity to exchange personal stories of language, customs, and culture that often created an atmosphere of learning for both teachers and students. At some sites, these clubs served as an additional refuge from the often harsh domains of test-score accountability inherent in the public schools.

Allowing students to read culturally relevant material was also important to the teachers and staff employed by the program. Dowd (1997) discussed this issue by arguing that students who can identify with their culture through textbooks, novels, and other supplemental reading materials, exhibit a feeling of connectedness to their academic

experiences. In essence, by being exposed to literature that was culturally diverse, program staff hoped the students would read more and enjoy learning. During language arts instruction, staff members created literacy circles that included books on different cultures and allowed their students to discuss openly their relevance and meaning. Through the AR program, students were able to check out books that were interesting to them. These books often depicted stories of race, racism, and diversity in school and community settings. This incorporation of literature added to the culturally infused curriculum taught by the teachers and staff members throughout the program.

Every program I visited incorporated creative and/or performing arts into their curriculum. Many of the programs used the theatre to discuss important, often historical, educational concepts. Whether through field trips or by presenting a student-led and created play, the programs used the dramatic realm to deliver meaningful lessons. As I have mentioned, students had the opportunity to dance but they also created original lyrics and CDs for others to enjoy. According to the staff, the lessons learned from these experiences far outweighed the activities promoted through the rigidity of traditional textbooks.

Because of the cultural experiences permeating throughout the program, teachers discussed possessing a sense of freedom. They seemed to enjoy being able to demonstrate their expansive pedagogical techniques by using strategies not realized in their regular day schools. Teachers expressed their excitement over the freedom to discuss their students' home lives, plan creative lessons, and have fun while learning various instructional concepts. These teachers instituted activities they determined to be empowering for them

as well as the students. They enjoyed teaching in the program and were attracted to the vast opportunities they could offer their students.

How Has the 21st CCLC Afterschool Program Staff Included Character Education into Their Curriculum?

The aims of character education are to assist students in students' moral development in an effort to equip them with the social consciousness they need to be productive members of society (Wynne & Walberg, 1989). By providing the tools for positive behaviors, character education programs influence better decision-making (Lickona, 1991) while promoting an awareness of distinguishing character traits that will help them reach their goals. The teachers in the 21st CCLC seemed to accept this challenge as they promoted and taught positive character traits to their students. This is an important facet of afterschool programming as it enhances positive youth development (Peterson et al., 2005). Participants in this study seemed to value character education as many of them expressed its importance while describing their overall missions and goals.

Staff members discussed how ethical and moral values such as honesty, responsibility, kindness, respect, and civility were integral to their explicit and implicit curriculum. One participant stated, "We want to give them an education that includes the opportunity to be productive members of society" (R. Jackson, personal communication, p. 184). They intrinsically understood the state and national focus on standardized test scores but also knew the value of including character education into their curriculum. To the participants, weaving character lessons into the curriculum taught students the social skills they needed to focus and understand the value of learning academic material.

Many of the teachers and staff members discussed seizing teachable moments to introduce character-building discussions and lessons. These lessons intermingled with other subject areas and included discussions such as accepting responsibility, being honest, staying drug free, and resolving conflicts using non-violent means. The impromptu sessions on character were important to the staff because they believed their discussions helped prepare their students for encounters that might quickly arise. According to participants, the informal character lessons occurring in the program were beneficial to their students because they addressed issues as they arose. By immediately addressing character issues, staff members felt they were demonstrating an example of the importance and relevance of character virtues that occur during daily exchanges.

Although staff members incorporated an implicit character education curriculum, many of them also used formal programs as well. This inclusion is important as "effective character education includes a meaningful and challenging academic curriculum that respects all learners and helps them succeed" (Lickona, 1996, p. 97). The structured activities staff members offered varied by age and grade and included materials such as newsletters, flyers, and colorful posters. Formal lessons took place every day in the elementary school sites as they learned about character words of the day, created arts and crafts, and role-played different scenarios with their friends. In the middle school sites, students participated in structured programs like the Junior Police Academy where they interacted with community leaders to learn appropriate behaviors. Finally, in the high school settings, students conducted service-learning projects, participated in a recycling drive, and explored ideas related to potential business endeavors.

Significance of the Study

The old adage that *it takes a village to raise a child* is accurate when it comes to the educational system in the United States. With the strict accountability and testing standards outlined within the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001, educators are forced to create lessons and activities focused on improving test scores. There seems to be no better time than the present for afterschool programs to address the needs of the village and respond to the childcare needs of parents while servicing the academic and character needs of students. In contrast to the current educational trends, the 21st CCLC afterschool program in this study created atmospheres of learning focused on developing the whole child. The 18 programs in this study accepted the challenge of preparing students for a future of academic *and* social success. They did not alienate the need for academic knowledge and the requirements set forth by NCLB, but rather, focused on methodically delivering instruction to students in a way they would find relational and relevant.

The fact that the 21st CCLC program exists after the regular school day is quite significant to this investigation. As previously mentioned, because many teachers are instructing students on test-taking strategies during the day, it has become increasingly difficult to teach lessons not directly addressed on standardized tests. Some might say that the nature of traditional public schools has become a travesty, as teachers are no longer addressing the needs of the students. In fact, Kozol (1993) stated, “If [people] are honest with themselves and with each other, they cannot help but look upon the public school today as an archaic and dehumanizing institution” (p. 1). In *On Being a Teacher*, Kozol categorized the aims of education as skewed and argued for a reevaluation of educational policy that included the creation of opportunities for educators to address the

needs of their students. Although he published this book 15 years ago, the sentiment remains the same today. With public school systems focusing on accountability coupled with the economic need for parents to find quality childcare, afterschool programs have served as a refuge for teachers, parents, and families.

Because 21st CCLC is an afterschool program, teachers were able to express an ethic of care for their students that transcended the boundaries of the regular school day. They enjoyed smaller class sizes and frequent opportunities to learn about their students' academic and social needs. Staff members built and maintained relationships with their students as well as their families and possessed the freedom to customize their instruction based on the needs of the students. Their pedagogical practices were culturally relevant and incorporated knowledge of their students' race, customs, and culture. Although these ideals are capable of being addressed during the regular school day, the autonomy of the 21st CCLC afterschool program provided staff members an opportune setting to accomplish this task (Zhang & Byrd, 2006).

In addition to offering caring and culturally relevant pedagogy, teachers in the program also taught implicit and explicit character education lessons. Through the afterschool program, the teachers and staff members seized every opportunity to impart lessons on ethical and moral virtues. Whether through informal discussions or structured lessons, students in the program received instruction on values and concepts that support the democratic ideals of responsibility and honesty. Democratic education suggests that every human being is a unique individual and that their uniqueness is the basis for educational interactions centered on respect, tolerance, and love (Hecht, 2007). Through

the combination of themes in this study, the 21st CCLC afterschool program seems to be striving toward that goal.

Contribution to Educational Research

Although staff members displayed the themes of caring, culturally relevant pedagogy and character education, the current literature has yet to address them collectively in one empirical study. For example, there are research studies on culturally responsive caring and culturally sensitive character education (Muñoz, 2007; Pang, 2006; Parsons, 2005) but none that simultaneously address the themes I have proposed in this study. Through this investigation, I have found that 21st CCLC teachers and staff members used all three educational techniques while instructing the students in their care. By staff members demonstrating an ethic of care and cultural sensitivity, they not only constructed important connections but they exemplified the values they taught in their character lessons. Through their behaviors and outward demonstrations, the teachers offered examples of responsibility and civility in practice. This study is the first of its kind and will contribute to the body of research on the aims of education, culturally sensitive pedagogical strategies, and how character-building lessons can be incorporated within an afterschool program.

This study also contributes to the field of educational research by discussing the use of photographs and digital diaries. Incorporating photographs into the study allowed me to recall events that occurred during participant observations. I was able to capture activities, interactions, and events that I may have overlooked had it not been for the images I collected over the course of the study. The digital diaries I recorded were also influential. By immediately documenting my perspectives, I was able to reflect on how

my positionality, perceptions, and interpretations informed the study. The thoughts and ideas I expressed after each site visit assisted in the data analysis process.

This study also addressed the importance and relevance of incorporating reflective and analytic memos into the qualitative software program, Atlas.ti. Recently, there has been growing support for the use of computer-assisted qualitative data analysis programs (Peters & Wester, 2007). Through the use of this software, I was able to visualize the large amount of data in a linear format with all the interview transcripts, digital diaries, memos, and pictures readily available. Because I had the majority of my data in one program, I was able to construct maps with images, quotations, codes, and personal reflections. Because all the data were centrally located, I was able to document my personal thoughts about the data collection process and reflect on the codes I created from the transcripts. Through this program, I linked selected quotations to my thoughts and created networks of data centered on my interpretations. Visualizing my perceptions while being immersed in the data was invaluable as it allowed me to focus my attention on the emergent themes rather than on managing the large amount of data collected.

Implications for Educational Policy

We will not find the solution to problems such as violence, drug abuse, alienation, and ignorance by imposing more standardized tests and punishing schools that fail to reach a numeric goal (Noddings, 2005). Instead, schools might consider focusing on developing the whole child by caring for him or her in ways that are genuine and sincere. The opening quotation to this dissertation is an expression of this sentiment. The participant seemed to understand that the aims of education include meeting the needs of students in a caring, culturally sensitive, yet character-building format:

> Our vision is for the instruction of core values and principles to influence the academic success of our students. It's a long story . . . the journey of how we want to see that happen but it's really moving in that direction. If the people working with the children start looking at them in a way of qualities and virtues, that will automatically spark a shift in consciousness for the person. Anytime someone addresses you, your character, and your culture, that brings about a shift where you feel empowered in a way that you typically don't. When people honor you and say you're pretty or you're cute or you're good . . . those judgment kind of things don't work. But when you address someone's character and honor their kindness or thoughtfulness or their spirit of caring . . . those are valuable things that make a shift in learning because it's kind of empowering to hear people say those things to you. So in time, by integrating these virtues into the classroom, the students will do better academically. (M. Grattick, personal communication, February 9, 2007)

This quotation serves as a testimony to the efforts demonstrated by the teachers and staff in the program. Although NCLB stipulates a prescribed goal, my results suggest that a shift in learning is possible through the support of afterschool programs and dedicated individuals committed to satisfying holistic student needs. Jodi Wilgoren (2000) argued that afterschool programs represent a revitalization of the regular school day as educators and policymakers seek to respond to the realities of working families and the missing constructs in public school classrooms. She concluded her discussion by stating, "The revolution begins at 3pm" (p. A1). This sentiment materialized in this study as well, and I used it as the title to denote just how powerful afterschool programs can be as change agents.

There is among many afterschool leaders, the hidden—and sometimes not-so-hidden—hope that innovative after-school pedagogy will eventually penetrate the schools (Noam, Biancarosa, & Dechausay, 2003, p. 123). Policymakers, educators, and afterschool advocates could take notice of the revolution, or shift in learning, demonstrated by the teachers and staff members in this study. They understood that education is contextual and that age, race, community, and culture play a crucial role in

class discussions and lessons. Many researchers have studied contextual frameworks of learner-centered learning (Ancess, 2000; Friere, 1970; Sheridan, Hunglemann, & Maughan, 1999; Warnes, Sheridan, Geske, & Warnes, 2005). This approach fosters the importance of student experiences, in and out of school.

Through "optimal, holistic learning" (Cornelius-White, 2007, p.113), policy-makers could ensure that students enrolled in afterschool programs receive "authentic caring instruction" (Valenzuela, 1999) based on their cultural, academic, and developmental needs. However, as policymakers evaluate contextual, learner-centered education, the administratively inferred needs of students also warrants discussion. Noddings (2005) warned readers about inferring student needs:

> Most of the school curriculum is supported by the assumption that educators and policymakers do indeed know what children need, and the curriculum is designed to satisfy these inferred needs. In trying to meet inferred needs, however, we often neglect the expressed needs of our students. (p. 147)

Although some needs, such as food, water, and shelter, are so universal that they are safely inferred, others require open, elaborate discussions geared toward understanding student needs. Through the ethic of caring, teachers may be better equipped to hear, understand, and respond to the expressed needs of their students. Located within the literature review portion of this dissertation was an example (Hastie et al, 2006) of researchers and teachers inferring the cultural needs of students.

In the study by Hastie et al. (2006), two White researchers taught African American middle school students the art of stepping. The researchers, perhaps because of a racial misunderstanding, assumed the students knew how to step because they were African American. This misguided assumption led to essentializing. Although the authors most likely had good intentions, their actions were problematic because instead of

addressing needs expressed by the students, they followed inferred notions of cultural norms.

Teachers who do not conduct open discussions with their students "may be reduced to creating activities on what often amounts to stereotypical, trivialized, or overgeneralized beliefs in culture" (Seidl, 2007, p. 169). I posed this question in the literature review: Who decides what pedagogy is culturally relevant? The answer to this question is the students. The students are the experts in what they need. Therefore, policymakers and educators might consider working *with* them when making educational decisions on their behalf. Because students are often dismissed as simple receivers of their education, it may serve them better to be thought of as participants (Freire, 1970). The teachers in this study cared about their students while teaching them culturally relevant lessons that also addressed character. These instructional practices seemed to foster an openness in communication that allowed the teachers to develop lessons and activities based on their students' expressed needs.

Perhaps teacher preparation programs could address the contextual needs of students through courses that require students to practice creating lessons based on students' expressed needs. For example, many of the students in the literature review were acutely aware of the race, gender, and class inequities inherent in our society. This knowledge does not disintegrate when they enter academic settings. As we educate students on the complexities of the world through caring, culturally relevant pedagogy, and character education, policymakers might consider ensuring that our teachers are prepared to address these issues through their lessons. Ladson-Billings (1994) argued, "Despite the current trend toward multicultural education, prospective teachers typically go through

workshops and courses that focus only superficially on material culture. Thus they come away with a foods-and-festivals approach to individual cultures; they learn to make a piñata or sing a spiritual" (p. 131). A more sophisticated preparation program may require future teachers to study cultures on a more intense level. As Brenda Townsend (2002) stated, this must occur so that we "leave no teacher behind" (p. 727). Once we address teacher needs, we can better prepare them to leave no child behind.

Reflections and Limitations

Analyzing the data for this study revealed rich, "thick descriptions" (Geertz, 1973) of my participants and their perceptions and experiences with the 21st CCLC afterschool program. Although I carefully and thoughtfully collected and analyzed the data for this study, like all others, it has its limitations. Because this study is a small representation of a larger funded project, the BU research team upheld the stipulations of a contractual agreement. Based on available resources, interviews with students were not possible. We were also bound by time constraints and deliverables[36] that required the timely execution of oral and written reports. Based on our time schedule, I could not spend an extended amount of time with each center. Although I was able to ascertain the majority of the experiences of the participants in the time allotted, I would have liked to spend a few more days with each center to gain an even stronger understanding of their daily operations.

As this study was originally an evaluation of program quality, staff members and invested stakeholders might have agreed to participate in the study based on fear of "the funder." Although each participant "agreed" to participate, I have to be honest with

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[36] Deliverables are tangible items that substantiate the implementation of a contract.

myself and wonder if they actually had a choice. As briefly mentioned in Chapter 3, every participant was fully aware of who was funding the BU study. The entity that funded our study was the same organization funding their program. This may have caused an unintentional power dynamic during the data collection process. For example, when I requested their participation, relevant documents, and time, were they granting BU permission or the funder? Although all the participants were forthright in their appreciation of the study's purpose, I wondered if they were being honest or if they were speaking out of fear of retaliation. I made every effort to ensure their anonymity and explained that they would receive pseudonyms but I often wondered if they trusted me. Perhaps if I had spent more time with them I would have quelled this concern; however, because I did not, this perception of power remains a limitation.

Finally, as with all qualitative research, this study may not be generalizable to the general population. *Generalizing* in research studies is "the extent to which research findings and conclusions from a study conducted on a sample population can be applied to the population at large" (Glossary of Key Terms, n.d.). Qualitative studies do not achieve this, nor is it a goal of such investigations. Instead, studies strive for trustworthiness by member checking, peer debriefing, and incorporating verbatim quotations into written reports (Merriam, 1998; Yin, 2003) In qualitative studies, results do not intend prove or disprove a hypothesis but rather represent participants' experiences and researchers' interpretations (Bogdan & Biklen, 2007).

Instead of incorporating random sampling, qualitative studies focus on smaller samples and attempt to capture or represent, in considerable depth and detail, the inner-workings of one or a few cases (Flick, 2006; Goodwin & Horowitz, 2002). However, this

lack of experimental design and objectivity does not equate to invalid and implausible studies. In fact, speaking about the world of human experience requires an extensive commitment in terms of time and dedication to process; however, some have dismissed it as a limitation and regarded the paradigm with suspicion (Myers, 2000; Wolcott, 2001).

As a qualitative methodologist, I hope that researchers will no longer have to document their interpretations and findings as limitations. Although others may conduct similar studies and present different findings, researchers should expect this variation. Qualitative studies are difficult to replicate because of the depths and variety of experiences shared between participants and researchers (Bradley, 1993; Niaz, 2007; Sandelowski, 1986). The study of humans is contextual and, therefore, differences in their opinions, views, and perspectives should be expected. Even if another researcher conducted the same study—using the same participants, in the same centers, with the same focus—the responses would most likely be different. Perceptions change, situations change, and circumstances change—all of which may or may not affect interviews, observations, and document analyses (Firestone, 1993). One day, researchers will no longer view the differences inherent in the human race as limitations; perhaps they will uphold them as precious gifts that make studies rich.

Future Research

This study suggested many possibilities for further research. One of the most salient would be the inclusion of students in the research process. The findings from this study revealed that listening to students express their needs is paramount to their academic success. Studies that explore best practices for student learning should include them in the data collection process. In fact, Nieto (1994) stated,

> Student voices sometimes reveal the great challenges and even the deep pain young people feel when schools are unresponsive, cold places . . . Those who spend the most time in schools and classrooms are often given the least opportunity to talk. Students have important lessons to teach educators and we need to begin to listen to them more carefully. (p. 420)

By gathering the voices of both students and teachers, researchers could glean if a disconnection exists between what teachers in afterschool programs are providing and what students are receiving.

Because the 21st CCLC afterschool program caters to the families of their students, another study could explore the adult educational experience. It would be interesting to note if adult learners interpreted the staff's attitudes and teaching styles as caring and culturally relevant. For example, in a study on adult learners in Trinidad and Tobago, Driedger (2004) noted that incorporating caring attitudes and culture helped her students in their quests for literacy. The adults in her study were like many others around the country in that they had difficulty reading everyday labels, filling out forms, and reading directions on medicine bottles. Driedger decided to "teach them where they were" (p. 28) and allowed her students to incorporate small portions of calypso, a language indigenous to their culture. Because the students felt comfortable with their transition into adult literacy, Driedger discovered a group of adults who were interested in acquiring new concepts. A similar study on adult learners in the 21st CCLC family could help inform the pedagogical needs of this particular subgroup.

Lastly, the literature review revealed a lack of qualitative articles on students of color participating in character education programs. This would be an area of great significance, as character-building skills do not occur within a vacuum. According to Gallien and Jackson (2006) this type of study is needed:

> Representations of character building are absent from the following fields: educational history, church history, black history and literature from a gendered and racially-nuanced perspective, child and human development, social and political contexts, and perspectives from historically segregated/black institutions. An interdisciplinary emphasis can engage further discussion and research on this subject and provide a better understanding of multiple perspectives on character education from specific cultural groups. This research may also bridge the current cultural disconnection between African-Americans and the educational goals of the current administration (p. 132).

For students of color, the stressors of possible racial oppression may compound their desire to acquire skills that promote honesty, trust, responsibility, and civility. Because they are often marginalized in the public school system, a study that examines their perspectives would add to the growing body of literature on educational methods and character-building curricula meant to improve their academic and social success.

Conclusion

"There is more to life and learning than the academic proficiency demonstrated by test scores." (Noddings, 1995, p. 27). It is my hope that this study serves as the impetus for dialogue between policy makers, educators, parents, community leaders, and afterschool advocates on the shift in learning that occurs within the 21st CCLC afterschool program. As Cohen (2006) suggested, "the goals of education need to be reframed to prioritize not only academic learning, but also social, emotional, and ethical competencies" (pp. 201-202). Through the ethic of caring, the teaching of culturally relevant lessons, and the instruction of character education, this particular 21st CCLC afterschool program not only met this goal but also assisted in demonstrating the role afterschool programs can play in the education of students.

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APPENDIXES

APPENDIX A

Sampling Plan for 21st CCLC Site Visits

(All names are pseudonyms.)

Grantee	Award Year	Program Type	Elementary	Elem,Midd,High
Butler Cty	2006	School Based	1 elementary	2 middle
Lincoln CIS	2004	CBO	n/a	n/a
Durango Cty	2002	School Based	X	4 middle schools
Armando Cty	2003	CBO	n/a	7 middle schools
*Glass Cty	2004	School Based	1 elementary	1 midd, 1 high
Mercer Cty	2003	School Based	3 elementary	n/a
Gate Cty	2004	School Based	4 elementary	n/a
Carter YDC	2002	Gov't	n/a	n/a
Finn Ct YMCA	2002	CBO	1 elementary	1 middle
Hartford Cty	2003	School Based	1 elem,1 comm	1 midd, 1 high
Conn.Ministries	2006	FBO	n/a	n/a
Jackson Cty	2002	School Based	3 elementary	1 middle
S.E. State Univ.	2002	College/Univ.	3 elementary	n/a
Habersham Cty	2003	School Based	2 elementary	2 middle
*Somerset Cty	2004	School Based	3 elementary	3 middle
Umoja Group	2006	CBO	n/a	1 middle

Grantee	Award Year	Program Type	Elementary	Elem,Midd,High
Turner Univ.	2003	College/Univ.	n/a	1 middle
Reagan Cty	2004	School Based	1 elementary	1 midd, 1 high
Waller Cty	2006	School Based	1 elementary	1 midd or high
Lrng to Live	2006	CBO	n/a	2 high

*Due to conflicts expressed from grantees, these site visits were cancelled.

- Five 2002 centers
- Five 2003 centers
- Five 2004 centers
- Five 2006 centers
- Eleven school based centers
- Five CBO's
- One government agency
- One FBO
- Two College/University
- Twelve Elementary School Grantees
- Thirteen Middle School Grantees
- Four High School Grantees

APPENDIX B

Document Checklist

	Documentation	Please check the box reflecting availability of the listed documents.	For items currently unavailable, please indicate future availability in the space below.
1	Programming Documentation (calendars, schedules)	2006-2007 ☐	
2	Marketing Information (flyers, brochures, pamphlets)	2006-2007 ☐	
3	Publications and/or Articles (news articles, etc.)	2006-2007 ☐	
4	Program Manuals (staff handbook, center/site procedural manual)	Current Version ☐	

Please return this completed checklist and documentation in the postage paid envelope by:
October 31st

APPENDIX C

Dates of Site Visits

(January 2007 to March 2007)

Based on the amount of centers and staff, site visits ranged from 1 to 2 days.

Name of Grantee	Date of Visit
Reagan County	January 22-January 23
Gate County	January 25
Finn County	January 29-January 30
Carter YDC	February 5
Turner University	February 8-February 9
Habersham County	February 12
Connections Ministries	February 15
Durango County	February 19-February 20
Waller County	February 24
Butler County	February 27
Lincoln County (CIS)	February 28
Armando County	March 1
Mercer County	March 2
Umoja Group	March 13
South Eastern State University	March 15
Hartford County	March 22
Learning to Live	March 26
Jackson County	March 27

APPENDIX D

PSEUDONYMS AND SITE VISIT LOCATIONS

Participant(s) and Title	Grantee	Date
C. Jacobs - Assistant Principal	**Durango County**	**2/19-2/20**
Officer D. Paulson - Teacher D. Johnson - Coordinator	Durango County	2/19-2/20
F. Dean - Coordinator R. Wasset - Teacher	Durango County	2/19-2/20
T. Short - Drama Coach	Durango County	2/19-2/20
G. Hanger - Project Director	Durango County	2/19-2/20
G. Hanger - Project Director	Durango County	2/19-2/20
J. Notting - Coordinator	**Gate County**	**1/25**
K. Lorry - Coordinator	**Finn County**	**1/29-1/30**
Y. Upscale - Evaluator	Finn County	1/29-1/30
B. Renny - Project Director	Finn County	1/29-1/30
D. Vasquez - Parent Liaison	Finn County	1/29-1/30
Q. Johnson – School/Program Liaison	Finn County	1/29-1/30
V. Brown - Coordinator	Finn County	1/29-1/30
D. Franks - Coordinator	Finn County	1/29-1/30
J. Banks – Teaching Assistant	**Connections Ministries**	**2/15**
Y. Minks – Project Director	Connections Ministries	2/15
P. Stone – Student Assistant D. Jacobs – Student Assistant	Connections Ministries	2/15
G. Kelley – Principal H. Armando – Project Director	**Carter YDC**	**2/5**

Participant(s) and Title	Grantee	Date
C. Baylor – Coordinator Y. Brown – Coordinator	Carter YDC	2/5
A. Lyons - Coordinator	Carter YDC	2/5
U. Yemens - Teacher	Carter YDC	2/5
R. Kallinski – Parent	**Jackson County**	**3/27**
A. Youmans – Principal and Parent	Jackson County	3/27
B. Norsworthy - Coordinator	Jackson County	3/27
C. Farrs - Teacher	Jackson County	3/27
C. Eaton – Teacher	**S. Eastern State**	**3/15**
W. Jenkins - Coordinator	**Habersham County**	**2/12**
K. Proper – Transportation Director E. Johnson – Parent R. Drake - Webmaster	Habersham County	2/12
H. Stevens – Principal K. Waller – Principal D. Roster – Principal R. Cummings - Principal	Habersham County	2/12
E. Masters – Principal L. Kammen – Principal M. Garnet – Principal P. Green – Principal F. Gowen – Principal A. Trent - Principal	Habersham County	2/12
U. Holly – Project Director	Habersham County	2/12
V. Wales – Administrative Assistant	**Turner University**	**2/8-2/9**
P. Ngueyen – Enrichment Teacher	Turner University	2/8-2/9
R. Brown - Parent	Turner University	2/8-2/9
Y. Jackson – Parent Liaison	Turner University	2/8-2/9
M. Grattick – Project Director	Turner University	2/8-2/9
W. Otterman – Coordinator	Turner University	2/8-2/9

Participant(s) and Title	Grantee	Date
M. Muhammed - Teacher	Turner University	2/8-2/9
F. Johnson - Teacher	Turner University	2/8-2/9
D. Walton – Project Director	**Reagan County**	**1/22-1/23**
I. Brasket – Coordinator	Reagan County	1/22-1/23
H. Upston – Coordinator	Reagan County	1/22-1/23
N. Hamilton – Principal	Reagan County	1/22-1/23
W. Rennigan – Teacher	Reagan County	1/22-1/23
Y. Callingsworth – Teacher	Reagan County	1/22-1/23
K. Peterson – Coordinator	**Waller County**	**2/24**
Parent Meeting	Waller County	2/24
D. Quinn – Project Director	Waller County	2/24
B. Kerrigan – Science Facilitator	Waller County	2/24
T. Perry – Coordinator Y. Donovan – Professor	Waller County	2/24
P. Chatham – Teacher	**Youth Vibe**	**3/26**
T. Vickery – Parent	Youth Vibe	3/26
C. Pitts – Parent Coordinator	Youth Vibe	3/26
L. Jackson – Parent Coordinator	Youth Vibe	3/26
S. Trace – Principal	Youth Vibe	3/26
W. Sampson – Project Director T. Granger – Coordinator M. Johnson – Coordinator V. Washington – Chair of Board	Youth Vibe	3/26
D. Andrews – Project Director	**Mercer County**	**3/2**
H. Lawrence - Teacher	Mercer County	3/2

APPENDIX E

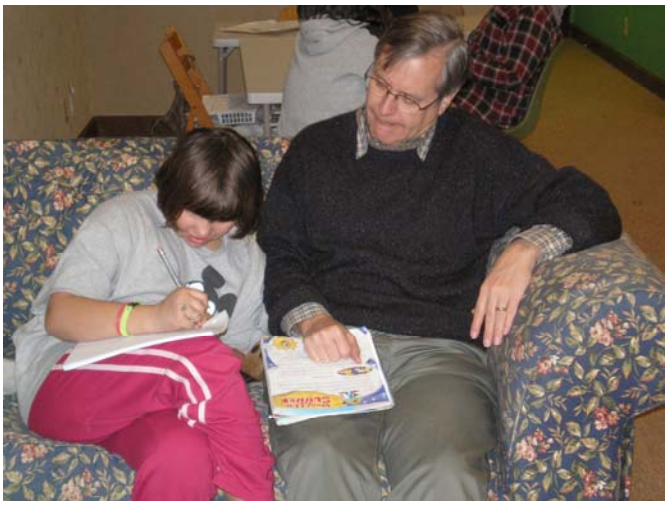
CODE LIST

Activities for Adults: GED
Activities for Adults: Literacy
Activities for Adults: Speakers
Activities for Adults: Technology
Activities for Adults: Workshops
Activities for Students: Academics
Activities for Students: Culture
Activities for Students: Enrichment
Activities for Students: Field Trips
Activities for Students: Speakers
Activities for Students: Technology
Advice from Community Partners
Advice from Other Staff Members
Advice from Parents
Advice from Principals
Advice from Site Coordinators
Advice from Teachers
Caring: Academics
Caring: Advice
Caring: Clubs
Caring: Good Teachers
Caring: Home Situation
Caring: Parent Involvement
Caring: The Overall Student
Caring: Trust
Character Education: Implicit
Character Education: Explicit
Character Education: Missions
Culturally Relevant Pedagogy: Arts
Culturally Relevant Pedagogy: Clubs
Culturally Relevant Pedagogy: Curriculum
Culturally Relevant Pedagogy: Teachers
Culturally Relevant Pedagogy: Books
Parent Communication
Parent Involvement
Parent Satisfaction
Shift in Education: Caring and Academics
Shift in Education: NCLB
Teachers: Lesson Plans
Teachers: Quality
Teachers: Recruitment
Teachers: Retention

APPENDIX F

PHOTOGRAPHS

Teaching One-on-One 1



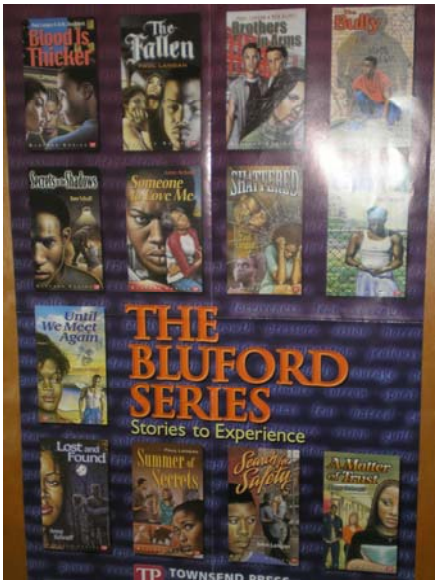
Caring About Life at Home

Parent Meeting 1

Step Team 1

Spanish Club 1

Boys to Men 1



AR Series 1

Music and Lyrics 1

Charter Quilt 1