Drexel University

Research Brief no. 11

The mixed methods study:
Exploring non-academic factors that impact literacy development for minority students
enrolled in advanced placement courses in an urban high school.

By

Anthony Batts II
Drexel University

Supervising Professor:
Dr. Joyce Pittman

Editors:
Dr. Penny L. Hammrich
Professor and Dean

Dr. Rajashi Ghosh
Associate Professor and Department Chair for Policy, Organization, and Leadership

Dr. Kathy Geller
Associate Clinical Professor

Katelyn Alderfer
PhD Student

Christine Galib
EdD Student

Copy Editor:

Anthony Hopkins
Director of Marketing and Communications

The mixed methods study:
Exploring non-academic factors that impact literacy development for minority students enrolled in advanced placement courses in an urban high school.

Mr. Anthony Batts II

Drexel University

Abstract

Students enrolled in advanced placement courses in an urban school present a unique dynamic to the education composition of the modern schooling system. This brief explores the relationship between the non-academic factors of literacy development and the academic performance of minority youth enrolled in advanced placement courses within urban public schools. This brief also investigates how the students' social experiences with peers, community individuals, and parent involvement contribute to the academic success within reading, writing, speaking, and communication.

Aim

This study sought to understand the relationship between non-academic factors of literacy development and the academic performance of minority youth enrolled in advanced placement courses within an urban public school. The research presents how students who are high performing in literacy differ from their low performing peers despite learning in very similar conditions.

Problem

The problem in this study explores a lack of knowledge about the role of non-academic factors of literacy development that contribute to the success of minority students enrolled in Advanced courses. The problem is embedded in the deficiency of educational practices that support the growth of both school literacy and life literacy where school literacy is defined as the ability to read and write to access course content information and life literacy is the ability to access and interpret information to meet the needs of real-world situations through home, parents, or socialization (Wilhelm, 2003). Non-academic factors of literacy development are defined as the skills that are necessary to develop reading, writing, and communication outside of the educational setting (Hay, 2012). There is a disproportionate number of minority students in public urban high schools who lack the adequate non-academic engagement to increase the reading and writing comprehension skills necessary to achieve high success (Cohen & Garcia, 2006). Students who are enrolled within Advanced Placement courses have shown their abilities to perform at higher levels of academic success having mastered previous course content. Although this gap of achievement in urban schools separates many urban students from their more advantaged suburban peers disproportionately affecting students of color (Wixon, 2015), there are many students of color enrolled in advanced placement courses attending urban public schools who often find success.

Research Findings

The findings of this study are organized through quantitative and qualitative results. Such results were interpreted through survey data derived from a modified version of the Hemingway scale of adolescent connectedness and Semi-structured Interviews with open-ended

questions. The quantitative data evidenced that students desire to perform well in school while gaining the respect of their teachers. Many of the students who have shown success tended to associate with many groups of friends however, they prefer to spend time outside of their inner-city neighborhoods. Lastly regarding the findings of quantitative data, the students within this study described that they value their parent's perspective of their character and sought to receive the approval of their parents especially during academically driven success.

The qualitative data results that emerged from coding and analysis of 10 interviews expressed that students who are considered high achievers with respect to literacy tend to develop a strong sense of educational motivation at a young age. This was established based upon parent involvement and parent expectations. Students were influenced by their encounters with parents, teachers, and their peers having multiple social circles where they can have conversations that peak their interest and spark student discovery of unfamiliar topics. Lastly, high achieving students from an urban public school indicated that their educational system lacked innovation in educating urban students where students want to learn based upon a curriculum tailored to their learning styles and interests.

Conclusions

Research Questions	
What is the relationship between non-academic factors of literacy development and the academic performance of minority youth enrolled in advanced placement courses within a public urban school?	The relationship between non-academic factors of literacy development and academic performance of minority youth enrolled in advanced placement courses within a public urban school include: -Multiple social circles regarding difficult topics -Knowledge of Code-switching -Understanding ones personal and academic goals -Leisure reading -A need to perform well in school
What social, cultural, and educational factors are significant to the literacy development of minority youth within a public urban school setting where the majority of the students are students or color and receive free or reduced lunch?	Lack of resources for urban high schools, lack of academic drive and competition, and parent extrinsic motivation are the socialcultural and educational factors significant to the literacy development of minority youth within a public urban school setting were the majority of students are students of color and receive free or reduced lunch.
How do minority students in an urban public school perceive social interactions as an influence for literacy development?	Social interactions providing an outlet to discuss goals/ future, real-world situations and expand critical literary through conversation are ways in which minority students in an urban public school perceive social interactions as an influence for literacy development.
How do African American students in an urban public school feel parents and guardian interactions influence literacy development?	Students in an urban public school feel parents and guardian interaction influence literacy development as students feel a sense of connectedness to their parents/guardians as an affirmation when they are successful within school.
How do urban minority students of advanced placement literature class perceive literacy development?	Minority students in advanced placement literature class perceive literacy development as an essential educational

	skill. Many students described the importance of developing strong emergent literacy skills.

Research Implications

This mixed methods study allowed insight of how African American students enrolled in advanced placement courses in an urban high school perceives their knowledge of reading, writing, speaking and listening as a way to navigate throughout society. Through quantitative, and qualitative data collection instruments enabled each African American student to express how they battle the social, political and racial adversities within an urban setting, while attaining academic success. As with all studies, this study provides opportunities for the progression of future research surrounding emergent literacy strategies that engage students who attend urban schools and the influence of critical litreracy for students entering urban high school. Exploring emergent literacy strategies coupled with non-academic activities of students who attend urban public elementary, and middle schools will help understand how minority students develop a foundation for future literacy growth.

Author Biography

Anthony Batts II, currently serves as an Educator at Winston Churchill high school in Potomac MD. Anthony received a Bachelor's of Arts in English Language and Literature from The University of Maryland, College park (2010), where he later received a Master's of education in Secondary education (2013). Anthony has served as an educating professional as a teacher having taught English courses that include Advanced Placement English Literature, British Literature, World Literature, American Literature and Reading Intervention. Anthony has served as an Adjunct professor, at Bowie State University, and Montgomery College, Rockville campus. Lastly, Anthony has served as a School Leader where he observed, coached, and provided feedback for many teachers surrounding instructional and organizational support within an urban school. Anthony intends to use his education credentials to continue the path of education success for the next generation through the impact and influence of having a strong foundation of literacy.

References

Cohen, G. Garcia, J. Apfel, N. & Master, A (2006) Reducing the racial achievement gap: A social-psychological intervention. *American Association for the Advancement of Science. 313*(5791) 1307-1310 Retrieved from https://www-jstor-org.ezproxy2.library.drexel.edu/stable/pdf/3846872.pdf?refreqid=excelsior%3A1305eeb5826008cfa5848d460302f159

Hay, I., & Fielding-Barnsley, R. (2012). Social learning, language and literacy. *Australasian Journal of Early Childhood, 37(1), 24+. Retrieved from* http://go.galegroup.com.ezproxy2.library.drexel.edu/ps/i.do?p=AONE&sw=w&u=drexel_main&v=2.1&it=r&id=GALE%7CA289721570&sid=summon&asid=8a7ac7df859da74f318a04c40b5c5d6a

Wilhelm, J (2003) The evolution of literacy. *Voices from the middle. 10* (3) 48-49. Retrieved from https://search-proquest-com.ezproxy2.library.drexel.edu/docview/213932770/fulltextPDF/6CAEC81ACEE84371PQ/1?accountid=10559

Wixon, M. (2015). Closing the achievement gap: Four states' efforts. *Education Commission of the States*. http://www.ecs.org/clearinghouse/01/17/10/11710.pdf