

ASK ME: I AM THE LEARNER

By Monica Moment-AFT/WTU Teacher Leaders 2014-2015

Is there a desire for student participation in the development of their education programs after completing an innovative academic needs assessment survey, the Student Academic Needs Assessment (STUANA) survey tool; subsequently, leading to Professional Development (PD) topics?

Rationale

A significant number of American high school students, matriculating in secondary education, are not successfully progressing to the next grade level or graduating within a timely manner. As a result of this data, many schools are initiating and implementing Response to Intervention (RTI) educational strategies and techniques to assist in meeting the needs of students with learning remediation, deficits and/or deficiencies among the general and special education population. In efforts to evaluate systemic school cultures, the writer assessed aspects of a widening academic achievement gap, as it relates to some educational populations with higher learning concerns among given school environments. This student oriented survey was developed, approved and disseminated to students in a DCPS high school to gauge their perceived educational concerns.

Literature Review

Adelman and Taylor (2010) suggested that the implementation of the conceptual frameworks, for student and learning supports, periodically, should be analyzed for deficits and barriers that interfere with school improvements. They discussed improvements of schools for all students, regardless of the school district in which they matriculate. They discussed the notion that school systems addressing and embracing the community, home and individual students should be in a unified manner, yielding comprehensive intervention toward the maximum educational experience regardless of ethnicity. This conceptual framework and intervention model was emphasized to be conducted starting in prekindergarten through postsecondary. Thompson (2010) proposed that educational governance teams are in a position to “influence school district climate and impact student achievement” through collaboration and decision-making efforts. She, seemingly, suggested that these management layers, superintendents and school boards, can assist with a greater percentage of school districts, systemically, embracing school climate and achievement policy reform with supports regardless of affluent or poverty status. Bryk (2010) discussed the organization of school and interaction with the local community can aid in the improvement of student achievement. He cited five essential supports: 1) a coherent instructional guidance system, 2) the professional capacity of its faculty, 3) the strong parent-community-school ties, 4) a student-centered learning climate; and, 5) leadership that drives change. Checkley provided Gardner’s concept of multiple intelligences as “the human ability to solve problems or to make something that is valued in one or more cultures.” There were several criteria cited by Checkley, as needing to be met to represent multiple intelligences: 1) a representation in the brain for the ability, 2) populations that are especially good or especially impaired in intelligence, and 3) an evolutionary history of the intelligence being seen in animals other than human being.

Data/Tools/Process

The 16-items student oriented academic needs assessment survey, the Student Academic Needs Assessment (STUANA) was developed and disseminated at an area high school to generate responses regarding their education. The school building administrator, a Washington Teachers Union (WTU) representative and DCPS personnel assisted with the approval of questions. The question selection

process assisted in soliciting the opinion of students regarding improvement in academics, school climate and extracurricular activities. Limited students' demographic information was requested; identifying their race/ethnic identification, gender/sex, grade levels and career goals. The survey questions addressed areas regarding strengths and weaknesses in general math and reading ability; also, reflected insight as to how students' gauged their targeted educational performance, school preparedness, and the amount of study time allowed for subject areas. The students were randomly selected from the entire student body. The survey was disseminated through a computer link, with the assistance of all content teachers. After emailing the computerized survey link, students were encouraged to complete the questions.

Data Analysis

Approximately, from a pool of 443 students, 116 student participants completed the computerized surveys. Of the 116 participants, 87 females (75%) and 29 males (25%) participated in the study. The major action research question for this study, #16, asked whether the participants felt they should be a part of the development of their education program. Tallying the frequencies, the students responded 72.06%, **yes**; 5.88%, **no** with 22.06% indicating **not sure**. The null hypothesis for the aforementioned research question remains that there is no desire for student participation in the development of their education programs after completing an innovative academic needs assessment survey, the Student Academic Needs Assessment (STUANA) survey tool; subsequently, leading to Professional Development (PD) topics.

Recommendations

The Action Research data proposed question, Is there a desire for student participation in the development of their education programs after completing an innovative academic needs assessment survey, the Student Academic Needs Assessment (STUANA) survey tool; subsequently, leading to Professional Development (PD) topics, suggested that students' wanted a greater "buy in" with this process. The data further corroborated the review of the literature, in that, "educational governance teams are in a position to "influence school district climate and impact student achievement" through collaboration and decision-making efforts. She, seemingly, suggested that these management layers, superintendents and school boards, can assist with a greater percentage of school districts, systemically, embracing school climate and achievement policy reform with supports regardless of affluent or poverty status."

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