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**SELF-AUTHORSHIP: A TEACHING APPROACH DURING THE
AFTER-SCHOOL COMMUNITY PROGRAM**

by
Fatjona R. Lubonja

A Dissertation

Submitted to the
Department of Educational Leadership
College of Education
In partial fulfillment of the requirement
For the degree of
Doctor of Education
at
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May 2, 2013

Dissertation Chair: Burton R. Sisco, Ed.D

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Dedication

I would like to dedicate the manuscript to my mother and my father, S. & A. Rama

Acknowledgments

I would like to express my appreciation to Professor Burton Sisco for his guidance and help throughout this research. His teaching was a guide on my long journey of completing this project. Dr. Sisco was a source of inspiration where I found hope and encouragement. Those moments of hope were important when difficulties confronted experience and life continued its path full of emotions. The journey of conversation traveled in the imagination around the world. In Germany where the precious and rare collection of clocks resided, or Vermont where the clear water reflected the beautiful fall colors. Like a precise clock, that runs continuously every second, minute, and hour, Dr. Sisco followed every step of this project, every word, sentence, and chapter. His teachings were an inspiration and a corner stone while building the pathway of this project.

Abstract

Fatjona R. Lubonja
SELF-AUTHORSHIP: A TEACHING APPROACH DURING THE
AFTER-SCHOOL COMMUNITY PROGRAM
2012-2013

Burton R. Sisco, Ed.D.
Doctor of Education

The purpose of this study was to examine the impact of integrating self-authorship pedagogy applied to a younger population. Integration of a self-authorship program during an after-school community program examined the self-authorship pedagogy approach following the developmental theory designed by Baxter Magolda (1999, 2001). Much of previous research in self-authorship was influenced by college student population. There was a literature gap on self-authorship theory applied to younger age population. This research investigated students' responses to the self-authorship program, the impact self-authorship had on students' learning, the impact self-authorship had on after-school programs, and my leadership throughout the research. The subjects of this study were 30 students attending an after-school program at the Boys & Girls Club in Atlantic City, Chelsea Unit.

Using a participatory action research methodology, this research followed mixed method, qualitative and quantitative data collection procedures. Four research cycles were employed in the study. Findings revealed an overall positive student response toward the self-authorship program. While engaged in the program, students experienced an increase in their interest toward the self-authorship program. Students' portfolio analysis showed growth in students' learning, and overall data showed a positive increase in their work and self-confidence.

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Chapter I

Introduction

The Making of Me

My philosophical understanding and experience of leadership began in a country far different from America. Albania, a small European country, which shares its borders with Greece, Macedonia, Croatia, and Italy from the sea, is my birth country. Legends say, Alexander the Great was their admirer, the Greeks traded with them, the Romans neighbored them, while the clear waters enchanted them, and the mountains fathered them. The country's history resonates in the form of the chant traveling and echoing through the air, and getting lost sometimes within the path of the fresh water.

I never imagined that the past would echo and travel with me during my advanced academic study. The more I worked toward understanding my leadership, the more my thoughts connected with my own experience. After all those years, memories woke up from a long time of hibernation. Suddenly I was traveling through the past. For all of the years that I have been living in Albania, Italy, and the USA, I have collected bits and pieces from my childhood stored away in my memory.

I acquired most of my early education in Albania, a country guided under strict rule of totalitarian government ideology. The idea of leadership was inculcated in me not from school, but rather from my family. In school, new ideas and leadership voices were persecuted. Freedom of speech was suppressed in daily life. The totalitarian power of the socialist government isolated Albania from the rest of the world (Fevziu, 2004).

According to the education textbooks of Civil & Moral Education (Fshazi, 2004), the aim was the promotion of the collective self before the individual. At the heart of this

transformation laid the subordination of the individual to a group, a class, or the national community in general. The interests of the community were placed above any individual and the individual was defined as a 'servant' of the common interest (Fshazi, 2004).

I was introduced to French Enlightenment philosophy, Kant, Camus, Freud, Machiavelli, Baudelaire, The Frankfurt School, and more during my teenage years. Maybe I was not able to understand it all, but I believed that during that time I developed the foundation of my individual leadership. For the first time I began to truly question the Albania's political doctrine. After all, I belonged to the very young generation that, even despite isolation, pushed for fundamental change.

In 1990, the students' movement for change began and led to demonstrations calling for the end of the dictatorship (Fevziu, 2004). Politically, Albania followed the East European pattern of throwing off communism, then replacing that first democratic government in the next election (McClear, 2001). In Albania, the transfer of power was not exactly peaceful, but very noisy and tinged with a serious physical harm to leadership. With the students' revolt and sacrifice for the democracy, in March 1991 the country held the first multi-party election. For the first time, the Democratic Party won with majority of votes. I was part of this young generation of students that demanded change that emphasized freedom of expression.

During my adolescent years, I began to travel to different European countries. I gained much knowledge through traveling. Most of all, I began to understand the world and experienced it on my own. That was the most significant step I had made in my life without being oppressed by the demagoguery and propaganda of any government or

philosophical theory. I discovered the importance of freedom over everything including freedom of learning, education, and experiencing life.

Dewey (1934) believed that experience engenders thinking. Although I disliked much of the Albanian 1980-1990 philosophy, I did appreciate and value my early education. Overall, my Albanian experience gave me a wider knowledge and a different world view. I am part of the generation that brought change in our society, connected ideologies, and maybe influenced the world to move forward in peace. To achieve the change from a dictatorship to the democracy required a transformation in primary beliefs. I become part of the change in my own self ideology. I consider that particular time period as fundamental in the making of my youth.

Personal Allegory of My Early Education Experience

As a young child, I was always curious about everything surrounding my little world. I remember a particular summer that for the first time in my young life I stopped asking “Why” but went in the search of “Why.” On a hot August day, my mother answered unusually to my string of questions.

“Why? Why? Even Socrates didn’t find why!” That’s all she said and left knowing I would question the answer.

Well, who was this Socrates that supposedly would have known everything? Looking for why was not easy, but looking for Socrates turned out to be a challenge. The search became a journey. I began looking around the neighborhood as I never did before. Who might he be, I struggled. The bread maker took my attention first. I had to admit, his bread was the best. To my surprise, making the bread was not easy. The bread

maker taught me how to make the bread. Yet no trace of Socrates. Although I agreed with the bread maker that even Socrates would have liked his bread.

The next day of that summer journey, I went on visiting the dress maker, cheese maker, shoe maker, and all the other little shops around. We all agreed that Socrates would have liked their products, but still, no Socrates. Was it the ice cream guy? Maybe, I thought. Besides, I loved the ice cream and every time he came around all the children would run toward him. He must have answers since all the children loved his ice cream, I reasoned. One afternoon, I waited for the ice cream guy until he showed up as always with his usual call and usual ice cream. It turned out he was not Socrates, but he taught me how the ice cream was made and that Socrates would have liked the ice cream. Happy to have learned about the ice cream, I returned home. I told my mother about the ice cream learning sensation, but still had not solved the Socrates riddle.

Socrates can be everywhere if you have a question, my mother told me, the importance stands that you are in quest of him. That journey stayed with my imagination on the first school day. When asked what I did that summer, I proudly narrated the stories about the bread making, shoe making, dress making, but the most successful one was the ice cream making. The idea of knowing how to make ice cream was an instant success with my new classmates.

Who taught you all this, one of my peers anxiously asked?

Socrates, I answered with a childish confidence.

Still, years later, I remember my teacher's smile. My mother was right, Socrates in a way, did follow me throughout my life.

Continuing My Education

Continuing my journey, I moved to United States of America in 1996 for further studies. By coming to America, I made significant changes in my career, my home, my friends, and my dreams. I believe change in itself requires courage. Although I had faced difficult times associated with family, culture, and social changes, to my surprise, I possessed a clear mind, strong optimism, and a vision of the future with a touch of humor. In my experience the ability to look forward toward the successful outcome, courage, integrity, beliefs, optimism, grace, and humor, were keys to the creation of synchronicity in the real world of sacrifice; all of which have defined my own leadership. As a constructive, multicultural, and creative leader, I gained experience and knowledge, using my intelligence, experience, and passion, with the commitment of being my very best.

Life stories and experiences are important in that they shape the creation of a new self. In the United States, although my priority was education toward a higher degree, I stayed connected to my creativity and community. While studying for my doctoral degree at Rowan University, I became interested and involved in an afterschool community program. The Boys & Girls Club of Atlantic City became a welcoming place for me as an aspiring teacher. I remember during my first day at the club, a group of children gave me a lesson on snacking on a peanut butter and jelly sandwich. As strange as it may sound, it was my first time to taste peanut butter and jelly above all, the children were so excited to show me how to make the sandwich, they even sang it “Peanut butter, jelly time,” “Peanut butter, jelly time.” Their enthusiasm and simplicity, in communicating with me

left an impression that motivated me to visit more often and to get involved in the program.

Lessons Learned

I believe leadership it is not just a term or epithet, but an experience that comes from internal forces and grows, shaping who you are as an individual. Throughout my experience of family, education, and traveling, I have been guided by a journey of benevolence, with a strong ethical compass, resulting in personal dreams, hopes, and optimism. I have tried to unpack my "situation" by deriving from past cultural contexts, four political regimes, and the kinds of leadership associated with them. By showing how leadership is shaped through a limited number of possible regimes, life experience grows. Education is inter-connected by the fact that no culture or experience exists in a vacuum. All experience and education are related.

Through studying leadership, I have learned to understand the cycles of stress, sacrifice, and dissonance that often afflict leaders. Drawing from real-life stories using leadership, I have been renewed by cultivating essential elements of mindfulness, hope, and compassion (Boyatzis & McKee, 1998). My leadership consists of three pillars including constructivist, multicultural, and creative. Within this platform of leadership, I am able to recognize myself as a researcher, leader, and educator.

Employing a constructivist philosophy, I explored the idea of reciprocal learning that enables me and others in community of education to construct meaning towards a shared purpose. Throughout my learning experience, I have gained insight by interacting with other individuals and sharing their knowledge and culture. As a researcher, I have

been guided by innovative ideas of teaching and learning, which have enriched my knowledge.

My multicultural leadership is imbedded in me through life experience. My life and education have been shaped by a meaningful cycle of life exploration and open minded cultural communication. My creative ability has guided my learning and directed me through a deeper aesthetic understanding. The road to building my espoused leadership has given me the possibility to deeply understand the importance in the teaching world, and above all understand my own self.

The Study

“Promoting self-authorship is a matter of helping students transform their assumptions about the knowledge and themselves” (Baxter Magolda, 1999, p. 97).

The purpose of this study was to investigate a self-authorship pedagogical approach implemented with a group of students’ ages 9 to 13. The study was influenced by the theoretical work of Baxter Magolda (1999, 2001) that focuses on developmental constructive philosophy. The self-authorship program was developed, implemented, and monitored for detecting students’ growth and changes at an after-school community program while implementing the self-authorship pedagogy. The goal was to promote teaching and learning through self-authorship under the constructive pedagogy targeting younger children.

Analysis of qualitative and quantitative data gathered from 30 student subjects during the after-school program, gave knowledge into the ways students engaged, preceded, grew, and captivated self-authorship during the after-school program at the Boys and Girls Club of Atlantic City. This pedagogical approach encouraged children to

create, tell their stories, and find their own voices so they could make “meaningful the birth of their own rationale” (Greene, 1995, p. 54). Overall, the findings provide an understanding in connecting to young students’ learning progress and changes toward becoming independent, self-regulated, and self-confident about their work.

Although Baxter Magolda (1999) defines self-authorship as an effective way of teaching, there is a gap in the research literature of the pedagogical approach applied to younger age students. The literature review in Chapter III discusses the importance of self-authorship toward developing students’ voice, sense of self, independence, and self-regulation. While having such positive and important qualities in regards to students’ development, research by Kegan (1994) and Baxter Magolda (1999, 2001) focused on college students, ignoring younger age students. In keeping with the findings of Kegan and Baxter Magolda’s developmental self-authorship theory, I used the same construct, however, my application of the process focused on younger students, ages 9 to 13 years old.

In addition, the research influenced my leadership and teaching style, growth, self-reflection, and strengthened my understanding of research. The examination of my leadership gave me a better pedagogical understanding and provided me with insights on how self-authorship reinforces my individual philosophical thinking. Consistent with my educational leadership studies, my interests were aimed at the educational research of self-authorship within three major leadership paradigms: constructivist, multicultural, and creative. I have integrated these leadership theories into my practice while conducting this self-authorship research project.

The study used a participatory action research methodology, incorporating both, qualitative and quantitative data collection. Four cycles were designed to organize and analyze data following the research questions. A qualitative method was used to measure students' response to self-authorship and the impact it had on their learning progress. A quantitative survey was designed to answer the research questions measuring the impact self-authorship had on the students in the after-school program. The self-authorship program took place during the after-school program and was organized using three main creative learning methods: drawing, writing, and computer animation.

Research Problem

As noted earlier, much of the self-authorship research has focused on college age students. The leading researcher in self-authorship is Baxter Magolda (1999) who asserts that “students can learn self-authorship in elementary and secondary education” (p. 257), but such an argument is left only for conjecture. Much of research in self-authorship was influenced by how learning can occur, but it has not included a discussion about how younger students respond to a self-authorship approach. What is missing from the research literature on self- authorship theory is how the theory applies to younger age students.

Research Methods

This research followed participatory action research under the mixed method data collection. Four cycles were designed to organize and analyze the data referring to the research questions. Throughout each cycle the data were evaluated, reviewed, reflected, and progressed to the next cycle. Cycle I introduced the self-authorship program to the students during the afterschool program. Qualitative data were used through pre-

observation, post-observation, and the questionnaire component. Cycle II examined the effects self-authorship had on students learning, utilizing pre-test, post-test, and portfolio analysis. Cycle III of this study examined the impact self-authorship had on afterschool program targeting the third research question. Utilizing quantitative method of survey, this study took into consideration the staff working and volunteering at the Boys & Girls Club of Atlantic City. Cycle IV discussed the researcher's leadership including pedagogy, self-reflection, and influence on self-authorship program. Within this cycle, I provided insights on self-authorship pedagogical method distinctive to my personal style and esthetic thinking.

Assumptions and Limitations

Throughout self-authorship research, I used the Baxter Magolda's (1999, 2001) constructive pedagogy in order to influence learning in younger children. The idea was to integrate and show that the self-authorship pedagogy could work when appropriately designed, targeting a younger age of students during the afterschool programs. The integration of the self-authorship program in the afterschool programs at the non-profit organization of the Boys & Girls Club of Atlantic City was truthful aligning with the club's mission. Students responded truthfully to the self-authorship program while my leadership supported and influenced students and the self-authorship program.

Since I did not have direct teaching contact with traditional public or private schools, the research was limited to members of the Boys and Girls Club of Atlantic City ages 9 to 13 years old. I developed the self-authorship program targeting children ages 9 to 13 years old who were already active member participants in the afterschool club. As a result, the size of the student participants in the research was limited to the club's

membership. Although the community organization followed the same school year schedule, the time period assigned for the program was limited to the hours of 4 p.m. to 6 p.m., twice a week.

The self-authorship program also originated as an idea in order to enhance membership registration numbers and retain current students. The room provided for the program was supplied with only five laptop computers that required continuous technical upgrades and maintenance. The software designed for the self-authorship called *Animate Your World*© and *Animation-ish*©, were compatible only with the Microsoft Windows XP©, and the need for computer upgrades was possible by using existing education grants given to the Boys and Girls Club of Atlantic City.

Definition of Important Terms

1. **Active Member:** Students participating at the afterschool period between the hours of 4:00 p.m. and 6:00 p.m. were registered members at the Boys & Girls Club in Atlantic City. There was a membership requirement by the Club administrator and a \$10.00 membership fee for each child. Parents were required to sign a membership paper and registered their children in order to participate in the afterschool programs.
2. ***Animate Your World* ©:** *Animate Your World* © is an interactive program using animation technology to infuse character education into the program. The program offers techniques on developing animation movies, and makes these movies come alive in the classroom. The software offers pre-created cartoon animation sequences focusing on character-challenging situations. Students plan, design, and produce their own interactive movies to the cartoons and simultaneously incorporate character education lessons from their school day. In addition to character education lessons, students learn the art of

storytelling, the art of visual thinking, and the basics of animation. *Animate Your World*© was developed by Cartoon Network and Turner Learning, the educational division of Turner Broadcasting System, Inc.

3. *Animation-ish*™: *Animation-ish*™ is an animation program with a creative mission. *Animation-ish*™ is designed to create basic drawing animation characters. *FableVision*© and *ToonBoom*© have partnered in developing this program.

FableVision© is a Boston-based children's media company, and *ToonBoom*© animation a Montreal-based software company.

4. **After-school Program:** Refers to programs taking place between 4:00 p.m. to 6:00 p.m. of the school days after the regular school hours. The programs involve students doing activities such as arts and crafts, reading, sports, and games.

5. **After-school Students:** Refers to students participating in afterschool programs at the Boys & Girls Club of Atlantic City. The afterschool hours arranged from 4:00 p.m. to 6:00 p.m.

6. **Bilingual:** Refers to students who spoke more than one language and participated at the self-authorship program at the Boys & Girls Club of Atlantic City.

7. **Boys & Girls Club of Atlantic City:** The Boys & Girls Club of Atlantic City is an affiliate member of the non-profit organization of Boys & Girls Club of America. The club opened in 1972 and since then has been serving the youth community of Atlantic City. The organization is the largest youth development organization in Atlantic City. Children attending the club after school were required to become members. The Boys & Girls Club in Atlantic City implements teen programs in two unit locations, the Pennsylvania Avenue Unit and Chelsea Unit. The locations are connected to the schools

in Atlantic City such as Uptown Complex School, Sovereign Avenue School, New York Avenue School, Brighton Avenue School, and also Atlantic City High School.

8. Computer-based Programs: Refers to programs that use the computer as the medium to facilitate instruction so they could be able to create, write, design, and develop animation by incorporating visual images and narrative.

9. Constructive Pedagogy: The self-authorship program used the constructive teaching method by encouraging students to construct their own creative story during an after-school program sponsored by the Boys & Girls Club of Atlantic City, New Jersey. Students were encouraged to create and discover new ideas while working on their projects of making a movie or writing an essay.

10. Self-Authorship: Self-authorship is an afterschool program designed following the constructive-developmental pedagogy originated by the constructive learning of Baxter Magolda (1999; 2001). Self-authorship program is designed to encourage learners to bring their experience into the classroom and construct their own perspectives. The self-authorship model encourages learners to connect to their own and others experience and ideas.

11. Self- Learner: Students were encouraged to learn independently and use the self-authorship programs of *Animate Your World* © & *Animation-ish*™ on their own when the instructor guidance was not available.

Research Questions

The following research questions guided the study:

1. How do the students respond to a self-authorship pedagogical approach?
2. What impact does self-authorship have on students' learning?

3. What impact does self-authorship have on after-school programs?
4. How does my leadership support and influence students and the self-authorship program.

Overview of the Study

This study examined the self-authorship pedagogy during the afterschool program targeting children ages 9 to 13 years old. The goal was to promote teaching through self-authorship under the constructive pedagogy targeting younger children. The research design was based upon the theoretical work of Baxter Magolda (1999, 2001). This study was grounded as an action research study throughout eight chapters.

Chapter II discusses the espoused leadership theory, the process of developing the personal leadership, and the leadership paradigm based on three major leadership styles: constructivist leadership, multicultural leadership, and creative leadership.

Chapter III discusses the literature review of the self-authorship theoretical model. Self-authorship theoretical model of Baxter Magolda (1999, 2001) was chosen to promote self-authorship as a form of constructive pedagogy.

Chapter IV illustrates the research methodology used throughout the study. Information was gathered through qualitative and quantitative means. Planning, implementing, and evaluating are examined during the action phases.

Chapter V describes Cycle I of the research study. This cycle intended to detect students' perceptions, feelings, and behaviors. Data on students' experience and interaction with the self-authorship program were recorded using pre-and-post observations. The selection of self-authorship was based on the principle of giving the

students possibilities and freedom of choice on how they wanted to work and what program they wanted to explore.

Chapter VI introduces Cycle II that analyzed the data targeting the second research question. Data were collected from pre-test, post-test and students' portfolio analysis in order to measure the impact self-authorship had on student learning. Tables of analysis were developed to measure Conceptual Content Characteristics originated by Tuman (1999) and Formal Language Characteristics.

Chapter VII discusses the impact the self-authorship program had on the afterschool community of the Boys & Girls Club of Atlantic City. A quantitative method of staff survey is analyzed and findings are discussed.

Chapter VIII illustrates the espoused leadership guiding this research. The chapter discusses the main personal leadership components and it addresses the fourth research question.

Chapter II

Espoused Leadership Theory

The Process of Developing Theory of Leadership

While attending education leadership classes at Rowan University, I had the opportunity to learn about leadership theories and styles, which included considerable readings and reflections on the subject. Although I read a host of articles and authors, I had difficulty narrowing my leadership style under one category. The question that I always asked was: How can I define my leadership into a simple term? The answer became more complicated than the question, owing to the fact that my life experience is diverse and unique in its own right. In the last few years, I have become increasingly interested in the concept of educational leadership within the three major paradigms: constructive, multicultural, and creative.

Leadership emphasizes the process of learning from personal experiences, beliefs, values (Bolman & Deal, 2003). My life experience plays a major role in defining my leadership style. Throughout my life, I have lived and been educated in different countries such as Albania, Italy, Germany, and the United States of America. My education and the foundation of my own philosophy have traveled with me from one continent to another.

I have experienced the strict, totalitarian, socialist theory of education in Albania, where the idea of leadership was not cultivated or encouraged as an individual trait, but rather as a member of a social group. Albanian society was built around a cult of personality of the “new socialist man.” The will for education toward developing individual leadership not only was discouraged, but it was punished. For years the

totalitarian regime forced campaigns against traditional customs, religious beliefs, and foreign influence. To eliminate dissent, opponents were subjected to public criticism, forced labor camps, prison and execution (Fevziu, 2004). The ruling party essentially ignored internationally recognized standards of human rights, and above all, the regime denied its citizens freedom of expression, religion, and freedom of movement. In addition, the regime tried to deny the population access to information and the courts ensured that people were sentenced without even the formality of a trial (Lubonja, 2002).

In Albania the democratic process has been in transition since 1990. In March 1991 the country held the first multi-party election. Soon one of the major problems created under the “democratic process” was the corruption that began its route to destruction of the democratic idea itself. The country suffered from violence that dominated the street and the economic crises plagued the country. Most of the intellectuals and educated citizens left the country. Although, political force was diversified and divided into multi-party, there was still a culture of totalitarian rule. The power of one individual ruler was, and still is, a phenomenon in Albanian politics (Zogaj, 2000).

The Kosovo war, fought in ex-Yugoslavia, added to the Albanian situation. Thousands of ethnic Kosovo-Albanians fled the country in fear of genocide, persecution, and war. The war in the neighboring country did not help the country politically and economically. In Albania, there is a craving for a new era of political integration. The continuous fight between two major party leaders has paralyzed the country and turned the war for democracy into a personal clan war by not allowing a new political generation to be developed. For years the corruption has become the main phenomena, distorting the

road to democracy. During 1989 and 1990, there was a fundamental misperception on the part of the West that democracy would fill the space left behind by Communism. The arrival of a true and stable democracy involved the establishment of democratic institutions that made a democratic culture. Furthermore, democratic culture could not be superimposed from above or from outside. It really had to grow organically from below and from within (Janos, 2000).

In contrast to my Albanian education and experience, my Italian journey was diverse, where individual talent and creativity was directed toward critical inquiry, religious guidance, and aesthetic harmony. The philosophy of the Italian educational system varies from teacher-centered to student-centered with a standardized curriculum designed to facilitate school transfer in both public and private school. The education I followed was influenced by Italian arts and culture.

In the United States of America, my concept of learning was enriched with diverse opportunities and experiences. Through my education and work experiences, I have acquired additional knowledge that has shaped and reshaped my leadership. I have become part of the culture that is infused with opportunities for exercising my leadership. This culture has also shaped my personal history, energy, thoughts, emotions, conflicts and affection. As Vygotsky (1962) argued in the “zone of proximal development” participants negotiate their own meaning, knowledge, and intelligence influenced by social, cultural, and historical factors.

Developing My Personal Theory of Leadership

In order to understand the key elements of my leadership model, I needed to consider all the significant elements that make up my particular leadership. Throughout my life leadership has evolved as a journey of my individual learning, past and present experiences, creativity, knowledge, and construction of meaning. It has also grown as opportunities that have shaped my values, beliefs, information, and aesthetics. Piaget (1969) wrote:

The heartbreaking difficulty in pedagogy, as, indeed in medicine and in many other branches of knowledge that partake at the same time of art and science, is, in fact, that the best methods are also the most difficult ones: it would be impossible to employ a Socratic method without having first acquired some of Socrates' qualities, the first of which would have to be a certain respect for the intelligence in the process of development. (p. 69)

My performance and success is built upon my academic education and formal training cultivated by previous knowledge from my family and from my extended travel. My leadership has developed similarly. Although the academic study of leadership gave me the theoretical knowledge base, experience in leadership development may have started much earlier in my life, while I fought in Albania for my creative freedom. My leadership derives from the idea that a leader must genuinely care about people. Empathy and caring in action, benefits both leaders and the people they lead (Boyatzis & McKee, 2005). It involves caring enough about someone to find out what makes him/she tick, which means minimizing prejudice and pre-judgments.

My constructivist leadership approach builds on these concepts by identifying and recognizing new roles and responsibilities. Similarly, I challenge myself, as a teacher, to consider an environment in which the students are encouraged to think, explore, and create within their unique individuality. In order to define my leadership other than referring back to my knowledge and experience, I also looked closely at my style of teaching. According to Burton (1980), the central consideration for teachers is to allow children to gain knowledge at their own pace while making connections and creating their own interpretation of the learning subject.

With this as backdrop, I developed and implemented a self-authorship program at the after-school program at the Boys & Girls Club of Atlantic City. Hurtwitz (1995), argued that if creativity is “something only nice to have for the children to have after serious school work then it has no place in the curriculum” (p. 35).

Based on a constructivist approach, it is important to honor prior experiences and beliefs, construct meaningful dialogue, and reframe actions based on learning. In the process, shared visions are fluid and evolving. I believe leadership needs to be reinvested within the dynamics of community. Reflective modes of consciousness enable individuals within groups to accept causal and collective responsibility for the benefit of the community. Barriers, if encountered, are understood to reside within authority and resources by sharing an understanding of the values, beliefs, and goals of the schools.

Formal Theories of Leadership

Constructivist Leadership. Constructive theory (Kegan, 1982) gives importance to the individual’s experiences within the growth of interpersonal and transpersonal understanding. Constructivist approach is defined by researchers as "reciprocal learning

processes that enable participants in a community to construct meaning towards a shared purpose" (Lambert, 1998, p. 17). William Foster (1986) pioneered the reciprocal process idea in crafting constructive leadership. He argued that leadership is based on a reciprocal process between leader and followers working toward a common purpose. While traditional leadership is often limited to individuals with specific traits who occupy positions of power and authority, constructivist leadership offers a fluid and dynamic notion of leadership that transcends personalities and roles. Essentially, the power and authority of traditional leadership are distributed to multiple stakeholders, which shift in accordance with the specific tasks and needs (Lambert, 1995).

The central concept of constructivist leadership is the significance of mutual learning processes. Leadership is exercised by a group of participants who are continuously engaged in an ongoing process of dialogue and critical self-examination. As a result, participants are simultaneously improving themselves and one another, in their bid to achieve their collective organizational objectives (Kegan, 1982; Lambert, 1998).

The constructivist leadership model distributes leadership power and responsibilities to all stakeholders within the community by overcoming the isolation of the educators and the administrators, and promotes collaboration among all parties. Instead of focusing on their self-interests, all the stakeholders within the community work together with each other in order to promote the well-being of the community.

Constructivism is not an evolutionary understanding that has naturally emerged from our training and experiences in behaviorism. Constructivism is a significantly different paradigm that enables us to frame new questions and create

learning based on passion, unique learning gifts and perceptions, community, and authentic work and assessment. (Lambert, 1998, p. 48)

Multicultural Leadership. According to Boyatzis and McKee (1998), it is important that leaders stay in tune with those around themselves and intuitively understand the surroundings by developing self-awareness. Multicultural leaders engage people's diversity and ideas to build a shared sense of purpose. They inspire people to give their best, to willingly work in collaboration with others. Leaders need to examine all aspects of their leadership by also investigating what's working well and what needs to change. It requires getting feedback from others, and creates environments where people feel safe and are encouraged to speak up.

As a multicultural leader, it was necessary for me to adapt customary ways of leading toward being open-minded, and deeply committed to learning about myself. The building of my multicultural leadership required a self-journey through discovery of ideal self (who do I want to be as leader), the real self (who am I), learning agenda (how can I build my strength), reconfiguration (experimenting and practicing new behaviors), and the use of power of relationship (developing supportive relationships). The conceptual framework also included cultural acceptance, affirmation of culture, and vision of educational equality (Boyatzis & McKee, 1998).

The concept of multiculturalism was developed historically in the early 20th century. Philosopher Horace Kallen (1924) was the pioneer of the multicultural idea who was followed and transformed later by scholars such as Takaki (1989), Benett (1990), and Ruiz (2001). In a culturally diverse society such as that of the United States, it is important to consider culture as leaders when designing pedagogical instruction.

As an educational leader today, I faced challenges that resulted sometimes on cycle of pressure, sacrifice, and difference. To counter the inevitable challenges of leadership roles, it was important for me to engage in a conscious process of renewal, both on a daily basis and over time. To do so, I needed to intentionally transform the approach to managing themselves, learning new behaviors by cultivating mindfulness, and engaging the experiences of hope and compassion on my teaching style (Boyatzis & McKee, 1998).

Under the multicultural lens, I viewed the world with multiple interpretations of events, based on the different understandings, motives, culture, and reasoning of an individual (Webb, 2007). Just as there are many languages and cultures in the world, there are also many meanings of individuals using them as they act and react with the environment. Each student participating in this research had his/her own construction of the world and created a personal reality and pathway involving their experience. Such leadership style helped me to understand each student's individual case of how they perceived their world (Webb, 2007).

Creative Leadership. Education and learning are unquestionably issues that require attention from all educators. Greek philosophers asked the question, "How can we learn?" many centuries ago. What I seek to do as a leader and educator everyday through my teaching is to grow children's understanding and learning by involving a self-authorship pedagogy that includes knowledge, experience, and creativity.

To establish an approach for understanding the relationships between cognition, culture, and education, I began with the premise that mind is not a noun, something complete at conception or birth. It is, rather, a process whose growth is influenced by the

ways in which the mind is used (Eisner, 2000). According to Dewey (1934; 1944), creativity has the power to transform those who experience it. “To feel the meaning of what one is doing and to rejoice in that meaning; to unite in one concurrent fact the unfolding of the inner life and the ordered development of material conditions—that is art” (p. 292). “Learning is a journey, a discovery of new perspective, is to look beyond things as they are” (Greene, 1995, p. 49). Greene reinforces her ideas by referring to Dewey’s ideas of creativity as an open possibility that allowed possibility for the unexpected or surprise imagination as reason also for a teacher to look with different eyes and approaches.

Thus, throughout this research, creativity affected my emotions, feelings, and thoughts that transferred into something more meaningful for the students. It was through the experience of creativity by developing shapes, ideas, colors, and meaningful stories that overall learning experience occurred. The creative process became meaningful to each child in individual notes toward the learning experience that “lead to expanding perceptions of meaning that empower the young to become different as they develop wider and more informed perspectives on shared reality” (Greene, 1978, p. 3).

Organizing Framework – Post-Theoretic Leadership

My leadership paradigm is based on three major leadership styles: constructivist leadership, multicultural leadership, and creative leadership. The following Figure 1, shows the leadership concept that guided my leadership style throughout this research.

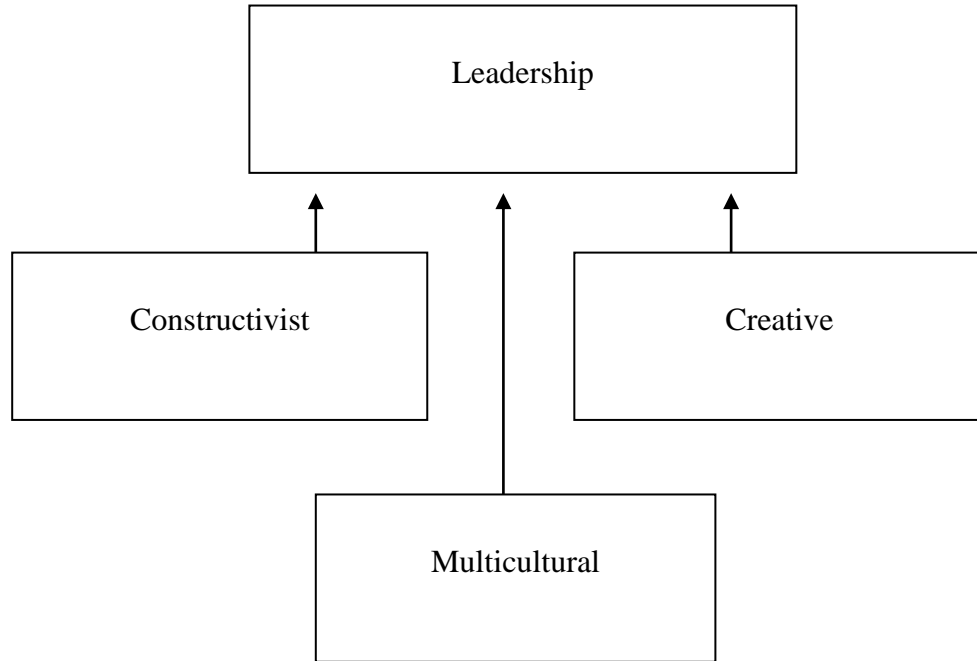


Figure 2.1. Leadership Concept.

Discussion

Teaching is a noble profession that is also prone to individual moral conscience and responsibilities. “To be ready to learn is to be ready to leap” (Greene, 1967, p. 29). Throughout the process of teaching, my leadership has used change as an agent to modification, exploration, and innovation. According to Greene “The principles and the contexts have to be chosen ...in the light of their lives with others ...using their imaginations, taping their courage-to transform” (p. 198).

As an educator, making a connection at an organization level, leaders need to foster a culture based on values like communication, relationships, fairness, trust, power, truth, flexibility, and empowerment. According to Zohar (1991), the idea of looking beyond narcissist ideas, helps us make the world a better place through discovering what

we really value in life, staying true to our deepest ideals and values, and making what difference we can, at whatever level we operate in life. Defining my leadership paradigm was not the sole purpose to seeing me as a leader, but rather to clearly see the present by evaluating it in full context. My leadership triangle was about seeing beyond conventions and habits.

Philosophers such as Dewey (1916), analyzed society in connection with education by connecting with the new stimulus, natural learning, process of learning, and individual discoveries. “The school is not an isolated unit that has nothing to do with reality” (Baldacchino, 2009, p. 27). In education, creativity should be considered as an “opening space” and “perspective” where everything depends on the actions undertaken. (Greene, 1978, p. 5). “For Jean-Paul Sartre, the project of acting on our freedom involves a rejection of the insufficient or the unendurable, a clarification, an imaging of better state of things” (Greene, p. 5).

“Schools produce students who continue to grow in their desire to learn and also who know how to learn” (Gage & Berliner, 1991, p. 565). To involve new ideas means to involve many options and possibilities for learning. At the same time it gives courage to new ideas and initiatives and freedom. This way, students become aware of their ideas and environment by becoming confident on taking “their own action to find out, to teach himself or herself something new” (Greene, p. 49). Learning should be like a journey, a discovery of new perspectives. Education should be opening the door to possibilities and giving more reason to the teacher to look with different eyes and different approaches. As a leader, I continuously questioned how students perceived my method of teaching and

the self-authorship program. By letting students contribute in decisions that affected their goals, I created relationships and ignited discussions.

Search for Change

As the world of education becomes diverse, learning instruction is unquestionably an issue that requires attention from all. Senge (1990) and Fullan (1993) suggested four core capacities toward greater change based on personal vision-building, inquiry, mastery, and collaboration. Thinkers such as Plato, Rousseau, Kant, and Dewey analyzed society's understanding of education by connecting it with the new stimulus, natural learning, process of learning, and individual discoveries. (Dewey 1916; Durkeim, 1961)

In order for my students to be able to impact the world around them, I, as an educator, had to first teach them how to see the world. And, in order for my students to be able to expand their voice, I first had to help them find their own voice. As an advocate of creativity, self-authorship and emancipation of learning, there is no more powerful way in which to affect change in the world than through giving students the power of their own vision and voice. In the self-authorship program that I taught, students studied and grew by creating, composing, drawing, story writing, editing, and producing. I taught them how to solve problems, organize information, tell stories, and create clear and beautiful presentations. In the midst of learning these tools, students were usually clear about what to do with them, but they often lost sight of why. Why write, why design, why create? It is through this question of *why* create (what is the purpose?) that forces the growth process. Guided by the leadership paradigm, I challenged the students to view their world with different eyes by growing independently as self-authors and looking at their world through diverse lenses.

Organization of Boys & Girls Clubs

The Boys & Girls organizations started in 1906. At first, the organization was a boy's only club called The Federated Boys Clubs. Its core was located in Boston, Massachusetts and consisted of 53 members who came together to start a nationwide movement. In 1931, the Boys Club Federation of America became Boys Clubs of America and in 1956, Boys Clubs of America celebrated its 50th anniversary and received a U.S. Congressional Charter. Later on, the movement included girls who formally became involved as members. To further recognize the fact that girls were a part of the cause, the national organization's name was changed in 1990 to Boys and Girls Clubs of America (BGCA). Based on the data given by the Boys and Girls of America Organization (2008) the Boys & Girls of America has been serving about 4.4 million children and teens throughout its membership, involvement in communities, and outreach programs. The community after-school programs of Boys & Girls Clubs have recently expanded to include global affiliations.

The Boys & Girls Club of Atlantic City is an affiliate member. The club opened in 1972 and since then, has been serving the youth community of Atlantic City. The organization is the largest youth development organization in Atlantic City. Children attend the club after the application for club membership. The Boys & Girls Club in Atlantic City implements teen programs in two unit locations, the Pennsylvania Avenue Unit and Chelsea Unit. The locations are connected to the schools in Atlantic City such as Uptown Complex School, Sovereign Avenue School, New York Avenue School, Brighton Avenue School, and also Atlantic City High School. The Boys & Girls Club of

Atlantic City operates after-school programs every day in accordance with the school year schedule. Programs for children 9 to 13 years old runs from 3:00 p.m. to 6:00 p.m.

The Boys & Girls Club of Atlantic City supports programs that address needs in the community. Their mission is to enable all youth of the community to reach their future in becoming caring, productive, and responsible members of the society and community in which they live. The goal of the club is to create an inspirational place for all young people, to realize their full potential as productive members of society.

According to their public web site (<http://bgca.org>, 2011) the Boys & Girls Club provides a safe place for children to learn and grow, by cultivating ongoing relationships with caring, adult professionals. Through life-enhancing programs and character development experiences, children build opportunity for their future.

The Boys & Girls Club provides more than 25 national programs that are available in the areas of education, the environment, health, the arts, careers, alcohol/drug and pregnancy prevention, gang prevention, leadership development, and athletics. Some of these programs target teens such as Literacy Program, Smart Girls Program, Smart Moves Program, Job Ready, Key Stone Club, and more. The programs provide knowledge for teens to develop vocational skills, career exploration, and mentoring, leadership skills, and the ability to resist addiction such as tobacco, drug, and alcohol (<http://bgca.org>, 2011).

Community of Atlantic City

The Atlantic City area has a growing demand for teen programs that help address the issues in need for help within the community. According to the 2010 U.S. Census Bureau, Atlantic City has relatively a young population. Although there is a job market

demand in the casino industry, Atlantic City has an unemployment rate that stands above state average.

The Atlantic City community faces many social problems such as poverty, unemployment, assisted housing, difficult family structures, and socio-economic problems (State of New Jersey Department of Law & Public Safety, 2000). According to Schinke, et al. (1992) “Drug activity within the public housing was 22% lower in sites that were served by a Boys and Girls Club when compared with sites not served by a Boys and Girls Club” (p. 13). While living in their neighborhood, teens witness the street violence, drug sales, and gang activity. “Without attractive opportunities to shape a productive future, these youth turn to the demands and the dangers of the street” (McLaughlin, Irby, & Langman, 1994, p. 8).

Chapter III

Review of the Literature

The Self-Authorship Baxter Magolda Theoretical Model

The self-authorship theoretical model was developed to promote self-authorship as a form of pedagogy in addition to subject mastery in higher education (Baxter Magolda, 1999). “Self-authorship extends beyond critical thinking or making informed judgments because it is not a skill; it is, rather, a way of making meaning of the world and one self” (p. 6).

Baxter Magolda’s self-authorship theoretical model originated from the constructive-developmental theory of meaning-making led by Robert Kegan (1994), on the “way students understand reflects the organizing principles they use to make meaning of their experience” (Baxter Magolda, 1999, p. 22). The constructive-developmental model concentrates on three major characteristics: epistemological, interpersonal, and intrapersonal.

Self-authorship, under the structure of constructive-developmental pedagogy, is supported through important principles of validation, learner capacity as individual constructor, situating learner’s experience, and defining meaningful constructive learning (Baxter Magolda, 1999). Situating learner’s experience is a key element in helping to bring the learners identity to learning. Defining learning through mutual exchange process maintains and reinforces learner’s participation in social construction knowledge. The principles represent self-authorship through encouraging learners to bring their experience and construct their own perspectives. The principles model connection through encouraging learners to connect to their own and others experience and ideas.

Under the constructive model (Baxter Magolda, 1992, 1999), students balance the autonomy toward internal beliefs, identities, and construction of relationships. This process was important in order to shift the learning method from authority dependence to self-authorship by challenging learners to see their creative reality in multifaceted terms.

In order to help learners to develop self-authorship, it is important to create lessons that encourage independent learning. “Knowledge is complex and socially constructed, one’s identity plays a role in crafting knowledge, and knowledge is mutually constructed via the sharing of experience” (p. xix). According to Baxter Magolda (1992), a powerful message in the students’ stories was the individual capability of developing their own unique voice. Their stories reflected personal learning experiences. Through exploration of knowledge and interpretation, students related learning with the aspects of their lives.

Origin

Kegan (1994) argued that meaning making is so fundamental to development that all changes throughout the life course stem from this process. Furthermore, Kegan contends that there is an internal structure that individuals use in constructing meaning that evolves over the life span in a predictable and systematic way (Ignelzi, 2000). Baxter Magolda (1999) used Kegan’s theory of development in developing self-authorship, since understanding the evolution of an individual’s meaning making provides insight into the individual’s sense of self. According to Kegan (1994), the development of the internal structure that individuals use to make meaning proceeds through a series of five stages that he refer to as orders of consciousness.

Kegan organizes each of his orders of consciousness into cognitive, interpersonal, and intrapersonal domains (Kegan, 1994). According to Piaget (1990), the child develops an ability to think abstractly and to make rational judgments about concrete or observable phenomena. In teaching the child, giving him/her the opportunity to ask questions and to explain things allows him/her to mentally manipulate information. Also, since the individual's sense of self is a product of a particular interpersonal context, it is not coherent across contexts. In other words, children see their world through their lens using their inner experience.

In agreeing with Kegan's (1982) development of children, Bandura (1997) goes one step further arguing that the children do not continue building senses merely of the action, but rather by observing others around them. Teachers and parents can create opportunities for children to grow by providing "an enriched physical environment, freedom of exploration, and varied mastery experiences" (p. 168). Although Bandura's (1997) approach is aimed at self-efficacy, there is enough evidence to connect with self-authorship where both authors agree in the same matters of learning engagement. While children engage in learning, they attend multiple sources of "information influenced by the nature of task, situational factors, characteristics' of their action, and the result they produce" (p. 170).

The structure for the constructive-developmental self-authorship pedagogy emerged from a longitudinal study done by Baxter Magolda (1992), in regard to "students' epistemological development or their assumptions about the nature, limits, and certainty of knowledge" (Baxter Magolda, 1999, p. 27). The study was based on data collected from 101 students at the Miami University (Ohio), beginning college in 1986.

The purpose of the study was “to trace epistemological development over the course of college and adulthood” (p. 27). The longitudinal study revealed those students’ stories and patterns. Taking those patterns into account has enhanced understanding of how particular experiences affected individual students. Furthermore, “their candid perceptions of what changed their thinking give rise to compelling ideas about how to transform educational practice” (Baxter Magolda, 1992, p. xiii).

The constructive-developmental pedagogy of self-authorship emerged from the longitudinal study of “knowing and reasoning” (Baxter Magolda, 1992). The three principles derived from the research, (validating students, situating learner, and defining learning), led the researcher to a second study focused on finding the process of implementation under the guide of constructive developmental pedagogy. “Reflections on my teaching during the course of the longitudinal study led to my attempts to promote self-authorship in my course via constructive-developmental pedagogy” (Baxter Magolda, 1999, p. 29).

Although, the second study took into consideration the previous longitudinal research in 1986-1992, the researcher’s approach this time was targeting courses with constructivist teachers who “desired to promote their students’ self-authorship” (p. 29). The researcher attended these courses during their meetings and seminars throughout the 1994 -1995 school year at the Miami University (Ohio). According to the researcher, an epistemic assumption evolved from the data where the students’ voices changed from “an echo of authority to an expression of the student’s own perspective” (p. 53). The researcher identified and grouped the patterns into three story lines: cognitive, intrapersonal, and interpersonal.

Developing the Model

“John Dewey’s (1916) conceptualization of education as the reorganization and reconstruction of experience, and Jean Piaget’s (1970) conceptualization of intellectual development as the reorganization and reconstruction of meaning stand at the foundation of many of these perspectives” (Baxter Magolda, & King, 2004, p. 30). The self-authorship theory developed from the “Knowing and Reasoning” research of Baxter Magolda (1992). “Constructing one’s own perspective requires encouragement, which often comes from interactions between teacher and student, between knowledge and experience” (p. xiv). The model evolved from the students’ assumption regarding the nature of knowledge. The Baxter Magolda’s self-authorship model took into consideration Kegan’s (1982, 1994) constructive-development of organizing principles of meaning. “These principles are how we make the meaning of our thinking, feeling, and social relating” (Baxter Magolda, 1999, p. 54).

Baxter Magolda (1992, 1999, 2004) developed the model of self-authorship based on contextual knowledge, personal values and identity, and capacity to engage in authentic relationships. Self-authorship principles are based on the internal individual capacity to define one's beliefs, identity, and social relations. The theory has emerged in the past 15 years (Baxter Magolda, 2001; Kegan, 1994). Although many lines of research historically address the components of self-authorship, Kegan coined the term in describing a shift of meaning-making capacity from outside the self to inside the self. He explained that a person takes values, beliefs, convictions, generalizations, ideals, abstractions, interpersonal loyalties, and intrapersonal states:

As objects or elements of its system, rather than the system itself; it does not identify with them but views them as parts of a new whole. This new whole is an ideology, an internal identity, a self-authorship that can coordinate, integrate, act upon, or invent values, beliefs, convictions, generalizations, ideals, abstractions, interpersonal loyalties, and intrapersonal states. (Kegan, 1994, p. 185)

Theoretical Foundation

Robert Kegan (1994), a leading constructive-developmental theorist, argues that self-authorship develops an “internal identity” (p. 185) that builds the foundation of future achievement and personal influence. Kegan's most significant contribution to the evolution of self-authorship lay in his advancing the constructive-developmental tradition to integrate Piaget's (1969) cognitive psychology. This constructive-developmental tradition surfaces the interconnectivity of how we view the world (the epistemological dimension), how we view ourselves (the intrapersonal dimension), and how we view social relations (the interpersonal dimension).

Self-authorship influences the ability to author individual thinking, imagination, and feeling, which are “integral components of complex ways of making meaning in all dimensions” (Baxter Magolda, 1999, p. 22). Kegan (1994) argued that “it is not enough for us to know what students understand...we must also know the way they understand it” (p. 278). The way students understand reflects on the organizing principles and gives meaning to their learning experience (Baxter Magolda, 2001; Kegan 1994).

According to Greene (1973),

To apprehend a film as a creative thing is to be somehow familiar with its grammar, the syntax of its image, the use of montage, flashback, and visual metaphors. Knowing what to look for, the viewer has a greatly increased opportunity to engage with it as art - and in engaging, to discover or rediscover aspects of self. (p. 294)

Developmental theorists (Baxter Magolda 2001; Kegan, 1994) call self-authorship the recognition of one's role in composing reality and establishment of the ability to do so effectively. Is it through that path of internal capacity that one's beliefs, identity, and social relations take place (Baxter Magolda, 2001; Kegan, 1994) argued that self-authorship is the foundation for critical thinking that requires people to "take charge of the concepts and theories of a course or discipline, marshalling on behalf of our independently chosen topic its internal procedures for formulating and validating knowledge" (p. 303).

Following a constructivist theory of learning, self-authorship (Baxter Margolis, 1999; Kegan, 1994) applies to the ability to organize the thoughts and feelings in context of the thoughts and feelings of the others, and literally make up his/her creativity (Baxter Magolda, 1999). Self-authorship is simultaneously cognitive (how ones makes meaning of knowledge), interpersonal (how one views oneself in relationship to the others), and intrapersonal (how one perceives one's sense of identity).

According to Kegan (1994) and Baxter Margolis (1999), self-authorship combines the ability to construct knowledge involving abstract, hypothetical thinking, and culture. Self-authorship explores the basic vision of the self and the authenticity while it leads the

reader to genuine self-hood and personal experience (Taylor, 2008). Dewey (1916), argued that “all communication is educative” (p. 6). Following Dewey’s remark that “the first approach to any subjects in school, if thoughts are to be aroused and not words required, should be as un-scholastic as possible” (p. 154). Self-authorship involves thinking that unites experience, activity, and reflection as important elements to learning. “To learn is not merely to accumulate data; it is to rebuild one’s world” (Grudin, 1990, p. 152). The narrative elements show the link and make the connection between the individual experience and self-authorship.

Narrative is deeply human, linguistic process, a kind of primal developmental impulse. We are storytelling creatures. We do not just tell stories; we live them, create them, define ourselves through which we construct our functioning personae and give meaning to our experience. (Hopkins, 1994, p. xvi)

Through the process of creating stories, images, and creative interaction the learning experience take personal notes that have individual meaning. Further, the method develops aesthetic ideas and knowledge in multiple varieties.

To explore a medium, to work with it, to try to express something seen or felt or heard is to come to understand, on some level, that visions are made real when they are transformed into perceptual realities and give an intelligent form. (Greene, 1978, p. 187)

Self-authorship involves imagination and creation of students that attend, shape, make sounds, rhythm, and fiction while creating individual meaningful work. In Stafford’s (1991) historical images argument, Rose (2007) added that “the construction of

scientific knowledge about the world has become more and more based on images” (p. 3). The integration of the creative self-authorship engages students directly in developing their own images, stories, and also a self-representation in the future of literacy. To introduce students toward self-authorship is to challenge their knowledge and encourage complex assumption. Freire (1989) thought of education toward critical thinking as the discovery of meaning, to be able to challenge, and transform if necessary. Pizzolato (2003) defined self-authorship as an “enduring way of understanding and orientating oneself to provocative situations in a way that recognizes the contextual nature of knowledge and balance the understanding with the development of one’s own internally defined goals and sense of self” (p. 798). Self-authorship promotes good volition that is presented in “various stages of life” (Pizzolato, 2003, p. 632).

Previous research showed the importance the creativity has in the daily lives of young children. Further, as Bruner, Oliver, and Greenfield (1966) suggest, there is a connection between creativities in representational skills when involving enacting, picturing, and symbolizing. In development, through the self-authorship process the learning takes place by exploring the “nature, limits, and certainty of knowledge” (Baxter Magolda, 2001, p. 25). Orlov (1982), a Russian physicist, argued that in creative thinking, the person potentially sees several versions simultaneously without completely realizing any of them, and the one version pops-up as the result of free choice.

Self-authorship research suggests that adults who experience oppression and marginalization develop self-authorship prior to or during their 20s (Baxter Magolda, 2001). In Torres's longitudinal study, students became self-authoring by trusting their internal voices to ground their negotiation of cultures and identity (Torres & Hernandez,

2007). Pizzolato (2003) found evidence of self-authorship among entering high-risk college students based primarily on the challenges they had encountered in striving to become college students. Their ability to maintain self-authorship in the face of continued marginalization in college depended on their coping skills (Pizzolato, 2004). These studies suggest that self-authorship is possible in the late teens and early 20s if the challenge and appropriate support are available. Integrated developmental models are emerging to articulate the complexities of self-authorship development (Abes & Jones, 2004; Baxter Magolda, 2001; Pizzolato 2003; Torres & Hernandez, 2007). “The possibility of developing self-authorship earlier than has typically been observed” (Hodge, Baxter Magolda, & Haynes, 2009, p.16) is important to open the possibility of further studies.

Impact of the Self-Authorship on Students’ Learning

Baxter Magolda (2001), suggests that students become self-authoring by trusting their internal voices, gaining sense of self and building confidence. Their ability to maintain self-authorship in college depended on their coping skills, and self-regulation (Pizzolato, 2004). Integrated developmental models emerged to articulate the complexities of self-authorship development (Abes, Jones, & McEwen, 2007). According to Baxter Magolda (1992), through self-authorship students’ knowledge evolved continually reconstructed on the “basis of new evidence and new contexts” (p. 189). Conversely, Clement (1992) suggests that children spontaneously begin to create their stories and develop their images. My study emphasized the importance of self-authorship pedagogy and helping children create and develop their own thinking.

The research cycle findings showed students' responses toward the self-authorship program was positive and data showed an increase in students' interest toward the program. Positive student engagement created an enthusiastic atmosphere that showed students' enjoyment and interest in the program. Throughout the cycles, data results showed overall growth on students' work. Students were able to freely explore their artistic abilities and created work that enriched their portfolio with a variety of individual work. In addition, the portfolio analysis data showed an increase in students' learning.

Theoretical Principles of the Self-Authorship

Self-authorship principles were based on the internal individual capacity to define one's beliefs, identity, and social relations. The theory had emerged in the past 15 years (Kegan, 1994; Baxter Magolda, 2001). As they progressed through their learning and experience, students moved away from thinking there was always a single right answer, and began to see that determining what was right required analysis of relevant evidence in light of the context (Baxter Magolda, 1992; Jones 2009; King & Baxter Magolda 2005). According to Baxter Magolda (2001), the development of self-authorship involved three distinct phases: (a) the crossroads, (b) becoming the author of one's own life, and (c) internal foundations. Crossroads were connected with students as they moved along the self-authorship continuum in need of self-definition. It is during this period of actively working to develop internal perspectives and self-definition that students become the author of their own lives. The internal foundation is actually a set of internally defined perspectives used to guide action and knowledge construction. As such, self-authorship is a way of communicating and orienting oneself to personal situations in

connection with the development of one's own personal experience that defined goals and sense of self (Baxter Magolda, 2001).

Although many lines of research have historically addressed the components of self-authorship, Kegan coined the term in describing a shift of meaning-making capacity from outside the self to inside the self. He explained that a person took values, beliefs, convictions, generalizations, ideals, abstractions, interpersonal loyalties, and intrapersonal states as:

...objects or elements of its system, rather than the system itself; it does not identify with them but views them as parts of a new whole. This new whole is an ideology, an internal identity, a self-authorship that can coordinate, integrate, act upon, or invent values, beliefs, convictions, generalizations, ideals, abstractions, interpersonal loyalties, and intrapersonal states. (Kegan, 1994, p. 185)

The concept of self-authorship learning is grounded in the constructive-developmental perspective of Piaget (1950) and Kegan (1994). Self-authorship enables learners to evaluate information critically, form their own judgments, and collaborate with others to act wisely. Further, it requires researchers to “take charge of the concepts and theories of a course or discipline, marshalling on behalf of our independently chosen topic its internal procedures for formulating and validating knowledge” (Kegan, 1994, p. 303). Students created work structures based on their experiences in regard to their surrounding world. Recognizing one’s role in composing reality and establishing the ability to do so effectively is what developmental theorists call self-authorship (Baxter Magolda, 2001; Kegan, 1994).

The Self-Authorship Program Initiative

As an initial step, I engaged students in a self-authorship creative program, by leading them in learning a new paradigm (Barr & Tagg, 1995). The research originated by emphasizing the design of constructive learning environments that encouraged students to construct their own creative story during an after-school program sponsored by the Boys & Girls Club of Atlantic City, New Jersey. In order to create and discover new ideas, I used a constructivist approach that:

Learners must possess an internal set of beliefs that guide decision making about knowledge claims, an internal identity that enables them to express themselves in socially constructing knowledge with others, and the capacity to engage in mutually interdependent relationships to assess others' expertise. (Hodge, et al. 2009, p. 19)

As a new teacher, leader, and a believer of constructivist learning, I studied self-authorship theoretical foundation and literature of Kegan (1994) and Baxter Magolda (1992; 1999; 2002). In the process, preliminary questions emerged such as: How can children grow through self-authorship? Why is self-authorship pedagogy important? How does self-authorship influence the students' confidence and sense of self?

Concept of the Study

I developed the self-authorship program targeting children ages 9 to 13 years old who were active members of the Boys & Girls Club of Atlantic City, New Jersey. The self-authorship program originated as an idea in order to enhance membership registration numbers and retain current students. The idea came as I was inspired while

watching students interact when creating “cool things” (as children said), small fragments of animation stories posted on You Tube©.

By observing their excitement over a simple creative idea, I proposed to the students that they could create their own work. Most of them answered with the question, “How can we?” Further, referring to the current literature on self-authorship, I noticed that there was a gap in the literature in targeting young children. I decided to develop a program which extended into a formal study of self-authorship. After opening a dialogue with the students, I came to the idea of introducing a self-authorship program, where the students created and explored their own stories.

I requested approval from administration to use the Club and the facility. After the program was approved and encouraged by the administration of the organization, it was introduced to the club member students’ ages 9 to 13 years old. The software designed for the self-authorship called *Animate Your World*© and *Animation-ish*©, was financed by education grants given to the Boys and Girls Club of Atlantic City. I carefully evaluated and selected the software programs before introducing them to the children.

The final decision on choosing *Animate Your World*© and *Animation-ish*© software for use in the self-authorship program was based on the principle of giving the students possibilities and freedom of choice on how they wanted to work and what program they wanted to explore. The idea of introducing *Animate Your World*© and *Animation-ish*© to the self-authorship program, was to attract, facilitate, and enhance students’ interest in the self-authorship program. The software facilitated my task by keeping track of how many times the students logged onto computer. Both software programs were developed targeting children ages 6 to 15 years old. The first software,

Animate Your World©, created interactive animation visual characters and emphasized the development of story and animation movies. The second software, *Animation-ish*©, emphasized visual drawing while developing characters, story, and animation movies.

Registration papers were designed for the students to log their names and were handed out to them anytime they wanted to attend the program. Story boards as visual storytelling tools were introduced for the visual medium. The self-author students were encouraged to develop stories on their own, using their original thoughts, concepts, ideas, characters, sounds, emotions, and languages. Also, students were helped to reach the goals of exploring self-authorship through the elements of storytelling, the interplay of graphics and animation, and the sequencing in a story.

All of these steps were included in the process of learning and making meaning. I encouraged the students to think about an idea or story that might have happened during the day in school or home, and to take notes. This way, the students came prepared with an outline story and their idea was discussed in the self-authorship program during the after-school period. Students were also encouraged to discuss the self-authorship program with their friends outside the club, family members, and teachers in their school. In addition, students were told that it was in their volition and right either to share the story, or the stories could remain anonymous.

This study was grounded as an action research study. Information was gathered through qualitative and quantitative means. The research evolved through cycles of observation, reflecting, and acting (McTaggart, 1997). Data were interpreted, communicated, and discussed during the reflection phase. Planning, implementation, and evaluation were examined during the action phases.

I developed an understanding through the use of participant observation in order to understand the research setting, the participants, and their behavior (Glesne, 2006). My intentions were to interact with the students as an internal investigator in order to create a welcoming atmosphere where students were encouraged to learn and create through their own experience while making individual meaning promoting self-authorship.

Chapter IV

Research Methodology

Introduction

Promoting learning through self-authorship, using constructive pedagogy, was the goal of the researcher. The purpose was to integrate self-authorship pedagogy in an after-school program, targeting children ages 9 to 13 years old. The research design was based upon Baxter Magolda (1999; 2001), constructive learning of self-authorship theory. I integrated a self-authorship program in the afterschool programs at the non-profit organization of the Boys & Girls Club of Atlantic City. The study examined students' responses to the self-authorship program, the impact self-authorship had on students' learning, the impact self-authorship had on after-school programs, and my leadership support and influence on students and the program.

Following a participatory action research design, information was collected using participant observation, interviews, and collection of file notes, logs, document analysis, portfolios, and exhibition. Validation of the evidence was derived by the triangulated, holistic approach (Creswell, 2009) participant testimony, pre-test and post-test, narrative suggestions, observation, and questionnaire. A total of 30 students were grouped into the program according to their ages. Students were organized into two groups. Eighteen students' ages 9 to 11 years old were grouped together in group number I, and twelve students' ages 12 to 13 years old were placed on group number II. The first group was admitted to the self-authorship program between the hours 3:30 p.m. to 4:30 p.m. The second group was admitted to the self-authorship program between 4:30 p.m. to 5:30 p.m.

The program was organized using three main creative learning methods: drawing, writing, and computer animation. Figure 4.1 illustrates the self-authorship program diagram of collecting creative work.

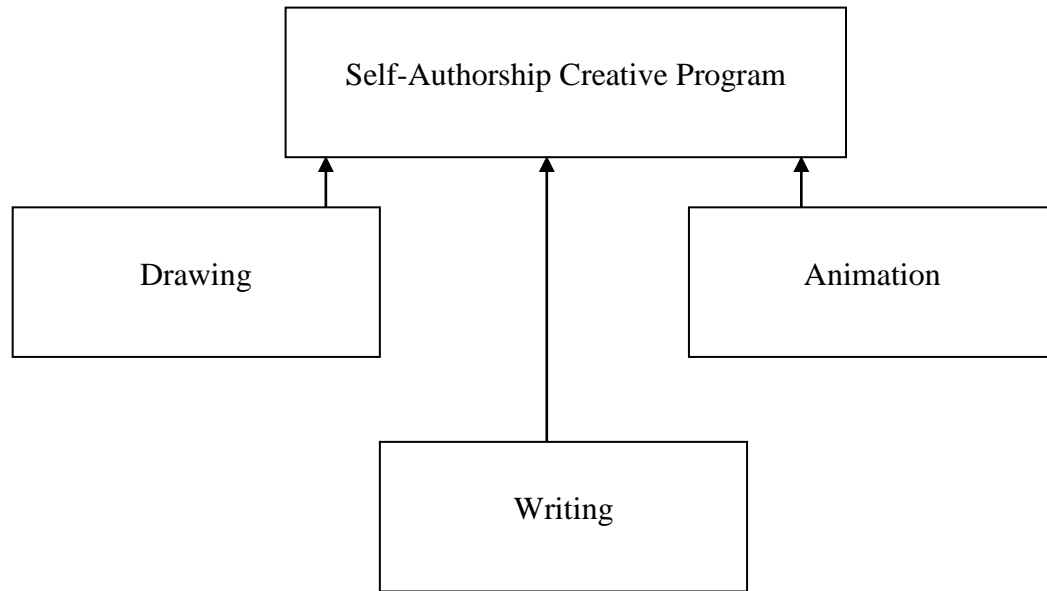


Figure 4.1. The Self-Authorship Creative Program.

Within the umbrella of these three main learning mediums, students collected portfolios of their creative work such as drawings, paintings, poems, essays, and animation movies. Students were given instructions while using these mediums so they could create, write, design, and develop animation by incorporating visual images and narratives. Using technology as a medium, students were introduced to computer-based creative programs such as *Animate Your World*© provided by *Cartoonnetwork*©, and *Animatish*©.

In order to better understand and answer the research questions, I used a mixed method of qualitative and quantitative data collection. A qualitative data collection method (Creswell, 2009) was used to answer the two research questions in regard to response and impact of self-authorship. Data collection included observation, questionnaire, pre-and-post-test, and portfolio evaluation. During the study time, I observed students using the self-authorship pedagogy, detecting and monitoring signs of students' growth and learning.

Quantitative data collection was used to address the third research question regarding the effects self-authorship had on the afterschool program. A survey was completed by 15 employees working or volunteering at the Boys & Girl Club of Atlantic City. The survey measured the impact of self-authorship within the natural flow of the after-school programs at the Boys & Girls Club of Atlantic City from the staff point-of-view.

Mixed Method Research Design

An action research mixed method of qualitative and quantitative research design was considered as essential for the purpose of this research initiative. Patton (1990), assert that researchers can successfully combine qualitative and quantitative approaches. Deriving from a positivist paradigm (quantitative) and interpretive naturalist (qualitative) paradigm (Glesne & Peshkin, 1992) different instrumentation and procedures were used in order to find the valid data. Figure 4.2 illustrates the mixed method research self-authorship data collection path used in the study.

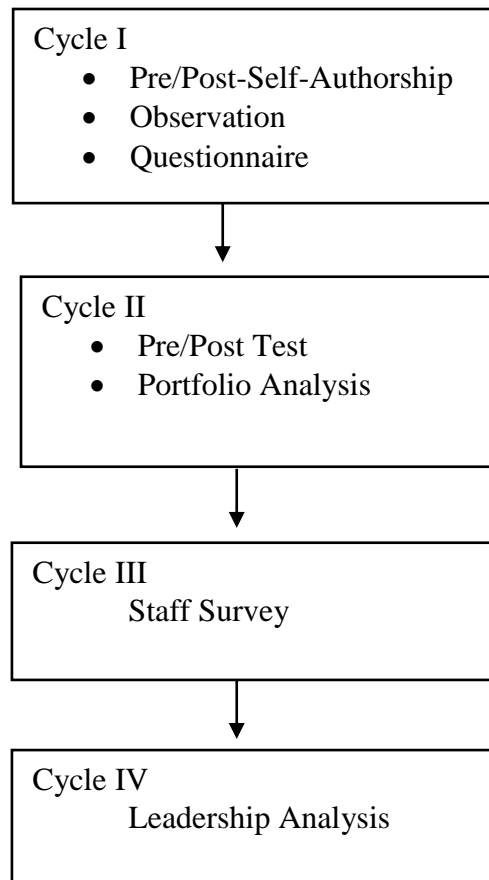


Figure 4.2. Mixed Methods Self-Authorship Data Collection.

Pre/post-self-authorship observation, questionnaire, and pre/post-tests methods were used to measure students' responses to self-authorship and the impact the self-authorship program had on their learning progress. The staff survey questions were designed to answer the research questions measuring the impact the self-authorship had on after-school program. Overall the cycles were designed to organize and analyze data following the research questions. Throughout each cycle the data were evaluated, reviewed, and progressed to the next cycle. The qualitative approach gave the inside view of the active change progress in response to the self-authorship pedagogy approach. This

process involved observation, keeping journals, conducting interviews, recording journals, group gatherings, and electronic portfolio evaluations.

Qualitative Method

Part of this study used an emergent, exploratory, inductive qualitative approach that addressed the research questions measuring the students' response to the self-authorship approach and the impact the self-authorship approach had on students learning. Within the qualitative mode, I followed the steps of inquiry (Marshall & Rossman, 1980) where reality was socially constructed in its environment, student point of view was encouraged, interpretation of personal thinking was expected and facilitated, descriptive notation was systematically recorded, and researcher involvement was constructive.

I employed participant observer strategies (Wolcott, 2002) such as observation in general, observation in search for paradox, and observation in search for problems in Cycle I. This cycle aimed at uncovering students' attitudes, feelings, and behavior. Students' experiences, gains, and interactions with the self-authorship program, were recorded using two observations, pre-and-post observation. The first observation was taken before self-authorship was introduced, while the second observation took place after the self-authorship was introduced. They were identified as pre-self-authorship and post-self-authorship data. The goal of this procedure was to detect any problems toward the existing methods of teaching in the after-school program and to notice any changes in students' growth.

The observation included note taking, participation, and the records of events and students' conversations. Field notes were descriptive and analytical (Glesne, 2006). Each

step of data collection was integrated and interdependent with each other. Data analyses under qualitative research followed the process of categorization, description, and synthesis. Data reduction process and coding system was used for the description and interpretation of students' responses to the self-authorship approach, and the impact of self-authorship on students' learning. The components of qualitative method design (Wiersma, 1995) are summarized in Figure 4.3.

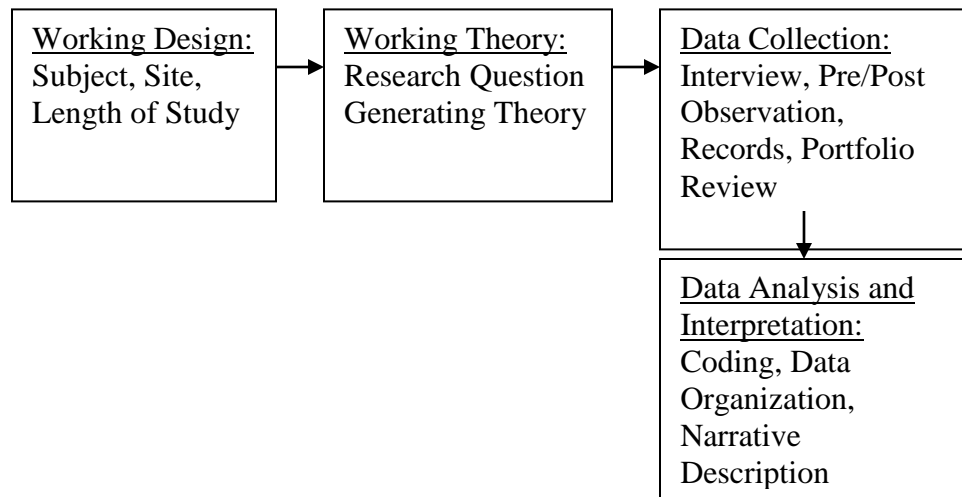


Figure 4.3. The Self-Authorship Components of Qualitative Method Design.

Cycle II analyzed data derived from pre-test, post-test and students' portfolios analysis targeting the second research question of measuring the effects self-authorship had on student learning. Students' portfolios were scored by table analysis using Conceptual Content Characteristic originated by Tuman (1999) and Formal Language Characteristics. Cycle II was organized into two phases that were designed to collect data at different times during the program. Data were compared by detecting any changes or

gains in students' growth. Figure 4.4 describes the data analysis procedure followed during the Cycle II.

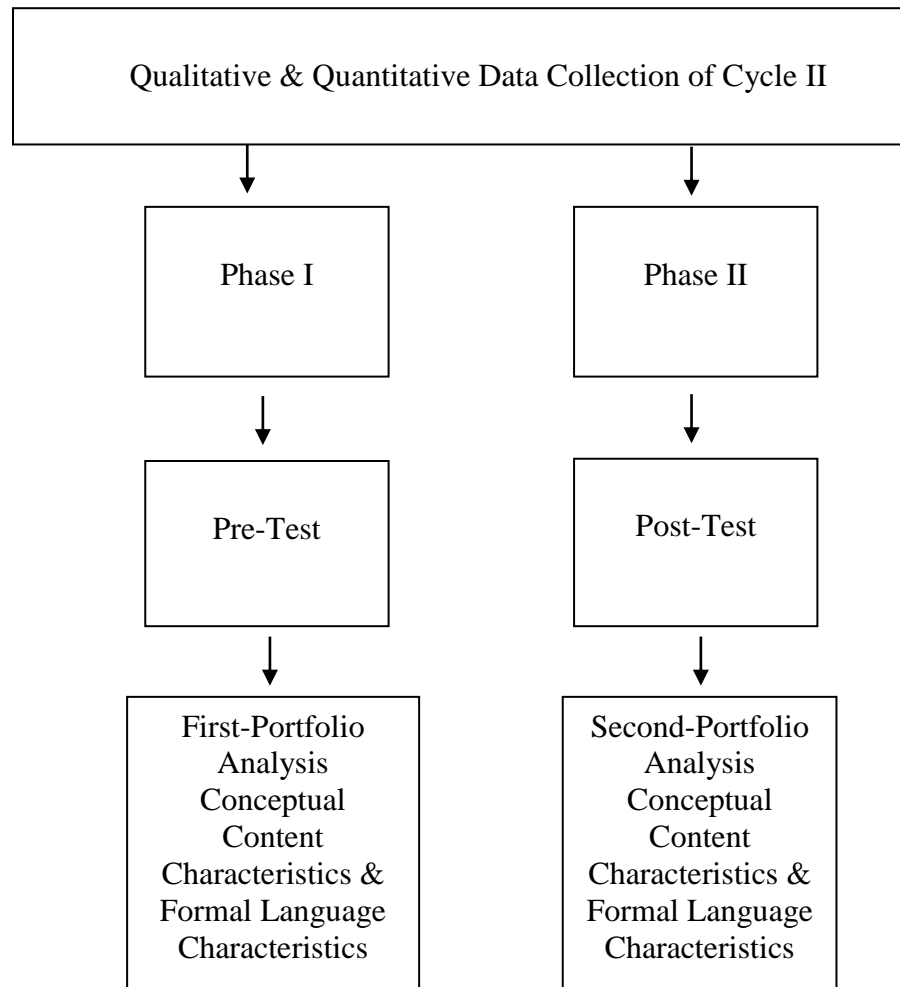


Figure 4.4. Qualitative & Quantitative Data Collection of Cycle II.

Mix method of qualitative and quantitative data collection was used during the Cycle II using assessment methods of pre-test, post-test, and portfolio analysis of 30 children ages 9 and 13 years old. The outcomes from the data analysis of pre-test, post-test, and portfolio were recorded on a detailed table and compared on their mean, median,

and standard deviation. Student work during the program was collected and organized into individual portfolios corresponding to the phase I and phase II. Student portfolios were collected and judged independently by me, as main investigator, based on a scoring rubric (Appendix I).

Quantitative Method

A quantitative method was used to address the research question: What impact did self-authorship have on afterschool program? The method was used to control and explain the variance in order to “enhance the interpretation of results so the researcher can tell the effects, if any, the variables are having” (Wiersma, 1995, p. 101). Survey data were collected from the employees and volunteers working during the after-school time period, at the Boys and Girls Club of Atlantic City. Cycle III gathered and discussed information during the after-school programs offered at the Boys & Girls Club of Atlantic City.

Using the quantitative mode, I followed the steps of inquiry on identified variables, measured relationship, generalization, prediction, casual explanation, formal instrumentation, component analysis, and numerical indices. The components of quantitative method design (Wiersma, 1995) are summarized in Figure 4.5.

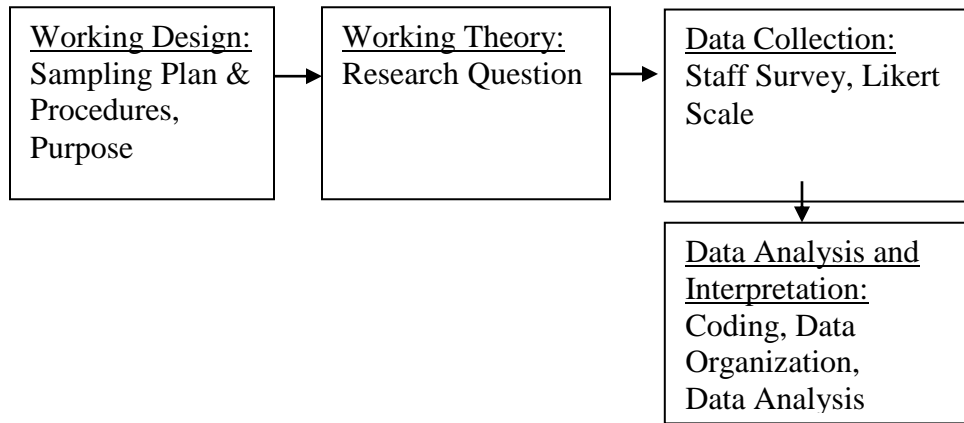


Figure 4.5. The Self-Authorship Components of Quantitative Method Design.

Action Research

According to Sagor (2000), action research is a disciplined process of inquiry conducted by and for those taking action. This research followed action research where I continuously took action in order to improve or correct the outcome derived from each cycle. As guided by action research, the students were informed of the purpose of the study. As the study progressed, authentic participation was pursued (McTaggart, 1997) by sharing the way the study was conceptualized and practiced. As a contributor in the action research, I followed an extended understanding through the use of the participant observation method. “The main outcome of participant observation is to understand the research setting, its participants, and their behavior” (Glesne, 2006, p. 51).

Under the participatory action research, I aimed at attracting students toward the self-authorship program and helped improve their work while maintaining collaboration within the institutional and cultural context of the Boys & Girls Club of Atlantic City. The research design was organized into four cycles using (Finn, 1993) a participatory

action research approach. Each cycle collected data so as to answer the research questions of students respond to a self-authorship pedagogical approach, impact on students' learning and on after-school program, and overall the influence on espouse leadership. Figure 4.6 describes the cycles' flow during the study.



Figure 4.6. Action Research Data Collection.

Research Validity

To increase validity, I followed the verification procedures as outlined by Creswell (1998). The research was designed to follow a prolonged engagement and persistent observation in order to understand and develop trust with the participants. Triangulation by using multiple data collection methods was followed during data collection. Repeated interviews and testimonies were used throughout the course of the

study (Glesne, 2006). These steps were helpful to me in order to improve the relationships between myself and participants and also to “allow the participants’ time to think more deeply about their own feelings, reactions, and beliefs” (p. 38). A collection of writings and notes with descriptive language were used as part of the research analysis.

Instrumentation Design

Data Collection. I gained access to the data by assuming the role of participant observer, using interactive techniques with the students who were studied. Computer access were be used for collecting any electronic data and also for inputting data. All the data were recorded using a Microsoft Excel© work sheet and Microsoft Word©. Approval from the administrative staff at the Boys & Girls Club of Atlantic City was provided (Appendix B) in order to have full access of the data collection. All participants names involved remained confidential. The researcher was the only person permitted to access the confidential information given to me during the research study.

Data gathered from qualitative and quantitative approach were reviewed at the end of each cycle in order to evaluate the findings. The process was continuous and reflective in reference to the change in personal leadership. Field notes helped accumulate detailed information about the program and behaviors of students. Through observation, I gained insight into the dynamics within the program implementation.

Moreover, in order to obtain authentic assessment, the collection of portfolios and exhibition (Paulson, Paulson, & Meyers, 1991) were used as data. I collected each individual student’s product including work, in progress on an electronic portfolio. Students provided a final product with positive reinforcement. Students’ final self-

authorship products had creative and artistic pieces, computer graphics, animation interaction, and narrative writings.

Observation, field notes, and journals were written and recorded by me. As a participant, I observed in the field everything that was happening by taking notes. I used observation strategies such as observation in general, observation in search for paradox, and observation in search for problem identification. The data were tape recorded and saved on computer files for later transcription.

Data Collection Procedure

Every child participant received a parent permission form signed for approval (Appendix C). Because the students were part of a bilingual population, a two language (Spanish and English) version of the consent form was prepared for their parents (Appendix C). Also, parents' signed forms were collected from the Boys & Girls Club as admission into the club and release forms if the program is used within the club walls. Each participant was given the freedom to decline or withdraw from participation at any time. All participants were assured that their names and any image, pictures, or video would not be revealed to the public. An IRB approval from Rowan University was also collected in reference to the research (Appendix A).

Data Analysis and Interpretation Data Analysis

Scoring tables were developed analyzing students' first and second portfolios using Conceptual Content Characteristic originated by Tuman (1999) and Formal Language Characteristics designed by me. Students' creative work was investigated for detection of any changes and signs of learning growth, while their work was evaluated and scored based on skills, complexity, elements of design, creativity, and originality. To

each element were assigned numbers from low (1), to medium (2), and high (3) (Appendix J). The scoring rubric was designed and used to assess and determine the quality of the performance of each student while participating at the after-school self-authorship program. Data also were recorded to evaluate the students' frequency of the program use and the quality of the progressive learning.

All the data were inputted into SPSS 16.0 computer software for data analysis. SPSS output data analysis was used for calculating tables, descriptive statistics, and correlation. In addition, Microsoft Office© and Excel Software© were used to record and transfer the data analysis.

The Researcher's Role

My role, as researcher, was to facilitate the learning of students as the study progressed through the research cycles. During my participation in the self-authorship program, I collected data using qualitative and quantitative methods. I also instructed children how to use the animation programs in the computer as the first step of introduction on the self-authorship program.

Setting

The study was conducted at the Boys & Girls Club of Atlantic City facilities, Chelsea Unit. The Boys & Girls Club of Atlantic City operated after-school programs every day, in accordance with the school year schedule. The research was conducted twice a week from the 3:30 p.m. to 4:30 p.m. and 4:30 p.m. to 5:30 p.m. during the regular club hours.

Subjects

The subjects of this action research were 30 students attending the after-school program at the Boys & Girls Club in Atlantic City, Chelsea Unit. All students were registered members and had free access to the computer lab during a specific time periods of 3:30- 4:30 p.m. and 4:30- 5:30 p.m. Participants attended Atlantic City schools in ranged from ages 9 to 13 years old. Figure 4.7 illustrates action research cycles.

Research Cycles

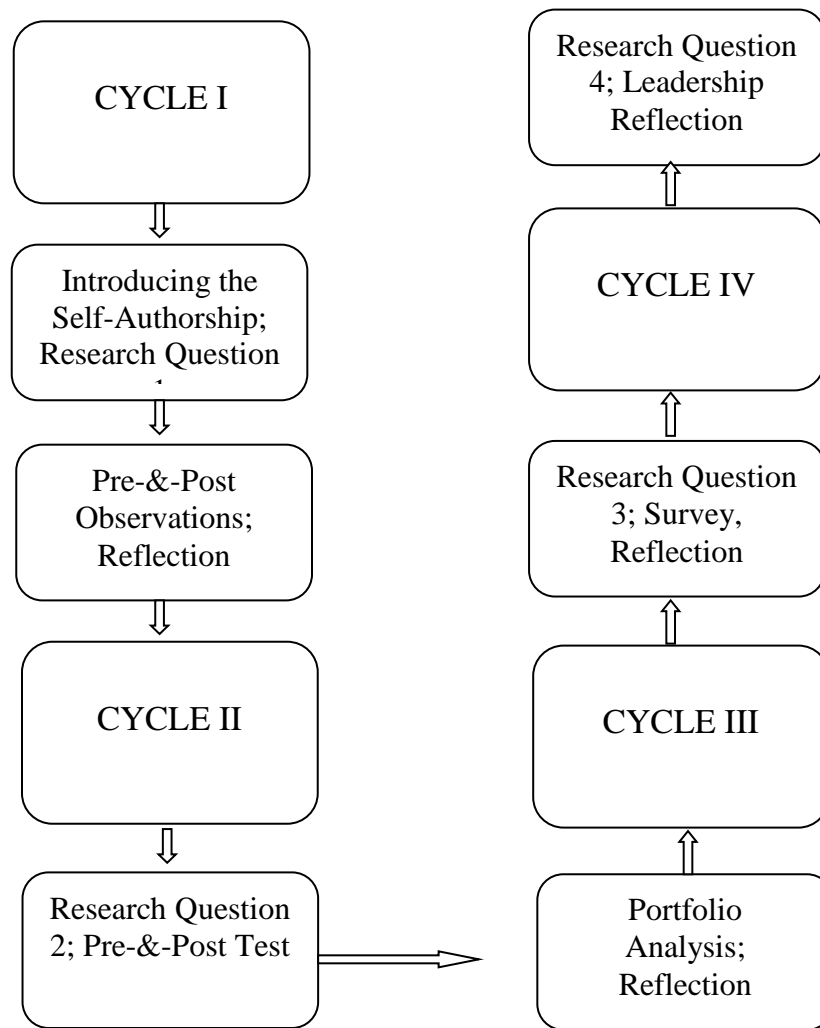


Figure 4.7. Action Research Cycles.

Cycle I – Introducing Self-Authorship Learning Program

This cycle started with my introduction of self-authorship, theoretical agreement, site, timeline, and access. During the Cycle I, familiarized myself with the after-school programs students' needs. Pre-observation was used to detect any internal students' behavior and relationship with the existing after-school programs. Further, self-authorship was introduced following the constructive pedagogy, based on the theoretical work of Baxter Magolda (1999, 2001).

The purpose of the Cycle I was to develop and implement the self-authorship program at the after-school community program. Basic assessment was derived from pre-observation in order to create a visual map and a better understanding of the situation. I introduced new instructional strategies using three components of learning methods such as writings, drawings, and animations including media technology with the self-authorship program. Other than the creative part, instructional lessons were enriched by introducing animation programs such as *Animate Your World*© and *Animation-ish*™. Guidelines for using the programs and technology were introduced and children's participations were facilitated. During this period, a trusting relationship was built with the student participants at the Boys & Girls Club of Atlantic City.

This study cycle used participant-observation pre- and -post observation (Glesne, 2006; Patton 2002), as methods aimed at uncovering students' attitudes, feelings, and behaviors during the after-school program. In order to record students' experiences and interaction with the self-authorship program, the observation time was divided into two parts. The first observation was taken before self-authorship was introduced, while the second observation took place after the self-authorship was introduced. They were

identified on data as pre-self-authorship and post-self-authorship. Research activities such as participant observation, field notes, and interviews were examined followed by revision for findings and outcomes.

Cycle II – Creating the Learning Environment and Reviewing

During the action research Cycle II, I continued to take action in order to analyze and evaluate the outcome derived from the findings. The purpose of Cycle II was to examine the effects self-authorship had on students learning. My intentions were to clearly illustrate and deepen the understanding of the self-authorship program and the impact it had on students' self-growth. In order to assess students' knowledge before and during the self-authorship program I designed a test with 10 questions (Appendix H). Throughout this Cycle II, phases collected data from pre-test and students' portfolio analysis and post-test. The intent of Cycle II was to detect any changes and effects on students' work. Phases were designed to expose data findings on students' progress during the program participation.

Pre-test and post-test recorded data monitored the self-authorship program progress of students. Portfolios were collected and investigated from the students to check for signs of changes and growth on their learning. Students' growth work was analyzed by investigating their individual work collected into a portfolio. In addition conceptual content characteristics table (Tuman, 1999) and formal language characteristics tables were designed to analyze students' creative work.

Cycle III – Delivering and Revising

Cycle III of this study examined the impact self-authorship had on afterschool program targeting the third research question. Utilizing a survey the study took into

consideration the views of staff working and volunteering at the Boys & Girls Club of Atlantic City. The survey used in this cycle sought to detect any changes or impact the self-authorship program had at the staff of Boys & Girls Club.

Cycle IV – Ending and Learning

Cycle IV discussed my leadership including pedagogy, self-reflection, and influence on self-authorship program. Within this cycle, I provided insights on self-authorship pedagogical method distinctive to my personal style and aesthetic thinking. Because the research explored my growth as a leader and change agent, reflections and insights were captured by me. As part of educational leadership studies I labeled my leadership under three major paradigms: constructivist, multicultural, and creative.

Constructivist, multicultural, and creative leadership described in this cycle were integrated as part of the Research Question 4. The analysis in Cycle IV included life experience, and rapport with pedagogical and aesthetic style were provided insights that were unique to the action research. I considered individual changes critical issues such as the role of leadership and culture in shaping the researcher's paradigm, and the interrelationship of researcher and those participating in the research study.

Chapter V

Action Research Cycle I

Introduction

The purpose of Cycle I was to examine pedagogical change at an afterschool community program and to develop and implement a self-authorship program. I introduced self-authorship under the constructive pedagogy, based on theoretical work of Baxter Magolda (1999, 2001). To gather information about the self-authorship program I followed a triangulated holistic approach (Creswell, 2009). In this cycle, data were collected utilizing observations and a survey. The analysis of qualitative data gave knowledge into the ways student engaged and captivated the self-authorship program.

During Cycle I, in addition to analyzing and reflecting on the data, I revised my role as a participant in action research by teaching and interacting with the students. While, I introduced the self-authorship program, I also developed a trusting relationship (Marshall, 2003) with the students at the Boys & Girls Club of Atlantic City. Under my leadership paradigm, I provided a pedagogical platform to support the students during the self-authorship program and their knowledge gain.

The method of participant-observation and a survey (Glesne, 2006; Patton 2002), were used to uncover students' perceptions, feelings, and behavior. In order to record students' experiences and interaction with the self-authorship program, the observation time was divided into two parts. The first observation was taken before the self-authorship was introduced, while the second observation took place after the self-authorship was introduced. Both were identified as pre-self-authorship and post-self-authorship data. Group activity was recorded and observed during the post-observation.

Further, a questionnaire was designed and conducted with the 30 children participating in the self-authorship program. A total of 10 questions were asked targeting the research question of how did the students respond to the self-authorship program.

Cycle I findings showed a positive increase in students' attitudes toward the program. Data showed students interest also grew toward the after-school program participation. Students' attendance increased and their opinion toward the program was positive. The observation and questionnaire showed students' engagement increased in addition to their overall enthusiasm about the self-authorship program.

Cycle I – Introducing Self-Authorship Learning Program

Research Question 1: How do the students respond to self-authorship pedagogical approach?

During Cycle I, I introduced the self-authorship program to students at the Boys & Girls Club of Atlantic City afterschool program activity during the hour the 3:30 p.m. to 4:30 p.m. and 4:30 p.m. to 5:30 p.m. twice a week. Prior, to after-school program introduction, a pre-self-authorship observation of students engagement in the after-school and a survey was administered with the goal of understanding and measuring students' responses to the self-authorship program approach. The first step of the action plan was getting involved personally with the computer programs. My intention was to capture the natural flow of the after-school context as the programs were implemented. In order to do so, I needed to secure permission to conduct the study from the Boys and Girls staff (Appendix B). The director was informed about my research intentions and the necessary steps of collecting data. As the first step, two observations were conducted. A pre-self-authorship observation was scheduled in the month of November 2008. The self-

authorship program was introduced in the month of January 2009. The time frame between the months of February and March of 2009 was considered the self-authorship implementation period. Post-self-authorship observation and the survey were conducted in the month of May 2009, during the after-school hours of the 3:30 p.m. to 4:30 p.m. and 4:30 p.m. to 5:30 p.m. Figure 5.1 shows the overall Cycle I data time frame.

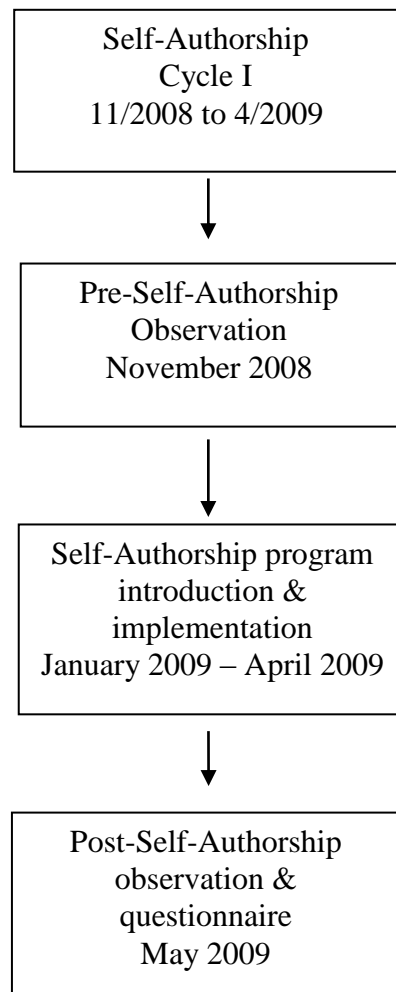


Figure 5.1. The Self-Authorship Cycle I Research Time Frame.

Discussion: Why Consider Pre-Self-Authorship and Post-Self-Authorship

Observation?

While volunteering and working five hours per week, I became familiar with the Atlantic City Boys & Girls Club and the programs running during the afterschool period between the hours the 3:30 p.m. to 4:30 p.m. and 4:30 p.m. to 5:30 p.m. During that period, while following the instructions and learning gained in the Leadership Seminar Class at Rowan University, I looked at children's responses to the existing programs at the Boys & Girls Club of Atlantic City, such as computer, art, and reading. My intention was to detect any problem toward the existing methods of teaching in the after-school program, and evaluating students' behavior using technology.

From the beginning, I noticed disconnection between the existing teaching method and students' learning or interest in the various programs. While I began looking at literature and initiated the idea of developing a self-authorship program, pre-self-authorship observation became necessary in order to compare and evaluate preliminary responses to a self-authorship pedagogical approach. Pre-self-authorship and post-self-authorship observations became the foundation and important point of reference in shaping the self-authorship program during the Cycle I.

Students' Profile: Pre-Self-Authorship Observation Narrative

The Boys & Girls Club of Atlantic City, Chelsea Unit was located at the Chelsea area of Atlantic City. The building entrance is through Sovereign Avenue, one block away from the Sovereign Avenue School. I arrived around 3:00 p.m., and the first thing I noticed was that all the children signed their names on the attendance login sheet. After a

short snack and homework, students scattered throughout the building to play with any game they could find available.

The atmosphere was quite welcoming filled with the children's voices. There were drawings of children around the walls and also posters of children participating at other Boys & Girls in America. It was already 4:00 p.m., and the club was filled with boys and girls ages 6-13 years old. Meanwhile, the children were scattered around the two story building. Ten children were sitting in groups of five, talking to each other, four other children were running back and forth from the first floor to the second floor, where 25 children were gathered at the game room.

A group of five students, two boys and three girls were helping each other finish their homework. One of the students in the group was helping a younger boy by pointing at the picture in front of him and spelling out the words. The boy showed signs of stress by taking long pauses and biting his lips creating red marks. Instead of answering, he would move his feet up and down and shift in his seat. The other two girls seating next to him began repeating the sentence in Spanish.

Ten minutes later they all left the table and went to the second floor at the computer room providing 10 Window 2000© desktop computers. There were six children already in the computer room. All of the children were playing children games on the computer. They were all playing the same game. Although other programs were offered by the club staff such as art and reading, there were signs of indifference toward the actual program. Students expressed words of "boring," "don't like to read that," "Oh, I read that ones." The ones that read the short story, given to them by the staff, read it very fast once, and closed the book.

Most of the children wanted to go to the computer room, as they volunteered by raising their hands when asked about program preferences. Although, the computer room activity seemed to attract most of the children, I noticed that all the children used the activity to play computer games. They also showed signs of frustration when the computers functioned poorly or were very slow to upload the game of the choice would “freeze up,” or they simply didn’t know how to operate the computer. Students commented “I need help,” “I don’t know what happened,” “It’s not working,” “that’s it, I’m leaving,” “this is boring, nothing works.” These responses suggested high stress with the provided computer activity.

Pre-Self-Authorship Situation Reflection

Although the after-school programs, such as reading, computer activity, games, and art activity were provided by the Boys & Girls Club of Atlantic City (BGCAC) for the children ages 9 to 13, the facility seemed to have lost the ability to attract students into the programs. The pedagogical structure seemed to contribute to a disconnection between the program approach and children’s interest. Evidence supporting this based on the students’ behavior when not wanting to participate or continue in an activity provided to them.

According to the Boys & Girls Club of Atlantic City (BGCAC, 2009) the activities during the after-school other than recreation, were designed to engage students in after-school learning. During my pre-self-authorship observation the children were active in the recreation and all the computers were used by children for gaming only. The absence of any trained teaching staff also contributed to poor pedagogical implementation of the actual programs. The students were continually asking for help in

the computer room. Some of them gave up and switched from one activity to another without any structured learning guidance.

Based upon my reflection of pre-self-authorship observation, I came to a conclusion that in order to help students to engage and be effective in after-school learning programs a new pedagogical method was needed, that would support the Boys & Girls Club staff limitation, and at the same time help guide the students to become more self-reliant and independent learners.

First Changes Toward the Self-Authorship Program at Boys & Girls Club

My intention of change in the organization of Boys & Girls Club was to bring a new idea toward pedagogical method to the after-school program. Since the BGCAC could not provide licensed specialized teachers (BGCAC, 2009), I proposed to the administrators, that they could refine their after-school program by using the self-authorship pedagogical method. The self-authorship method (Baxter Magolda, 1992, 1999, 2002) was selected for use with children because its constructive design emphasized a learning environment that encouraged students to construct their own ideas, guide and set internal beliefs. In addition the program enabled students to express themselves in socially constructing knowledge and developed individual capacity to engage in mutual relationships with others (Hodge, Baxter Magolda, & Haynes, 2009).

While the self-authorship conversion was being developed, computer upgrades were needed. Since the computer room seemed to be the preferable place for the children, I used it for the self-authorship program. The computers were upgraded from old desktops to new Windows XP©, donated to the Boys & Girls Club by the Biemount Foundation.

The Self-Authorship Program Introduction

Self-authorship was introduced during the after-school program at the Boys & Girls Club of Atlantic City. The program was introduced to the children by a series of presentations. Children were invited to see samples of animation movies created during the presentation. Brochures informing the children of the new program were distributed throughout the club. Thirty students were voluntarily signed up for the program. Students' parents were informed about the program and my research. A consent form was distributed to the parents who gave permission for their children to participate.

The self-authorship program was designed based on three core activities including animation, creative writing, and drawing. A time table was designed in order to introduce the students to the program. The meeting time was reserved for time period of 3:30 p.m. to 4:30 p.m. and 4:30 p.m. to 5:30 p.m. All of the student participants alternated between the animation activity, writing activity, and art activity. The animation activity was based on the use of the animation creative program *Animate Your World*© and *Animatish*©. The creative writing was based on poetry and short essay writing. The freehand drawings were part of the creative process of making short animation movies. Figure 5.2 shows the three components of the self-authorship program: creative writing, creative drawing, and computer animation.

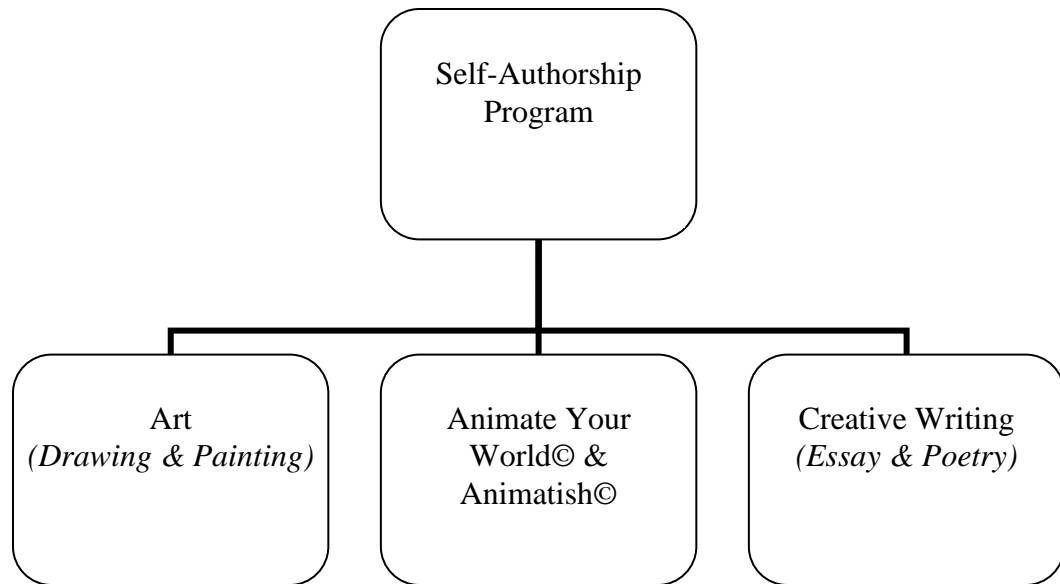


Figure 5.2. The Self-Authorship Program Diagram.

Students were encouraged to resolve and make personal decisions about their projects. I guided and encouraged the students by posting helpful comments and suggestions through a set of constructive questions such as: How would you change that? What would you do to change that? How do you think the story goes? What happened in the end of the story? What words can you use to describe it better?

During the creative work students were instructed to tell a story including elements such as: visual setting, characters, a beginning and development of a plot or problem, and an original way the plot or problem was resolved. Students could choose one of the predesigned pictures provided in *Animate Your World*© software or design their own using the *Animatish*©. Hand-outs with instructions were given to students to organize their ideas (Appendix G).

In *Animate Your World*©, students were able to select from 16 background designs to determine where the story took place. For example, students could select a

school yard background design if their story took place at a school. Other scenes were in the classroom where the characters could take shape and be developed into a story. Creating and developing characters in the stories is one of the benefits of the self-authorship program. By creating their own characters, students could personalize their movies. When using *Animate Your World*©, students could choose from predesigned characters. There were six “animated actors” who could be used to play the parts of the characters. While in *Animatish*©, students were encouraged to draw their own characters inspired by their personal experience.

The Self-Authorship’s Instructional Learning Pedagogy

At the beginning of the self-authorship program, students were encouraged to be self-motivated, problem solvers, and finding personal meaning in their work. They could discover how things are created or related, independently find problem solutions, share ideas, and demonstrate the creative work to their other peers. Using the self-authorship pedagogy, I instructed, exposed, and provided students with a variety of media designed to inspire the students’ interest. The students were offered assistance as needed and were guided to ask questions leading toward problem solving. Positive communication, encouragement, and appreciation toward the students work was emphasized by me. Students were encouraged to work individually and were evaluated based on the product they produced.

Figure 5.3 shows the instructional approach of the self-authorship program to stimulate self-problem-solving and self-motivation. In order to stimulate a problem-solving idea an instructional guide was designed for the self-authorship learning pedagogy.

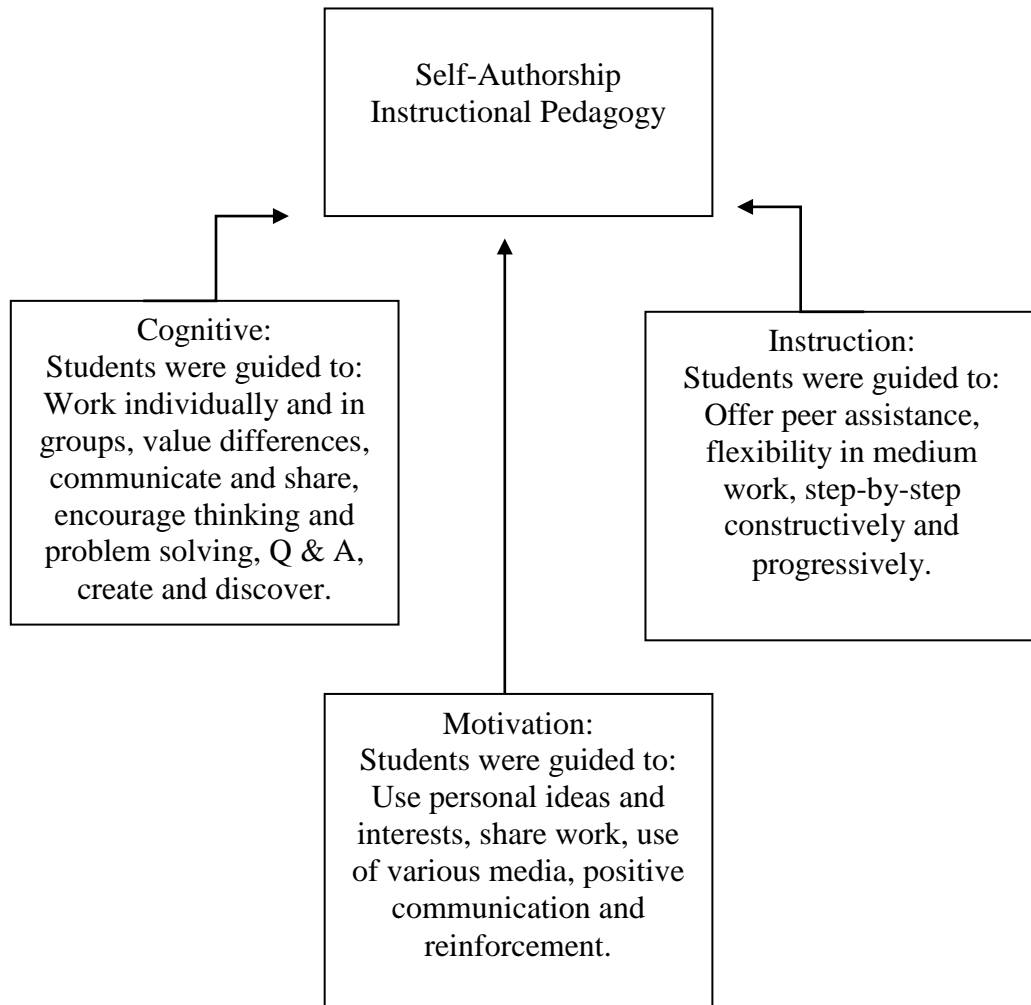


Figure 5.3. The Self-Authorship Instructional Pedagogy.

Guiding questions were introduced to help students learn the three main components of the self-authorship program: creative writing, creative drawing, and computer animation.

Guiding questions were purposely designed to help students develop their own work.

1. Do you want to set up the plot/problem so the viewers get to know your characters?

2. Which character or characters will be on the screen? What will they be doing and what will they say?
3. How will your characters' expressions, words, and actions mix together to begin your story?
4. What visual description and color design would you give to your story?

The next part of developing a story was to set up the situation or plot. Students were encouraged and guided to ask questions such as:

1. What interesting event is happening with your characters?
2. Were the characters serious, funny, dangerous, strange, or more?
3. Should you build up to the plot of the story?
4. Why do certain characters get involved?
5. What character behavior was helpful?
6. How can your character help to solve the problem?
7. What will be the characters' actions in the story?
8. What words or expressions will they use?
9. What happens to end your story?

Instructions were given in the beginning of each session. Questions about their school day, what did they learn, how did they do, and so on were asked to encourage students to connect to their stories, and self-motivate them toward their own creativity. Each student was assisted if they asked for help on how to run the *Animate Your World*© and *Animatish*© program in the computer in order to create the short movies. All work was saved on a program file called "student animation." At the end of the month, the

students who had the most work saved were rewarded with dollar coupon that could be redeemed at the Boys & Girls Club shop.

The Self-Authorship Students' Observation Narrative

There were 30 students signed in the after-school program, 15 girls and 15 boys. Since the computer room had only 10 laptop computers students were organized into two groups. Students age 9 to 11 years old were grouped together in group number I, where students age 12 to 13 years old were placed in group number II. The first group was admitted to the self-authorship program between the hours of 3:30 p.m. to 4:30 p.m. The second group was admitted to the self-authorship program between the hours of 4:30 p.m. to 5:30 p.m.

Since the beginning of the self-authorship program, students expressed interest by exchanging words between each other “what story are you doing,” “how did you do that,” “that’s cool,” “I want to make my voice too,” “how do you spell this,” “do you like my movie, check it.” Both girls and boys were excited to see their movies developed one page at a time. They had to create their own story board that involved drawings, writing, animation, characters, music, and also record their own voices in case they wanted to make their characters speak. They spoke slowly when recording their voice to the computer and then laughed with their voice when playing the movie. Others were quiet each time one of their peers was recording their voice. Once in a while, students expressed amusement when someone finished a short version of the movie. They used words such as “that is so cool,” “wow, teacher, teacher, come and see this,” “can you help me do this too,” “I want to show this to my other friend in school,” “I’m gone show this to mom.” Students expressed also a desire work in a group on a movie in order to

record a variety of voices to their characters with female and male voice. They asked each other “can we make the movie together,” “who wants to play my sisters voice,” “can you record my mom’s voice.” After they recorded each other’s voice of character they played the movie. For a moment they burst into a playful laughter by commenting on each other’s animated character. This atmosphere was repeated often throughout the program.

The students often preferred peer help. During their work on the self-authorship program they used conversations such as: “How did you do that, that’s cool,” “I spend lots of hours on this and still don’t think is good,” said the boy working on the computer. “You see, I always forget about the saving, and my entire page was lost,” “Just like that,” “I better don’t forget now,” he pointed to the computer and saved the file. Often while working on the project they talked the steps with under voice. When asked if they needed help the answer was simply “no,” while each continued working.

During the program boys and girls helped each other to create characters in their movie. While writing the essay they expressed that they wanted to write “what they feel,” and sometime they “need time to think.” When asked if they wanted to share the stories they said “yea,” and two of them chose to read their story in front of their peers. Both of them introduced themselves as being “11 year old and shy.” Their stories spoke about their relationship with their parents, especially their mother. They spoke of being thankful to their mother. One of them described her mother as being “her hero and her best friend.” “She wished to be with her mother because her mother worked night hours. She didn’t like that her mother had to work the entire night.”

The other girl introduced herself as being born in Quito, Ecuador. “A little country next to Columbia and Chile,” she explained further. She was 11 years old. She

continued by reading “I just turned eleven years old, and when I came here, I was very unhappy. I had no friends because I didn’t speak English. I moved too many schools.” She continued talking about her school experiences going back and forth from one school to other. “From first grade to fourth grade I switched four schools. Once I was very sick. My mom took me to the hospital as fast as possible.” In one paragraph she spoke about the program at the Boys & Girls Club experience. She said “It took me one year to convince my mom to let me come here. Could you believe that?”

The Self-Authorship Group Work Observation Narrative

Group work observation was organized as a part of the post-self-authorship observation process. Students were observed during the time period of 3:30 p.m. to 4:30 p.m. and 4:30 p.m. to 5:30 p.m. A couple of students volunteered to help with the laptop and the projector setup, some were trying to find a seat, facing the projector, while the others were discussing the story they had prepared. After projecting the image on the wall I asked if students could guide me and teach me on how to proceed with the program on creating the animation movie.

“We are all going to work together. So, ok, what do I do now,” I asked.

“Use the mouse Miss. T, the mouse works,” one of the students instructed me noticing my confusion on operating the computer.

“Thank you, very nice of you helping me,” I said to the student.

“What happens now, what I do next?” I asked again.

“Click that, then wait,” two students confidently instructed me to click on the icon as the next step.

“Very good,” I said admiring their enthusiasm.

“What should I do next?” I asked again waiting for their next instruction.

“Go to the production labcreate a new one, save,” they continued speaking out each step of the instruction. “We are going to save it, and I am going to create a folder just for us,” I said. “Woooo...” they cheered happy, “call it: cool kids at boys & girls club,” they instructed me.

“Ok, what do we need first, what do we have to do?” I asked.

“The title, the title,” they said.

“The crazy day, no the crazy week, no the crazy day,” they debated between the title.

“One week of our life, or school life, yea. No, no, one week of normal life,” they continued and decided to finalize on “One school day.”

“Ok, where is the story taking place,” I continued.

“In school, in school... and home,” “It’s Monday, we go to school,” they cheered approving “Next frame, we choose some music,” they guided the movie directing the steps including choosing music background. “Have to place the character, Jessica, will be the name of the girl, the boy’s name is Justin,” students continued choosing and naming the characters. “We need the voice for Justin, and he is going to be happy today,” they continued instructing the story “Justin says: *I wander what’s going to happen today.* Than his mother come to his room saying: *Justin, are you ready to go to school, the bus will be here soon,*” students continued playing and editing voice their voice characters.

Throughout the movie making the students were all giving their opinion, some were talking in the same time. There was an enthusiastic atmosphere throughout the program, students laughed often with the characters voice recording. Students guided and taught me how to make the movie. During the movie making process students directed

the process and acted in the same time. They seemed confident on making decisions while editing, cutting, or re-recording the movie. The process of creating the movie went on for one hour. They were all working in the same room and remained active throughout the time of the movie making. Every step taken during the production process was discussed by all and every decision taken was based on mutual agreement with all of the participants. Students were so excited about the work they were doing that when it was time to leave around 6:00 p.m. they asked if they could stay longer and work on the movie.

“It’s 6 o’clock Mrs. T,” someone from outside the room announced.

“Can we do the voice, let him do the voice,” they continued. “Can we continue until 6:30,” a voices in the group said. “Yea, yea...,” “we’re having fun,” “When is the next time we’re gone meet,” one of student asked “Monday,” answered another. “Shhhhh, quiet,” said one student, “We are running the movie,” someone else said and began playing the movie. They were all quiet until the short movie finished. After that moment everyone in the room exploded into laugh including me. I could see how happy students were with their work and most of all they all agreed that had much fun and were eager to continue the movie next time.

Pre-Self-Authorship and Post-Self-Authorship Students’ Observation Discussion

Upon the comparison between the pre-self-authorship and post-self-authorship reflection a pattern of change was noticed on students’ behavior during the after-school program. During the pre-self-authorship observation students participating in the after-school program used the computer activity to play games, while during the post-self-authorship observation students used the time in computer creating their own movie

story. Post-self-authorship observation also showed students' positive attitude toward the program. Words like "this is cool" were used often. In addition, students showed respect for each other while working together in the program. Every time one of their peers had to record their voice in the computer they all maintained silence. This behavior factor was important noticing that the students were not instructed or pressured to do so by me as teacher. Students self-regulated their behavior during their creativity time.

While in pre-self-authorship observation students showed signs of frustration and often asked "I need help," "It's not working," and "that's it, I'm leaving," during the post-self-authorship students were relaxed and showed signs of content working with each other. During the post-self-authorship observation students showed interest on the program by fully participating sometimes by expressing amusement using words such as "that is so cool," "wow, teacher, teacher, come and see this," "can you come to school and show this what were." Students felt comfortable also when helping each other. Once in a while student would ask help on spelling a word, while another student would assist his/her peer by spelling the word.

In addition, during the post-after-school observation students have shown signs of self-confidence on often expressing aspirations such as "I want to show this to my other friend in school," "I'm going to show this to mom." They also had the courage and the confidence to share some of their personal stories with their peers. In their stories they spoke freely about their family, experience, and personal feelings.

Group activity observation showed students self-confidence increased by taking full responsibility on making animation movie. Throughout the time students showed signs of being comfortable, excited, and happy with the activity. They laughed, giggled,

talked back and forth when discussing the process, made decisions, agreed and disagreed, also demanded quality work from each. Students followed steps needed when editing the story line, spelling the words, doing the voice recording or showing the action of characters.

The Self-Authorship Questionnaire Data Analysis

Students' response questionnaire revealed an open variance in responses related to the research question of students' response to the self-authorship program. The form of the questionnaire consisted of 10 questions and was organized into two parts. The first part, consisting of four questions, was designed to gather demographic answers, the six other questions were designed to gather students' response to the program. There was an equal number of 15 girls and 15 boys in the program. Three students were English (L1) language speaking, 27 students were bilingual and English as a second language (ESL). The participants were part of a diverse background including 7 African American, 3 Caucasian, 17 Hispanic, and 3 were Multiracial. There were four students that had less than one year of membership, 13 students had one-to-two years of membership, 10 students had three-to-four years of membership, and 3 students had five-to-six years of membership at the Boys and Girls Club of Atlantic City. Table 5.1 describes the self-authorship students' population demographics.

Table 5.1

The Self-Authorship Student Population Demographics (N=30)

Variable		<i>f</i>	%
Age	9-10	16	53.3
	11-12	10	33.3
	13	4	13.4
	Total	30	100.0
Gender	Female	15	50.0
	Male	15	50.0
	Total	30	100.0
Race	African American	7	23.3
	Caucasian	3	10.0
	Hispanic	17	56.7
	Multiracial	3	10.0
	Total	30	100.0
Language	English L1	3	10.
	Bilingual L2	27	90.0
	Multilingual L3	0	0.0
	Total	30	100.0
Membership	Less than 1 year	4	13.4
	1-2 years	13	43.3
	3-4 years	10	33.3
	5-6 years	3	10.0
	Total	30	100.0

The second part of the questionnaire was designed to measure students' responses of self-authorship program. In reference to the research question of students' response to self-authorship pedagogical approach, the data revealed a high percentage of students' interest on creating animation movies, working with friends, and telling stories. The question "When participating at the creative self-authorship program you: Create

animation movies” demonstrated a very high response *yes*, 93.3 % of student participation activity and *no* 6.7%. “Playing with friends” 66.6% responded *yes* and 33.4% *no*, while “Drawing pictures” 60.0% responded *yes* and 40.0% *no*. “Tell a story” 76.6% responded *yes* and 23.4% *no*, while “Create with friends” 86.6% responded *yes* and 13.4% responded *no*. Table 5.2 below describes student activity participation data at the creative self-authorship program.

Table 5.2

Participating at the Creative Self-Authorship Program
yes=1 no=2 (N=30)

Variable	Yes		No		Total	
	<i>f</i>	%	<i>f</i>	%	<i>f</i>	%
Create animation movies	28	93.3	2	6.7	30	100.0
Play with friends	20	66.6	10	33.4	30	100.0
Draw pictures	18	60.0	15	40.0	30	100.0
Tell a story	23	76.6	7	23.4	30	100.0
Create with friends	26	86.6	4	13.4	30	100.0

The following data, showed below in Table 5.3, revealed students’ response in regard to students’ creativity such as making animation movies, drawing, and writing, and sharing ideas with friends, parents, teachers, sisters, brothers, and other family members. To the question regarding the students sharing the ideas with B&G friend, 66.6% answered *very much*, 26.7% *some*, and 6.7% *not at all*. Sharing with “School friends” was slightly lower than sharing with Boys & Girls Club friends, 23.3% answered *very much*, 36.6% answered *some*, and 40.0% answered *not at all*. A considerable of

number of students shared their ideas with parents. Data gathered showed 56.6% shared *very much* ideas about the program with their parent, 26.7% *some*, and 16.7% *not at all*. Sharing work information with other family members such as brother/sister/cousin, followed with 53% *very much*, 30% *some*, and 16.7 % *not at all*. The question referring to the students sharing ideas about the program with school teacher showed low levels of communication. Only 6.7% shared *very much*, 36.6 % *some* and 56.7% did not share at all. In comparison with the other questions “have you shared ideas with school teacher” and “school friends,” data detected a low level of sharing ideas or experience in connection to the program.

Students’ also responded positively to the questions related to (Table 5.3) the self-authorship influence in their way of working individually, with friends, teacher, while creating movies or writing creatively. Data revealed a positive response on “Self-authorship program influenced your way of working by yourself” eliciting a very high strong response with 66.6% *very much*, followed by 26.6% *some*, and only 6.7% *not at all*. Data also showed that the self-authorship program had a positive influence on students “Self-authorship program influenced your way of creating movies” with the highest positive return of 80.0% *very much* and 20.0% *some*. “Self-authorship program influenced your way of working with friends” followed with 33.4% *very much*, 56.7% *some*, and 10.0% *not at all*. “Self-authorship program influenced your way of writing essay/poetry” responded 33.4 % *very much*, 46.6 *some*, and 20.0% *not at all*. Data also revealed a low level of self-authorship influence on working with the teacher. “Self-authorship program influenced your way of working with teacher” received 16.7% *very much*, 30.0% *some*, and 53.3% *not at all*.

Further, students were also asked while participating in self-authorship program, if they had solved a problem, wrote their story, published their movie, and shared their story (Table 5.3). A significant positive turnout data was recorded on question “Participating in self-authorship program you have published your movie” with 80.0% *very much*, 16.7% *some*, and 3.3% *not at all*. The positive data response was followed by students’ response of sharing their creative work with others. “Participating in self-authorship program you have shared your work” with 33.4% *very much*, 56.6% *some*, and 3.3% *not at all*. A positive data trend was noted regarding the question targeting students’ resolving their own problem while participating in the self-authorship program. A total of 33.4% of students responded *very much*, 50.0% responded *some*, while 16.6% responded *not at all*. “Wrote your story” responded 23.3% *very much*, 70.0% *some*, and 6.7% *not at all*.

The last part of this set of questions (Table 5.3) concentrated on gathering information on students’ interest on engaging in the self-authorship program. The questions were designed to measure the students’ interest on frequenting self-authorship program daily, weekly, after-school, and during the school day. “Would you practice self-authorship every day” received 26.6% *very much*, 66.7% *some*, and 6.7% *not at all*, while “Every week” responded 33.4% *very much*, 50.0% *some*, and 16.6% *not at all*. “Would you practice self-authorship every day in after-school” collected 30.0% *very much*, 56.7% *some*, and 13.4% *not at all*, while “School day” responded 23.3% *very much*, 70.0% *some*, and 6.7% *not at all*. Table 5.3 describes data of students’ engagement in the self-authorship program.

Table 5.3

*Engaging in Self-Authorship**Very much=1 Some=2 Not at all=3 (N=30)*

Variable	Very Much		Some		Not at All		Total	
	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%
<i>Have you shared ideas with:</i>								
B&G Club friends	20	66.6	8	26.7	2	6.7	30	100.0
School friends	7	23.3	11	36.6	12	40.0	30	100.0
Parent/s	17	56.6	8	26.7	5	16.7	30	100.0
Brother/sister/cousin	16	53.3	9	30.0	5	16.7	30	100.0
School Teacher	2	6.7	11	36.6	17	56.7	30	100.0
<i>Self-authorship program influenced your way of:</i>								
Working with friends	10	33.4	17	56.7	3	10.0	30	100.0
Working by yourself	20	66.6	8	26.7	2	6.7	30	100.0
Working with teacher	5	16.7	9	30.0	16	53.3	30	100.0
Writing essay/poetry	10	33.4	14	46.6	6	20.0	30	100.0
Creating movies	24	80.0	6	20.0	0	0.0	30	100.0
<i>Participating in self-authorship program you have:</i>								
Solved your problem	10	33.4	15	50.0	5	16.6	30	100.0
Wrought your story	7	23.3	21	70.0	2	6.7	30	100.0
Published your movie	24	80.0	5	16.7	1	3.3	30	100.0
Shared your work	10	33.4	17	56.6	3	10.0	30	100.0
<i>Would you practice self-authorship program</i>								
Every day	8	26.6	20	66.7	2	6.7	30	100.0
Every week	10	33.4	15	50.0	5	16.6	30	100.0
In after-school	9	30.0	17	56.7	4	13.4	30	100.0
School day	7	23.3	21	70.0	2	6.7	30	100.0

The last part of the questionnaire gathered data on students overall rating of the program. The findings found an enthusiastic level of positive response and acceptance of the program from participating students. A total of 24 students out of 30 students rated the movie animation part of the program *very good*. Over all, the question regarding “Creating movie animation” had a 100% positive response between *very good* and *good*. “Poetry and story writing” received 23.3% *very good*, 70% *good*, and 6.7% *not good*. “Creative drawing” received 30.0% *very good*, 56.7% *good*, and 13.4% *not good*. Overall rating targeting self-authorship afterschool program received an enthusiastic positive rating of 33.4% *very good* and 66.6% *good*.

Table 5.4

Overall How Do You Rate The Program?
Very good=1 Good=2 Not good= 3 (N= 30)

Variable	Very Good		Good		Not Good		Total	
	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%
Creating movie animation	24	80.0	6	20.0	0	0.0	30	100.0
Poetry and story writing	7	23.3	21	70.0	2	6.7	30	100.0
Creative drawing	9	30.0	17	56.7	4	13.4	30	100.0
Self-authorship afterschool	10	33.4	20	66.6	0	0.0	30	100.0

Data Analysis Discussion

The questionnaire offered an opportunity to understand and reflect on the students’ experiences with the self-authorship program. A large percentage of student participants in the self-authorship program were bilingual and English as a second language (ESL). In reference to the research question of students’ response to the self-

authorship program, data analysis from the questionnaire revealed a high percentage of students' interest on the activity of creating animation movies, working with friends, and telling stories. This finding supports the development and implementation of the self-authorship pedagogical approach. Data showed that students not only built self-confidence in creating their work, but took that confidence a step further by sharing their work with friends in the club, outside the classroom with school friends, parents, and other family members.

An enthusiastic level of positive response from students was detected on the data referring to their interest and willingness to publish their work, resolving their own problems or difficulties, working by themselves, and working with peers. These results showed that the students were attracted to the activities provided by the program. Although data showed a positive level of students' response to the self-authorship program, it also showed a communication disconnect between students and teachers. A small percentage of the students had spoken or shared their work with teacher. Students were confident enough to share their work with other friends and family but not much information was shared with school teachers. Although the self-authorship was designed to help students grow and learn independently, the role of the teachers was important as a good source of reference. Sharing learning and work with a teacher would have supported further students' growth and self-confidence. According to the questionnaire data analysis, students gained important confidence and grew individually during the self-authorship program but hesitated to communicate that confidence outside the self-authorship program. Data also showed a change in pattern when the questionnaire

referred to students sharing with parents and other family members. The response showed a large level of sharing confidence when referring to parents and other family members.

The Self-Authorship Cycle I Reflection

Cycle I offered an opportunity to implement the self-authorship program, investigate students' responses, and reflect on the experiences the participants reached during the self-authorship program. I introduced self-authorship under the constructive pedagogy, designed upon the theoretical work of Baxter Magolda (1999, 2001). The analysis of qualitative data depicted further understanding of the ways student engaged, interacted, communicated, preceded, and captivated the self-authorship program.

During the action research Cycle I, other than analyzing and reflecting on the data, I revised my role as participant in action research by teaching and interacting with the students. Through the Cycle I, while I introduced the self-authorship program, I also developed a trusting relationship (Marshall, 2003) with the students at the Boys & Girls Club of Atlantic City. Under my leadership paradigm, I provided a pedagogical platform to support the students during the self-authorship program and their knowledge gain.

This study cycle used participant-observation and a questionnaire (Glesne, 2006; Patton, 2002), as methods aimed at uncovering students' perceptions, feelings, and behavior. In order to record students' experiences and interaction with the self-authorship program, the observation time was divided into two parts. The first observation was taken before the self-authorship was introduced, while the second observation took place after the self-authorship was introduced. Both were identified on data as pre-self-authorship and post-self-authorship including a questionnaire targeting the research question by measuring students' response to the self-authorship program.

Students' response toward the self-authorship program was positive. While engaging in the program they created an enthusiastic atmosphere that showed that students enjoyed their time in the program. In comparison with the pre-self-authorship, post-authorship data showed an increase in students' interest regarding the program. Also, it was evident that investing in new computers was a great asset for the program. Organizing and redesigning the structure of the afterschool activity by creating a fixed time table made the program clear and imposed guidelines on students' attendance.

Although the findings were positive and the data showed the students' response toward the program was encouraging, a limitation was detected on the students' ability to transmit and share their enthusiasm outside the program. Students felt more connected with the program within the environment of the Boys & Girls Club. To further understand and improve the impact of the self-authorship program on students learning I developed two types of scoring tables. The tables analyzed students' creative work using Conceptual Content (Tuman, 1999) and Formal Language Characteristics. The process was implemented in Cycle II of this research.

Chapter VI

Action Research Cycle II

Introduction

Cycle II focused on finding the impact of the self-authorship program on student learning. Data were collected utilizing both qualitative and quantitative methods by dividing the cycle into two phases. Phase I completed the pre-test and first students' portfolio analysis, and phase II completed the post-test and the second student portfolio analysis. Scoring tables were developed analyzing students' first and second portfolio analysis using the Conceptual Content Characteristic originated by Tuman (1999) and the Formal Language Characteristics.

The research questions in Cycle II guided the effects the self-authorship had on student learning by calculating the results of the pre-test, post-test, and portfolio of 30 children ages 9 to 13 years old. Each student drawing, animation, essay, and poem were collected and organized into an individual portfolio corresponding to their age, group, and phase. Student portfolios were scored, evaluated, and judged independently by me as the principal investigator based on a scoring rubric. The art work was compared looking for evidence of learning and growth. In addition to analyzing the Conceptual Content Characteristics and Formal Language Characteristics, a pre-test and post-test was collected accordingly to the assigned phase.

Under my leadership paradigm, during the Cycle II, I continued to provide a pedagogical platform to support students during the self-authorship program. Also I revised my role as participant in action research by teaching, interacting, and analyzing data by taking in consideration also the recommendations from Cycle I.

The Cycle I data findings resulted in positive growth on student learning. The pre-test and post-test data comparison results showed increases in student computer operating knowledge. In addition, data showed growth on students' work and their artistic abilities without school and teacher pressure. The comparison of the two phases using pre-test, post-test, first and second phase portfolio analysis data showed an increase in students' learning. The improvement in English language and word spelling learning was an important outcome when taking into consideration English was their Second Language.

Cycle II – Analysis of Children's Creative Work

Research Question 2: What impact does self-authorship have on students' learning?

The purpose of Cycle II was to examine the effects self-authorship had on students learning. Cycle II was organized into two phases involving a pre-test and first student portfolio analysis on phase I, post-test and students' portfolio analysis on phase II. The self-authorship program pre-test and first students' work analysis was collected in the month of September, 2009, while the post-test and second students' work analysis was collected during the month of November, 2009. Students' interviews were collected during the month of December, 2009. Figure 6.1 provides a detailed map of Cycle II data time frame.

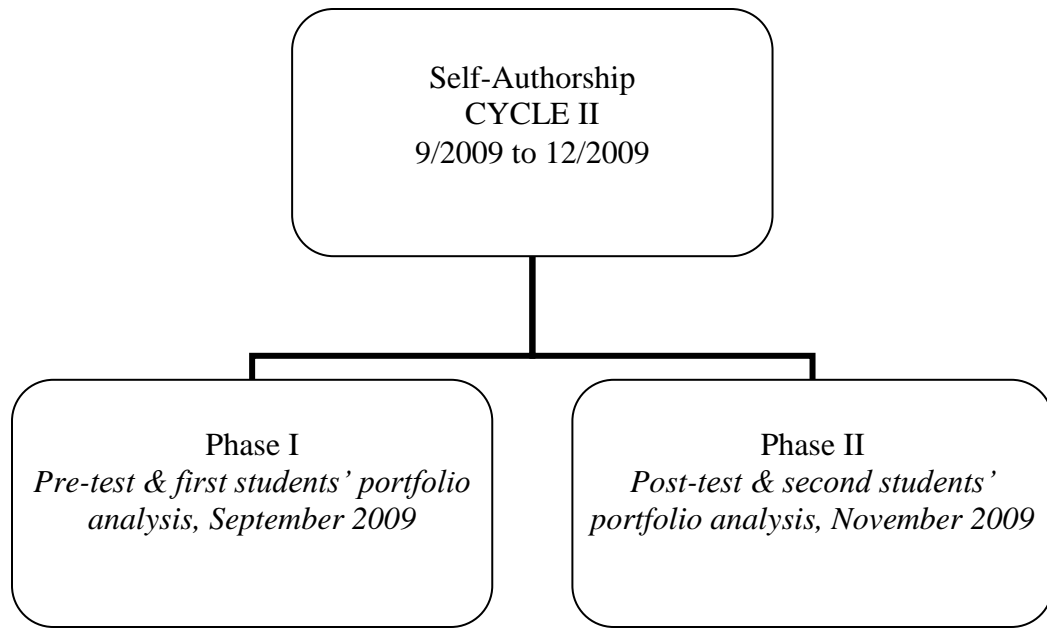


Figure 6.1. The Self-Authorship Cycle II Research Time Frame.

Phases I & II: Pre-and-Post-Test

A pre-test and post-test was conducted for two purposes: first to measure the self-authorship program progress, and second to measure student knowledge gain. The pre-test and post-test involved 10 multiple choice questions with the a total value being 100 points. The pre-test collected from 30 students showed progress changes on students learning in operating the computer program.

Table 6.1 describes the pre-test and post-test data showing scores of students' correct and incorrect answers. The first question asked "What action do you take to open a document file," data showed an increase in students' choosing the correct answer, from 56.6% on the pre-test to 93.3% on the post-test. The next item "Where do you save your movie," resulted in 53.3% correct responses on the pre-test and 76.6% on the post-test. The next question asked "Where is student' folder located," with correct answers of

40.0% on the pre-test and 66.6% on the post-test. “What program do you use to create your animation,” scored very high in both tests with 86.6% answering correctly on the pre-test and 100% correctly on the post-test. The question regarding “What is the next step after opening Animate Your World program,” 50.0% answered correctly on the pre-test compare to 86.6% on the post-test. To the question “What button do you click to create a picture theme,” 66.6% answered correctly on the pre-test compare to 93.3% on the post-test. To the question “What button do you click to make the characters move,” 50.0% answered correctly on the pre-test compared to 86.6% on the post-test. To the next question “What action do you take after voice recording scored 50.0% answered correctly on the pre-test compared to 66.6% on the post-test. To the question “What action do you take if you want to see your movie” 60.0% answered correctly on the pre-test compare to 93.3% on the post-test. The last question, “What program do you use if you want to draw your character,” 56.6% answered correctly on the pre-test compared to 86.6% on the post-test.

Table 6.1

Students' Pre-and-Post-Test Data (N=30)

Variable	Pre-Test		Post-Test	
	<i>f</i>	%	<i>f</i>	%
1. What action do you take to open a document file?				
a) Turning on power button	4	13.4	2	6.7
b) Save	9	30.0	0	0.0
c) Double clicking on the document	<u>17</u>	<u>56.6</u>	<u>28</u>	<u>93.3</u>
	30	100	30	100
2. Where do you save your movie?				
a) Documents	10	33.3	5	16.7
b) Students folder	16	53.3	23	76.6
c) Program file	<u>4</u>	<u>13.4</u>	<u>2</u>	<u>6.7</u>
	30	100	30	100
3. Where is student' folder located?				
a) My Document	12	40.0	20	66.6
b) Application	8	26.7	2	6.7
c) Temporary folder	<u>10</u>	<u>33.3</u>	<u>8</u>	<u>26.7</u>
	30	100	30	100
4. What program do you use to create your animation?				
a) Microsoft Publisher	1	3.3	0	0.0
b) Microsoft Word	3	10.0	0	0.0
c) Animate Your World	<u>26</u>	<u>86.6</u>	<u>30</u>	<u>100</u>
	30	100	30	100
5. What is the next step after opening Animate Your World Program?				
a) Save	15	50.0	26	86.6
b) Publish	0	0.0	3	10.0
c) Create character	<u>15</u>	<u>50.0</u>	<u>1</u>	<u>3.3</u>
	30	100	30	100
6. What button do you click to create a picture theme?				
a) Background	20	66.6	28	93.3
b) Voice	4	13.4	0	0.0
c) Character	<u>6</u>	<u>20.0</u>	<u>2</u>	<u>6.7</u>
	30	100	30	100

Table 6.1 (continued)

Students Pre-and-Post-Test Data (N=30)

Variable	Pre-Test		Post-Test	
	<i>f</i>	%	<i>f</i>	%
7. What button do you click to make character move?				
a) Background	9	30.0	2	6.7
b) Play movie	6	20.0	2	6.7
c) Action	<u>15</u>	<u>50.0</u>	<u>26</u>	<u>86.6</u>
	30	100	30	100
8. What action do you take after voice recording?				
a) Record	9	30.0	6	20.0
b) Play	15	50.0	20	66.6
c) Trash	<u>6</u>	<u>20.0</u>	<u>4</u>	<u>13.4</u>
	30	100	30	100
9. What action do you take if you want to see the movie?				
a) Return	10	33.3	0	0.0
b) Play	18	60.0	28	93.3
c) Save	<u>2</u>	<u>6.7</u>	<u>2</u>	<u>6.7</u>
	30	100	30	100
10. What program do you use if you want to draw the character?				
a) Animate Your World	7	23.4	4	13.4
b) Animatish	17	56.6	26	86.6
c) Publisher	<u>6</u>	<u>20.0</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>0.0</u>
	30	100	30	100

Table 6.2 describes the overall student performance on the pre-test and post-test.

The data were compared in order to measure student growth or learning assessment during the after-school program.

Table 6.2

Pre-Test and Post-Test Data Comparison (N=30)

Student #	Pre-Test %	Post-Test %	Student #	Pre-Test %	Post-Test %
1	50	90	16	40	90
2	40	80	17	50	80
3	70	100	18	60	90
4	60	90	19	60	80
5	50	80	20	70	100
6	60	90	21	90	100
7	80	100	22	40	80
8	50	80	23	60	90
9	40	80	24	60	80
10	60	80	25	70	100
11	50	80	26	70	100
12	30	80	27	50	60
13	50	70	28	50	70
14	30	90	29	70	80
15	50	80	30	80	100

Figure 6.2 shows a data comparison of pre-test and post-test results. Overall the pre-test and post-test data showed a performance increase on students learning when operating animation computer program. The pre-test and post-test data showed a pattern of change in students' growth. The 10 question tests recorded a positive outcome emphasizing higher score percentage during the post-test. A noticeable growth was recorded on overall average test performance. Although the test was designed based on simple questions, requiring a knowledge gain on basic steps of the animation program, students' scores were important indicators of their knowledge gain. In reference to the

research question, based on the data results of pre-test and post-test data comparison, self-authorship showed signs of growth in students learning.

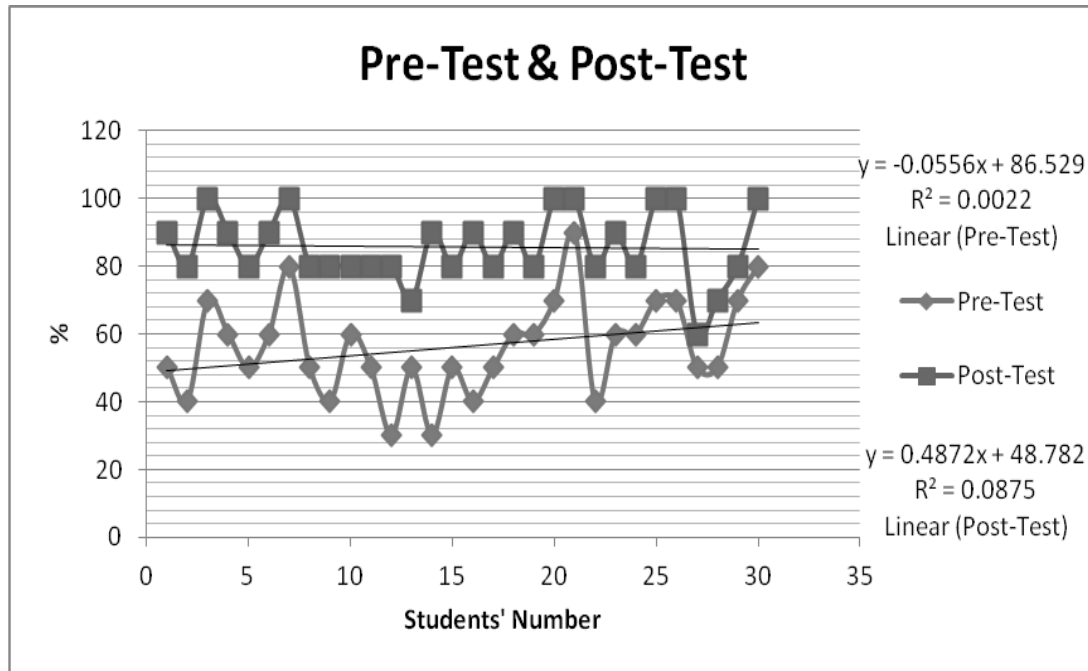


Figure 6.2. Pre-Test and Post-Test Data Comparison.

Phases I & II: Students' Portfolio Conceptual and Formal Characteristics

As part of Cycle II, the student portfolios were analyzed to measure the growth in their work. Changes in conceptual content characteristics and formal language characteristics of their drawings were investigated. An evaluation rubric was designed to evaluate and score student work based on skills, complexity, elements of design, creativity, and originality assigning values of low (1), medium (2), and high (3). Table 6.3 describes the student's portfolio score sheet, while Table 6.4 describes the rating guideline definition.

Table 6.3

Rating Guidelines Definitions

Conceptual Content Characteristics (Tuman, 1999)

1. Realism: Elements pertaining real life experience
2. Fantasy: Elements reflecting exaggerated experiences
3. Humor: Elements of communication that provoke laughter
4. Action: Relate to motion of characters
5. Social: Elements of engagement in social relation
6. Care: Elements of concern for others
7. Conflict: Elements of disagreement
8. Heroism: Elements of idealistic act and sense of strength
9. Travel: Elements of place, change, and transition

Formal Language Characteristics

1. Spelling: Relate to accurate word spelling
 2. Rhyme: Relate to poetic style
 3. Rhythm: Relate to the rhythmic sound, voice interpretation
 4. Descriptive: Relate to expressive style of writing
 5. Politeness: Pertaining respective word use
 6. Completeness: Relate to comprehensive use of word flow
-

Table 6.4

CYCLE II: Student's Portfolio Score Sheet
Student's Code #

Variable	Low 1	Medium 2	High 3
Conceptual Content Characteristics			
1. Realism	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
2. Fantasy	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
3. Humor	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
4. Action	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
5. Social	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
6. Care	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
7. Conflict	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
8. Heroism	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
9. Travel	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Formal Language Characteristics			
1. Spelling	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
2. Rhyme	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
3. Rhythm	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
4. Descriptive	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
5. Politeness	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
6. Completeness	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Student Work Conceptual and Formal Characteristics Data Analysis

Portfolio data analysis of the 30 students revealed changes between the first and the second phase. The total sum of the scores accumulated on the first phase was 656 while the total sum of the scores on the second phase was 778. The total number average on the first phase was 1.4, lower than the 1.6 total average recorded on the second phase. Table 6.5 shows the data scored under each variable referring to conceptual content characteristics and formal language characteristics.

Table 6.5

Conceptual Content and Formal Language Characteristics Data Analysis (N=30)

Variable	Sum.		Avr.	
	1	2	1	2
Conceptual Content Characteristics				
Realism	45	49	1.5	1.6
Fantasy	42	50	1.4	1.7
Humor	36	52	1.2	1.7
Action	44	48	1.5	1.6
Social	45	54	1.5	1.8
Care	53	57	1.8	1.9
Conflict	37	52	1.2	1.7
Heroism	47	47	1.6	1.6
Travel	48	56	1.6	1.9
Formal Language Characteristics				
Spelling	39	56	1.3	1.9
Rhyme	42	54	1.4	1.8
Rhythm	40	49	1.3	1.6
Descriptive	49	50	1.6	1.7
Politeness	46	56	1.5	1.9
Completeness	<u>43</u>	<u>48</u>	<u>1.4</u>	<u>1.6</u>
Total	656	778	1.4	1.7

Figure 6.3 shows the data concentrated on the scores gathered under the Conceptual Content Characteristics variable. The largest change was detected on the application of

humor. Students applied humor in their work from a score of 36 on the first phase compared to a score of 52 on the second phase. Conflict followed with a score of 37 on the first phase to a score of 52 on the second phase. The social variable scored 45 points on the first phase and 54 points on the second phase. Fantasy variable scored 42 points on the first phase and 50 on the second phase. Travel, followed with a score of 48 points on the first phase and 56 points on the second phase. Realism had a total score of 45 points on the first phase and 49 points on the second phase. Action, followed with a total score of 44 points on the first phase to 48 points on the second phase. Heroism produced the same score of 47 points on the first and second phase.

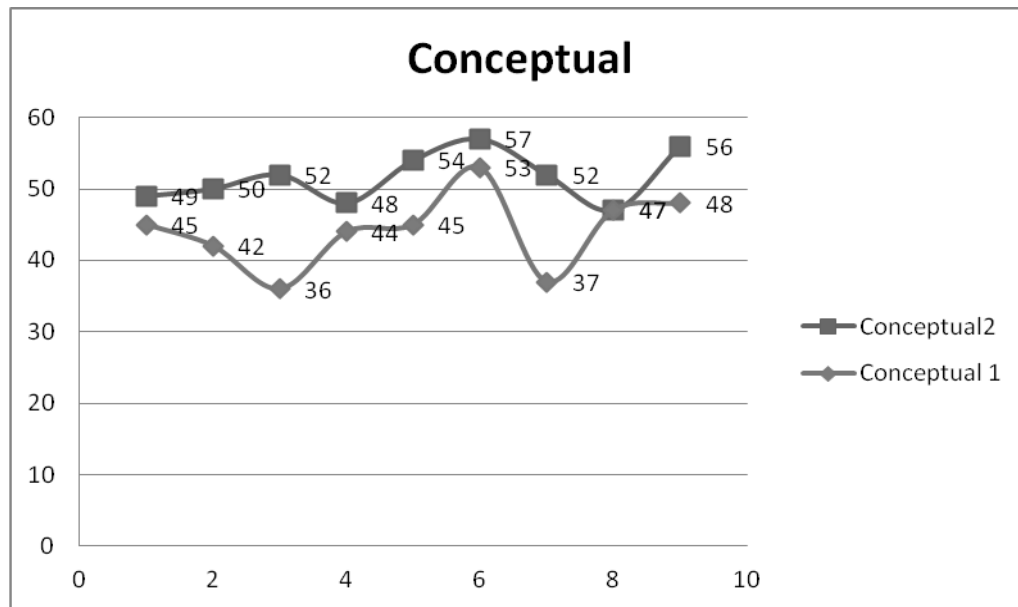


Figure 6.3. First and Second Conceptual Data.

Figure 6.4 presents data concentrated on the score gathered under the formal language characteristics variable. The highest number of change was detected on the

application of spelling, showing growth from 36 points on the first phase to 56 points on the second phase. Rhyme followed with a score of 42 points on the first phase to 54 points on the second phase. The next data change was detected on the politeness variable showing growth from 46 points on the first phase, to 56 points on the second phase. The lowest change was noted on the completeness variable with a score of 43 points on the first phase and 48 on the second phase.

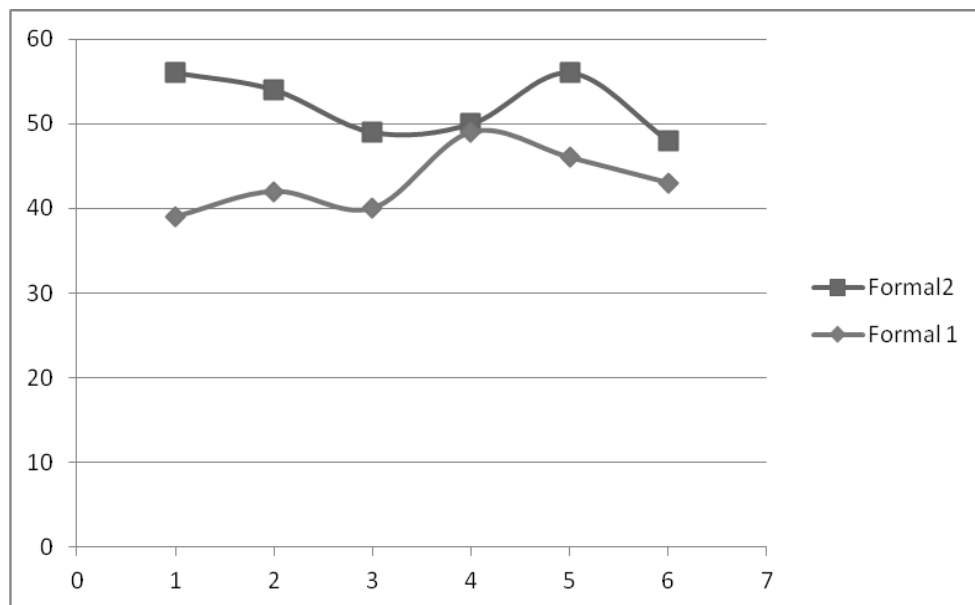


Figure 6.4. First and Second Formal Language Data.

Figure 6.5 also shows the overall student performance data by comparing first phase total score with the second phase total score. Student performance improved during the second phase total score as compared to the first phase total score; 27 students improved on the second phase while three students scored lower on the second phase data collection.

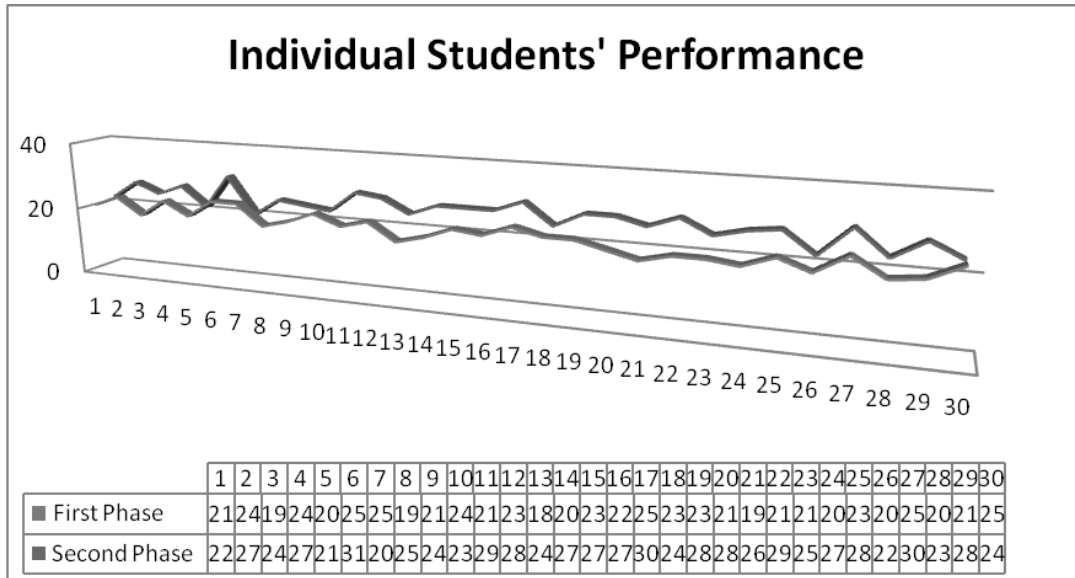


Figure 6.5. Conceptual and Formal Language Individual Students' Data Comparison.

Phases I & II: Students' Work Conceptual and Formal Characteristics Reflection

Conceptual content and formal language characteristics data analysis revealed changes in student learning. Changes were detected in Conceptual Content Characteristics and Formal Language Characteristics pertaining to their creative work. Overall, the data showed positive growth on the total score of the second phase in comparison to the total score of the first phase. The biggest growth was on students' spelling and rhyme on the Formal Language Characteristics, while humor, conflict, and social variable showed growth on the Conceptual Content Characteristics data.

The Self-Authorship Cycle II Discussion and Reflection

According to Clement (1992) "Creating their own images supports children in their thinking" (p. 121). Every line, shape, and form that is created is considered a discovery toward the next idea, shape or form, and discovery. "A drawing is an autobiographical record of one's discovery of an event seen, remembered, or imagined"

(Berger, 1974, p. 166). The self-authorship program at the Boys & Girls Club of Atlantic City, suggested it was an encouraging self-expression program.

The purpose of Cycle II was to detect, analyze, and record any changes and learning effects on student work while attending the after-school program. Overall, cycle II research examined the effects self-authorship had on students learning targeting the research question of what impact self-authorship had on students' learning.

The analysis of quantitative and qualitative data gave insight into the ways students worked with the program, engaged, created, and learned during the self-authorship program. Cycle II offered an opportunity to evaluate the self-authorship program through the students' world of creativity and reflect on the growth the participants reached during the performance of the self-authorship program.

The Cycle II data showed overall growth on students' work and young people were able to explore freely their artistic abilities without school and teacher pressure. Through their work, I connected and learned more about the students and their development. During the cycle II students created work and enriched their portfolio with a variety of individual work. In addition, the comparison of the two phases using pre-test, post-test, first and second phase portfolio analysis data showed an increase in students' learning. The highlight of the findings was the improvement in word spelling. This factor was very important when taken into consideration that 99% of the students were part of the English as a Second Language student population.

Although the findings were positive and the data showed the students' learning to be encouraging, a weakness was formal regarding on the students' ability to a create complete animation movie. Data analysis showed that students engaged in much work,

but their creativity was limited to short and some of the movies were unfinished such as including a introduction, body, and conclusion as the basic elements of storytelling.

Chapter VII

Action Research Cycle III

Introduction

The purpose of Cycle III was to examine the impact self-authorship had on the after-school program. During this cycle, data were collected utilizing a survey of the staff working and volunteering at the Boys & Girls Club of Atlantic City, New Jersey. Survey consisted of 18 items designed to measure the impact the self-authorship program had on the Boys & Girls Club after-school program.

Cycle III – The Self-Authorship Program Effect on Boys & Girls Club After-School Community Program

Research Question 3: What impact does self-authorship have on after-school program?

The goal of Cycle III was to measure the impact of the self-authorship program on the natural flow of the after-school programs at the Boys & Girls Club of Atlantic City. In order to do so, I surveyed the staff and collected information about the various afterschool programs offered at the Boys & Girls Club of Atlantic City, and to obtain their opinions about any change noted since the self-authorship intervention was implemented. Figure 7.1 shows a detailed map of Cycle III data collection.

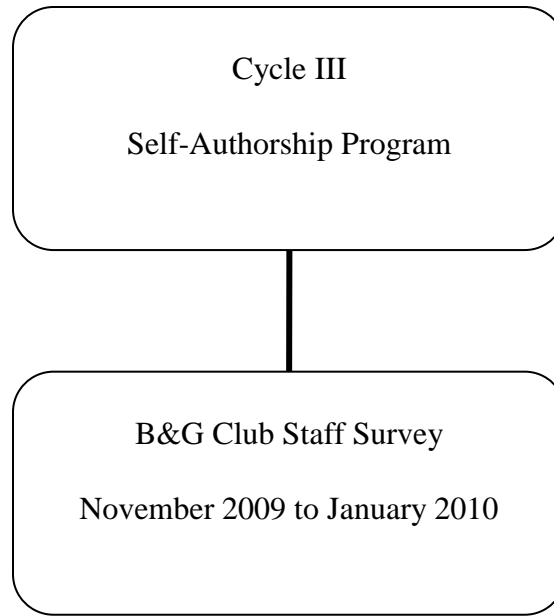


Figure 7.1. The Self-Authorship Cycle III Data Collection.

The survey was conducted between the months of December 2009 to January 2010. A total of 18 surveys were distributed and 15 returned for a response of 83%. The staff of the Boys & Girls Club of Atlantic City included seven females and eight males, of which six were fulltime employees, four part time employees, and five volunteers. The years of experience varied between two who had less than one year of experience, seven who had one to two years, two who had three to four year, three who had five to six years, and one who had more than seven years of experience with the Boys and Girls Club of Atlantic City.

The survey was designed to answer research question three measuring any changes or impact the self-authorship program had at the Boys & Girls Club. The survey (Appendix K) was organized into two sections. The first section contained four

demographic items. The second section contained 14 closed-ended statements using a Likert-type scale with numerical values given to each answer choice.

Cycle III staff survey revealed positive increase on students' daily attendance during the after-school period at the Boys and Girls Club of Atlantic City. The self-authorship program had a positive impact on students retaining attendance. In addition, staff members had a positive attitude toward self-authorship. They agreed that such programs were influential on attracting new members and retaining community youth population.

The Self-Authorship Cycle III Data Collection Findings

Table 7.1 describes the demographic data of the survey finding. There were 10 females and 5 males, of which six were fulltime employees, four part-time employees, and five volunteers. The participants were part of a diverse background including five African American, five Caucasian, four Hispanic, and one was Multiracial. Years of experience with the Boys and Girls Club of Atlantic City varied.

Table 7.1

Gender Distribution (N=15)

<i>Variable</i>	<i>f</i>	<i>%</i>
Female	10	67
Male	5	33
African American	5	33
Caucasian	5	33
Hispanic	4	27
Multiracial	1	7
Full time employs	6	40
Part time employs	4	27
Volunteer	5	33
Less than 1 year	2	13
1-2 years	7	47
3-4 years	2	13
5-6 years	3	20
More than 7 years	1	7

Table 7.2 describes the staff's opinion on student participation and performance in the after-school programs. A positive score was recorded on student participation in the self-authorship community program 4 responded good, 10 very good. Communication between staff and students participating in the self-authorship program 3 responded fair, 12 good, and 2 very good. The impact the program had on the attendance at the Boys & Girls Club of Atlantic City, 9 responded good while 7 responded very good. A low score was recorded on the response toward the efforts to reach community children to participate at the afterschool program, 3 answered poor, 7 answered fair, and 5 good. Self-authorship program impact at the Boys & Girls Club of Atlantic City recorded 6 fair, 6 good, and 3 very good.

In response to the data, student attendance at the Boys & Girls Club increased. According to the staff students' daily attendance in the afterschool program has increased, 3 responded fair, 10 responded good, and 2 responded very good. The finding showed that self-authorship program had a positive significant impact on students retaining attendance. According to the staff of Boys & Girls Club of Atlantic City, participation in self-authorship program had a positive impact on students. The response was high with 11 staff members good, while 4 staff members responded very good.

Table 7.2

Boys and Girls Club of Atlantic City Performance Ranking
Poor = 1, Fair = 2, Good = 3, Very Good = 4

Variable	Poor	Fair	Good	Very Good
	S. Disagree <i>f %</i>	Disagree <i>f %</i>	Agree <i>f %</i>	S. Agree <i>f %</i>
Students' participation in the afterschool community programs.	0	3 20	10 66	2 13
Students' participation in the self-authorship community programs.	0	1 7	4 27	10 66
Communication between staff and students.	0	3 20	10 66	2 13
The impact program have on attendance at the Boys & Girls Club of AC.	0	0	9 60	7 47
Efforts to reach in community children to participate at the after-school programs.	3 20	7 47	5 33	0
Self-authorship program impact at the Boys & Girls Club of Atlantic City	0	6 40	6 40	3 20
Students' membership at the Boys & Girls Club of Atlantic City has increased the last year.	1 7	8 53	6 40	0
Students' attendance at the Boys & Girls Club of Atlantic City has increased the last year.	0	6 40	8 53	0
Students' daily attendance in the afterschool program has increased.	0	3 20	10 66	2 13
Participation in the self-authorship programs at has a positive impact on students.	0	0	11 73	4 27

Table 7.3 describes the data findings targeting student participation at the community programs at the Boys & Girls Club of Atlantic City. From 15 staff members, 9 members responded important and 6 members responded very important. Interaction between students member and afterschool program, 12 responded important, and 3 responded very important. Introduction of new programs such as self-authorship program, 5 answered important, and 10 answered very important. Collaboration between Boys & Girls Club of Atlantic City and the children in the community, 2 responded important, 13 responded very important.

Table 7.3

Student Participation at the Boys & Girls Club
Not Important = 1, Important = 2, Very Important = 3 (N=15)

Variable	Not Important		Important		Very Important	
	f	%	f	%	f	%
Students' participation in community programs at Boys & Girls Club of AC.	0		9	60	6	40
Interaction between student members and after-school program.	0		12	80	3	20
Introduction of programs such as self-authorship.	0		5	33	10	66
Collaboration between Boys & Girls Club of AC and children in the community.	0		2	13	13	87

Discussion

Cycle III examined the impact self-authorship had on afterschool program. The staff's survey answered questions referring to the impact the self-authorship program had on afterschool program at the Boys & Girls Club. According to the findings, students' daily attendance at the Boys and Girls Club of Atlantic City improved within the existing members. The finding showed that self-authorship program had a positive impact on students retaining attendance. Participating daily in the after-school programs was important, showing the self-authorship success and also retaining youth within the educational programs.

Staff members had a positive reaction toward the collaboration of the Boys & Girls Club and the community. Youth interaction with self-authorship program had a positive reaction on the staff members. They believed that such programs are influential on attracting new members and retaining community youth population.

Chapter VIII

Examining My Leadership

Introduction

Research Question 4: How does my leadership support and influence students and the self-authorship program?

During the last two years of the research project, I constructed new conceptions of pedagogical theory and practice which varied from my previous years. I came to recognize the difference between offering my own explanation and supporting the development of my personal thinking and leadership. The important questions I had to address were: What have I learned about leadership that was important for me to communicate to the students? How could this be communicated when taking into consideration my previous experiences? How did my leadership support and influence students during the self-authorship program?

This cycle discusses my leadership including teaching style, growth, self-reflection, implementation, and influence on the self-authorship program. This examination of my leadership gives a pedagogical understanding and provides insights on the self-authorship research process which were unique to this action research study. As part of my educational leadership studies and throughout the research process, I became interested in the process of instructional education research as an activity involving self-authorship pedagogy within the three paradigms of constructivist, multicultural, and creative. Figure 8.1 reflects the leadership concept of this action research.

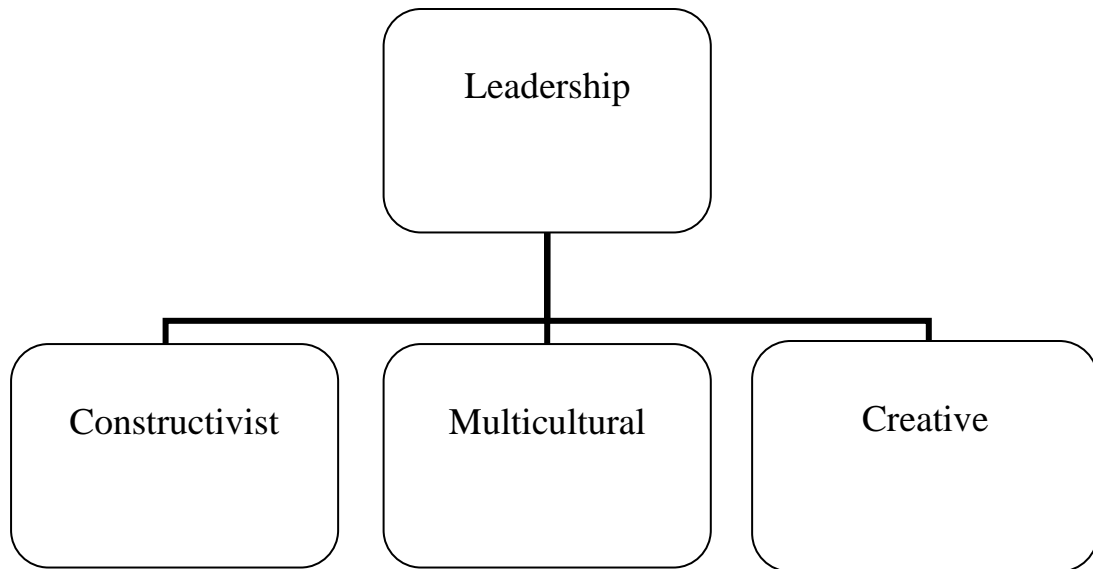


Figure 8.1. Espoused Leadership.

On several occasions I have been asked by faculty and peers to explain my educational leadership platform by conceptually mapping some of my ideas and pedagogical beliefs. Throughout this research process, I often felt overwhelmed by the extent of the information regarding leadership. The idea of mapping and examining my leadership has evolved as I initiated a critical dialogue with myself, peers, and students.

As a prelude to the development of my leadership, I give a brief overview of the origins of my leadership. I describe my leadership based on life experiences, international travel, and education in diverse cultures. I have traveled, lived, and been educated in Albania, Italy, Germany, and USA. My life experience has informed a personal understanding of pedagogy that has also enabled me to mold and adapt my teaching style to my students' needs. This multicultural background has facilitated my understanding of the diverse population of children participating in this research study. As a leader, I have reflected and inquired on my pedagogy, leadership, and personal impact on students.

Constructivist Leadership Influence on the Self-Authorship Program

As a constructive teacher, my priority was to help students become independent learners and develop a deeper understanding of their creative process. While implementing the self-authorship program, I embraced the view that learning required internalization of new information, individual experiences, and growth of interpersonal and intrapersonal understanding (Kegan 1982). Students were facilitated in a constructive manner and change was constantly present as I engaged in an ongoing process of dialogue and critical self-examination.

As a constructivist teacher, self-authorship program was designed to place the learner as central in the creation of meaning (Steffe & Gale, 1995). Students were guided through questions that engaged them on self-authorship activities. There were no long lectures designed, but rather short and direct ones while running the activity mini-instructions. The pedagogy was flexible based on students' needs and questions asked during the program. Individual and social learning activities were used in the construction of knowledge, including peer controlled formal and informal activities, and self-control activities as independent learners (Biggs, 1996; Johnson & Johnson, 1990; Kirby & Pedwell, 1994). Such strategies of teaching were used to direct students toward applying their own teaching and understanding. Self-addressed questions were encouraged such as: What do I want the story line to be based on? What do I want to add or take from this story? Students were given choices of working in pairs or alone. Although each individual or partner had questions to address, they were mostly self-directed and were encouraged to draw their own conclusions. Peer discussions and conversations were encouraged in order to create a natural scaffolding (Riley & Morocco, 1999). Figure 8.2

shows the constructivist influence on pedagogical structure of the self-authorship program.

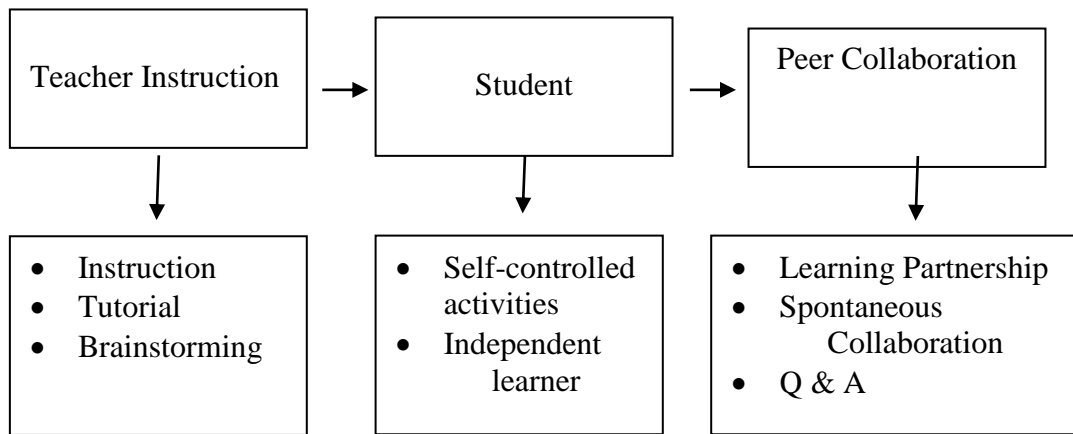


Figure 8.2. Constructivist Model of the Self-Authorship.

Following the constructivist pedagogy, I used an assessment portfolio, where students recorded their work weekly which was used later for critique and work comparison. Self and peer assessment was encouraged. As an instructor, I took into a consideration issues such as: What quality of learning outcome was I looking for? What evidence provided by students would show change or gain through the use of my teaching practice? Such evidence came through during the evaluation of student portfolios, peer discussions, and short stories. This assessment gave clear indications of change in students' work quality and quantity.

Following the constructivist theory (Eylon & Linn, 1988) understanding was developed from sequential acquisition of the skills and bits of information. Students' were anchored toward situated authentic activities (Dewey, 1993) including socially

mediated (Kinnaman, 1990) experiences and dialogues. The teaching was reflective and modified as it unfolded by revisiting key issues (Zorfass, 1999).

Multicultural Leadership Influence on the Self-Authorship

According to Lambert (1995), “diversity brings a complex to the network of relationships that contains multiple perspectives and multiple resources and talents” (p. 40). My personal multicultural knowledge is derived from personal experience. This provides lens through which knowledge is interpreted and further used as a vehicle to motivate students (Garcia, 1999). I used multicultural leadership as a cultural relevant method in order to ease students in maintaining and developing cultural competence. Research suggests that through multicultural experience students experience authentic educational achievement and a strong sense of self-esteem (Bennett, 2001).

At the Boys & Girls Club in Atlantic City, local culture was seen as helpful elements during the self-authorship program. While the students worked independently, they learned and progressed through personal changes that reflected their individuality and surroundings. During this time of growth it was important to take into consideration that the self-authorship also while progressive it was influenced by other factors such as personal and cultural identity. According to Freire (1994), we are neither only what we inherit nor only what we acquire, but rather a combination of the dynamic relationship between what we inherited and what we acquired. Diversity was that reality at the self-authorship student population and I needed to look at it in relation to my teaching rather than as a static snapshot (Senge, 1990).

In relation to my students participating in the self-authorship program I found myself welcomed and somehow understood them within their diverse world. All of the

students participating in the program had diverse backgrounds. They associated with my vocal accent and my background with their own and found something in common, which gave them the ability to communicate freely. “Are you Spanish?” often my students’ asked, and some of them would ask questions in Spanish. Although I could not answer them in the same language I was able to understand them, because of the similarity of the Spanish language and Italian, and I would give an answer in English. This type of communication was repeated often during the after-school program. Students would switch language for continuance of their thought, and it gave them some kind of freedom of expressing their ideas. As a multicultural leader, I was open to such communication in order to encourage the students to think in their familiar language and rephrase it in English.

Creativity Leadership Influence on Self-Authorship Program

Creativity has been a guide for my leadership throughout this research. I believed that if I developed as a teacher, my students would also grow by following in my footsteps. Moreover, I recalled one episode when one of my students had observed me coming to the self-authorship program with a book. I was not aware until the student pointed out. He said, “Mrs. T. every time you come here, you have a book with you. Do you read all the time?” I noticed that I did have a book with me. “Yes, I answered to the student, this is how I learned the English language and all other knowledge I have gained.” The next day, and all other days, I observed the same student entered the club always holding a book to read.

As a creative leader it was necessary for me to maintain the philosophical idea that students were the core of the program. I worked primarily to create opportunities for

students, removing obstacles and facilitating their work, encouraging growth and positive attitudes during the self-authorship program (Kampmeier, 1976). Children ages 9 to 13 who develop artistic ability are more concerned with expressing their own ideas (Lowenfield, 1949). As a teacher, I considered this element important while implementing and assessing student's work. The goal was to allow students to develop individual concepts without restrictions, in the absence of an adult-biased criticism. As a creative teacher I encouraged the students to discover and explore new ideas. Students were purposely encouraged to use the different mediums of the self-authorship program, such as drawing and animation, as a way of developing voice and identity (Lowenfield, 1949).

“A drawing is an autobiographical record of one's discovery of an event seen, remembered or imagined” (Berger, 1974, p. 166). In the case of the children at the Boys & Girls Club of Atlantic City, the art was important in encouraging personal expression. With the use of the self-authorship program, I encouraged the children to explore freely their artistic abilities. Every line, shape, and form that was created was considered a discovery and a “stepping stone” toward the next line, shape, form or discovery.

As children were encouraged to create images inspired by events, trips to other places, sports and activities, the stories begin to emerge. Children ages 9 to 13 years old “are thought to be at the height of their curiosity and imaginative power” (Burton, 1980, p. 58). In order to create, it was important that I guided the children with the proper tools so they could observe and inquire, capture character objects and events, and develop ideas. During this phase, children in the course of their drawing, did not intend to

communicate metaphorically, but rather subconsciously (Smith, 1983), using themes such as wishes and fears.

According to Clement (1992) “Creating their own images supports children in their thinking” (p. 121). As a creative leader, I developed self-authorship on the grounds of creating a welcoming environment where students and the teacher had a natural approach to learning. This is where combined ideas were put together freely and were encouraged by me as the instructor. Creative leadership was modeled in a natural way with the students so that creativity was promoted and reinforced.

Leadership Reflection, Change, and Implications of Study

The nature of teaching, aside from leadership, implies constructing theory and practice, resolving problems, and learning continuously (Watt & Watt, 1999). Connected to my educational leadership research, was the opportunity to explore and engage in a constructive learning. Caring environment while sharing reciprocally through teaching, found a common ground with students and other staff members. Throughout this experience, I gained knowledge in theoretical connections while further developing and understanding my leadership. In particular, I gained knowledge of the steps and tools used in the process of planning, conducting, and interpreting the theory in action.

Coming from a different cultural background, my sense of community and belonging had somehow changed. These experiences have connected me to the notion of community and the belief that like everywhere in the world, people are the same regardless of their individual origins. I have looked at the experience also as a bridge of communication, understanding, connection, and a fundamental step for building and defining myself, through the lens of leadership.

As a leader and a teacher, I had to continuously fuel my understanding and connections with children, and how to be simple and creative in my approach to them. Teaching is not a simple task in an after-school environment. The situations change continuously because of the structure of the after-school organization; this was especially true of the Boys & Girls Club of Atlantic City. Most of the changes in this study came from small steps of the action research in interaction with students and other staff members. Overall, the change came in the form of personal discovery, self-understanding, and self-reflection.

Leadership and change has been a dynamic presence throughout my learning and this research study. The experience was constructed with opportunities to learn new things and to open my eyes to a new student population. Involving culturally related experiences, I maintained a cultural competence in relation to the students that was important in developing a genuine sense of self. My leadership ideas in regard to effective education were mostly based on personal knowledge. In this approach, change proceeded through my individual construction of understanding. Further, as a leader I built the knowledge not only through the use of traditional learning, but also through my own life experiences (Kegan, 1999).

Adopting this espoused leadership, I realized that my role as an educator extended beyond my responsibility of teaching the students within a community setting. I also collaborated with staff to determine how to improve the overall quality of the learning environment in the after-school community of the Boys and Girls Club of Atlantic City. Moreover, the process of analyzing this information gave me the opportunity to critically

reflect on my teaching practice by applying the concepts of the constructivist leadership model, to actual reality (Baxter Magolda, 1999; Kegan, 1982).

One key elements of my leadership definition was about pedagogy, learning together, and constructing meaning and knowledge. This involved opportunities to surface and mediate perceptions, values, beliefs, information, and assumptions through continuing conversations with my students. With the guide of my leadership paradigm, I instructed students to create, inquire, and generate ideas. Using such guidance, I also had time to reflect upon my work toward learning, and to create actions that grew out of these new understandings.

The capacity to create an effective work environment as a leader and teacher, my leadership required core values, equity, facilitating change and transition, understanding student learning, and clear sense of self (Kegan, 1996). Change came within me as a leader. Throughout my years of doctoral studies I have emerged stronger and more confident on my thoughts and pedagogical practice. My espoused leadership has changed according to my experience, work, and everyday teaching.

The model tested was based on Baxter Magolda's self-authorship theoretical foundation that indicated growth in students learning during after-school program. Overall findings supported the self-authorship pedagogical method applied to younger age population. Kegan's (1994) and Baxter Magolda (1992, 1999, 2002, 2004) emphasized on the importance of developing other than self-independence with the intrapersonal and interpersonal development also intercultural maturity (King & Baxter Magolda, 2005). Such cultural frame was welcomed and became natural within the student population of the self-authorship after-school program. Their diverse background

hosted the diversity of self-authorship pedagogy organically and that was a key component that made self-authorship pedagogy approachable and acceptable.

However, the research findings referred to settings outside traditional school such as after-school community programs. Traditional school curriculum might be a subject to be discussed toward the self-authorship pedagogical method. The self-authorship approach might be considered applicable if arranged to the school standards or custom curriculum.

Recommendations for Practice and Further Research

Recommendation for practice is advised toward individual programs in any field such as art, language, and science. The self-authorship approach data collection could be considered in measuring students learning or growth by using portfolio data analysis. In addition other considerations would be given to measuring learning changes targeting students with impairment and difficulties. This student population will require specialist assisting during individual student needs.

This research project offered a snapshot of the student population and their engagement in the self-authorship pedagogy. This research targeted children ages 9 to 13 years old, as result recommendations are given for future research targeting other age groups. Recommendations for future research and practice include a closer look at the student engagement involving teacher interaction and supervision. Practice should include opportunities with full time teacher student interaction. This will require professional staffing or specialist available with children for a period of time.

In addition other environment settings are suggested for future data collection such as public or private K-12 schools. The self-authorship program may be replicated at

such educational institutions in order to better understand student engagement and learning using self-authorship pedagogy.

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Appendix A
IRB Approval

Rowan University
INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD
FOR THE PROTECTION OF HUMAN SUBJECTS (IRB)

Request for Revision to Approved Protocol

Principal Investigator: Fatjona Lubonja
Project Title: After-school Community Program
Faculty Advisor (If student is PI): Dr. Burton Sisco
Department: Education Leadership
IRB Protocol #: 2008-148
Original Approval Date: 4/16/2008

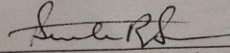
Describe the changes to the protocol (use additional page if needed):

I request a revision to approved protocol for the continuation of my research data collection for the Year 2010 – 2011.

CERTIFICATIONS: I will continue to observe the ethical guidelines and regulations regarding the protection of human subjects from research risks and will continue to adhere to the policies and procedures of the Rowan University Institutional Review Board.

SIGNATURES:
Fatjona Lubonja
Principal Investigator

5/25/2010
Date


Faculty Advisor (if PI is student)

5/27/10
Date

FOR IRB USE ONLY:

Date Received: _____ Status: Approved _____ Rejected _____
(Date) (Date)

IRB Authorized Signature: _____

Rowan University
INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD
FOR THE PROTECTION OF HUMAN SUBJECTS (IRB)

Request for Revision to Approved Protocol

Principal Investigator: Fatjona Lubonja
Project Title: After-school Community Program
Faculty Advisor (If student is PI): Dr. Burton Sisco
Department: Education Leadership
IRB Protocol #: 2008-148
Original Approval Date: 4/16/2008

Describe the changes to the protocol (use additional page if needed):

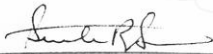
I request a revision to approved protocol for the continuation of my research data collection for the Year 2012 – 2013.

CERTIFICATIONS: I will continue to observe the ethical guidelines and regulations regarding the protection of human subjects from research risks and will continue to adhere to the policies and procedures of the Rowan University Institutional Review Board.

SIGNATURES:

Fatjona Lubonja
Principal Investigator

10/2/2012
Date


Faculty Advisor (if PI is student),

Date

FOR IRB USE ONLY:

Date Received: _____ Status: Approved _____ Rejected _____

(Date) (Date)

IRB Authorized Signature:

Appendix B

Boys & Girls Club of Atlantic City Approval



April 5, 2008

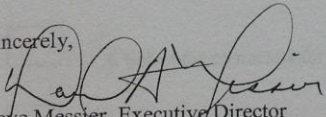
To: Fatjona Lubonja
714 Debra Street
Northfield, NJ 08225

Dear Mrs. Lubonja,

This letter is to inform you that I have reviewed and supports your research study titled, "Students' engagement in after-school community program: Improving instructional strategy". It is our understanding the project will utilize the Boys & Girls Clubs of Atlantic City during the 2008-2009 school years. We are very interested in your efforts that may help improve our after-school program.

If you have any questions or need further assistance, please contact me at (609) 347-2697.

Sincerely,



Dave Messier, Executive Director
Boys & Girls Clubs of Atlantic City
317 N. Pennsylvania Avenue
Atlantic City, NJ 08401



BOYS & GIRLS CLUBS
OF ATLANTIC CITY

To: Mr. Messier,
Executive Director
Boys & Girls Club of Atlantic City
317 N. Pennsylvania Ave.
Atlantic City, NJ 08401

Dear, Mr. Messier

I am a graduate student in the Education Leadership Department at Rowan University. I will be conducting a research project under the supervision of Dr. Sisco as part of my doctoral thesis concerning the youth engagement in after school community programs. I am requesting permission of conducting my research at your non-profit organization, the Boys & Girls Club of Atlantic City. The goal of the study is to develop effective instructional strategies toward improving youth engagement in after school programs.

To preserve the confidentiality, appointed names will be used to identify individuals. All data will be reported in terms of groups. The responses will be anonymous and that all data gathered will be confidential. There will be no physical or physiological risks involved in this study. The participants will participate voluntarily and free to withdraw at any time without any penalty.

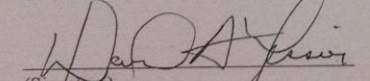
At the conclusion of the study a summary of the results will be made available to interested individuals. If you have any questions feel free to contact me at 609-703-4402 or email: tionalub@comcast.net.
Thank you.

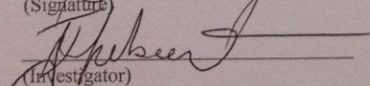
Sincerely
Fatjona Lubonja, Doctoral Candidate
Educational Leadership
714 Debra Street, Northfield, NJ 08225
email: tionalub@comcast.net
phone: 609-703-4402

Please indicate whether or not you wish to allow this study in your organization by checking the appropriate statement and signing below.

I grant permission

I do not grant permission



(Signature)


(Investigator)

4-7-08

Date
4-7-08

Date

Appendix C
Parent/Guardian Permission

Dear Parent/Guardian

I am a graduate student in the Education Leadership Department at Rowan University. I will be conducting a research project under the supervision of Dr. Sisco as part of my doctoral thesis concerning the youth retention in after school community programs. I am requesting permission of conducting my research at your non-profit organization, the Boys & Girls Club of Atlantic City. The goal of the study is to develop instructional strategies toward effective after school programs.

Each child participating in the after school program at the Boys & Girls Club of Atlantic City will be invited to participate in the program, and observed during the programs implementation. While participating in the program the child will asked questions and will be videotaped. I will retain the videotapes at the conclusion of the study. To preserve each child's confidentiality appointed names will be used to identify individuals. The videotapes may be viewed by other researchers when the data is presented at a professional conference. All data will be reported in terms of group result; individual results will not be reported.

Your decision whether or not to allow your child to participate in this study will have absolutely no effect on your child's standing in the community programs. At the conclusion of the study a summary of the results will be made available to interested parents. If you have any questions feel free to contact me at 609-703-4402 or email: tionalub@comcast.net.

Thank you.

Sincerely

Fatjona Lubonja, Doctoral Candidate, Educational Leadership
714 Debora Street, Northfield, NJ 08225
email: tionalub@comcast.net
phone: 609-703-4402

Please indicate whether or not you wish to have your child to participate in this study by checking the appropriate statement below and returning the letter to your child's after school teacher.

___ I grant permission for my child _____ to participate in this study.

___ I do not grant permission for my child _____ to participate in this study.

(Parent/Guardian Signature)

Date

Estimado madre/padre/tutor:

Yo soy un estudiante graduado en el Departamento de Educación de Liderazgo en la Universidad de Rowan. Voy a ser la realización de un proyecto de investigación bajo la supervisión del Dr Sisco como parte de mi tesis doctoral relativa a la participación de los jóvenes en los programas de la comunidad después de la escuela. Estoy pidiendo su permiso para que su hijo participe en la investigación de la organización sin fines de lucro, el Boys & Girls Club de Atlantic City. El objetivo del estudio es desarrollar eficaces estrategias de instrucción para mejorar el compromiso de los jóvenes en programas después de escuela.

Su hijo, que participan en el programa después de la escuela en el Boys & Girls Club de Atlantic City se les invitará a participar en el programa, y yo los observare durante los programas de aplicación. Aunque participan en el programa los niños harán preguntas y será grabado en video. Voy a conservar las cintas de video en la conclusión del estudio. Para preservar la confidencialidad de cada niño nombrado nombres se utilizan para identificar las personas. Las cintas de video pueden ser vistos por otros investigadores, cuando los datos se presentarán en una conferencia profesional. Todos los datos se comunicarán en términos de resultado del grupo; no searan resultados individuales.

Su decisión de permitir or no a su niño a participar en este estudio no tienen absolutamente ningún efecto sobre su hijo de pie en la comunidad de programas. Al concluir el estudio de un resumen de los resultados se pondrán a disposición de los padres interesados. Si tiene alguna pregunta no dude en ponerse en contacto conmigo al 609-703-4402 o Email: tionalub@comcast.net. Gracias.

Atentamente
Fatjona Lubonja, Doctoranda
Email: tionalub@comcast.net
Teléfono: 609-703-4402

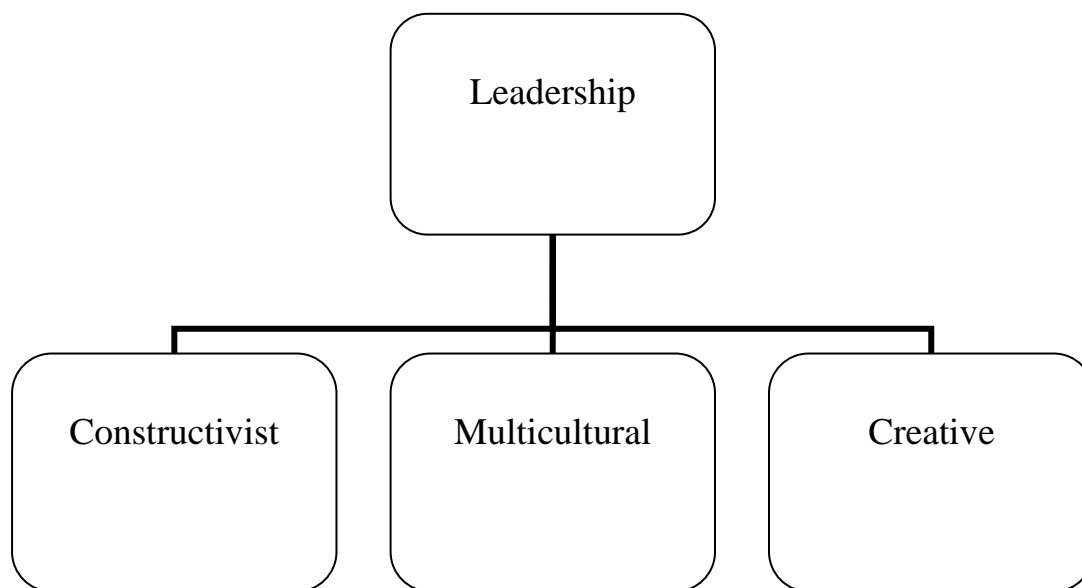
Por favor, indique si quiere o no tener a su niño a participar en este estudio mediante la verificación de la declaración pertinente que aparece a continuación y devolver la carta a su hijo después de la escuela de maestros.

Conceder permiso para que mi hijo to participar en este estudio.
 Yo no conceder permiso para que mi hijo to participar en este estudio.

(Padre / Tutor Firma)

Fecha

Appendix D
Espoused Leadership



Appendix E

The Self-Authorship Cycle I Questionnaire

The interview is designed to take few minutes of your time. Your participation is entirely voluntary, and you may withdraw consent and terminate your participation at any time without consequences. All responses are anonymous and all data gathered will be confidential. There will be no names or other identifying information collected.

Indicate your choice by using *X* to the answer that applies.

1. What is your age?

9 [] 10 [] 11 [] 12 [] 13 []

2. What is your gender?

1. Female []
2. Male []

3. What is your racial/ethnic background?

1. African American []
2. Caucasian []
3. Hispanic []
5. Multiracial []

4. What language category do you place yourself?

1. English (1 Language) []
2. Bilingual (2 Language) []
3. Multilanguage []
4. Other (no English) []

5. How many years of membership do you have with Boys & Girls Club?

1. Less than 1 year []
2. 1-2 years []
3. 3-4 years []
4. 5-6 years []

6. When participating at the creative self-authorship program you:

	Yes	No
• Create movies	[]	[]
• Play with friends	[]	[]
• Create visual characters	[]	[]
• Tell a story	[]	[]
• Create together with other friends	[]	[]

7. During your participation in self-authorship program have you shared your experience with:

	Very much	Some	Not at all
• Other friends in the club	[]	[]	[]
• Other friends in school	[]	[]	[]
• Parents	[]	[]	[]
• Brother/sister/cousin	[]	[]	[]
• School Teacher	[]	[]	[]
• Principal	[]	[]	[]

8. Did self-authorship program influence your way of:

	Very much	Some	Not at all
• Working together with friends	[]	[]	[]
• Working by yourself	[]	[]	[]
• Interacting with the teacher	[]	[]	[]
• Writing stories/poetry	[]	[]	[]
• Creating movies	[]	[]	[]

9. While working with the self-authorship program (animation/drawing/poetry) you:

	Very much	Some	Not at all
• Solved your own problem	[]	[]	[]
• Wrought your own story	[]	[]	[]
• Published your movie	[]	[]	[]
• Shared your work with others	[]	[]	[]
• Shared your personal thoughts	[]	[]	[]

10. Overall how do you rate the program?

Very good	Good	Not good	Not good at all
[]	[]	[]	[]

Thank you for your participation.

Appendix F

Observation

Self-Authorship Observation

Opening the computer.

Notes _____

Opening the program folder.

Notes _____

Saving under their name.

Notes _____

Interacting with the program.

Notes _____

Writing concept

Notes _____

Engagement time

Notes _____

Read document

Notes _____

Observation and providing help.

Notes _____

Observation without helping.

Notes _____

Voluntarily use of program.

Notes _____

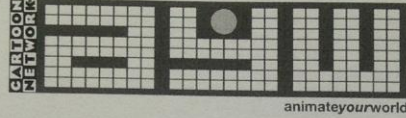
Uncomfortable using computer.

Notes _____

Comfortable using computer.

Notes _____

Appendix G
Guiding Instructions



shapingcharacter

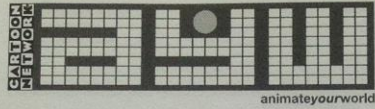
PROJECT PLANNER

Overview: Your job is to create a solution and ending to one of the starter animations that you see when you enter the *Production Lab* or to create a new animation.

Follow the steps below to successfully complete your task:

1. Review the animations in the *Cartoon Theater's, Now Showing.*
2. Choose to create an ending for a starter animation in the *Production Lab* OR create a new animation from scratch.
3. Develop a good story for your story ending or your new animation.
4. Select the characters for your story and create interesting character profiles
5. Assemble a sequence of exciting frames to create your storyboard.
6. Test your frames and edit.
7. Play your movie.
8. Test and edit again to make sure your animation tells your story.
9. Release your movie to the *Cartoon Theater* for others to enjoy.
10. Congratulations! You are now an animator.





shapingcharacter

STORY DEVELOPMENT FORM (cont.)

How is the problem or conflict introduced?

Which characters help with the problem or conflict?

Who does what?

Why do they get involved?

Where and when do they start helping?

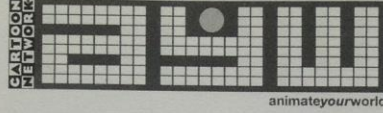
What character traits do the characters use to be helpful?

What consequences do their actions have on the story?

How are other characters in the story affected?

How does the story end?





shapingcharacter

ABOUT DEVELOPING A STORY

All animations tell a story. The stories enacted through animations have the same elements as any good story:

- A Setting (sometimes with various scenes)
- Character/s
- A strong beginning
- Interesting development of a plot or problem
- Exciting and/or interesting way the plot or problem is resolved
- A great ending

Story Setting:

- * Where does the story take place?

In Animate Your World: Shaping Character, you can select from sixteen backgrounds.

Look at the backgrounds to help you define your setting. For example, your story could take place in Millson Middle School. One scene might be in the principal's office, then your characters might move to the gym or the computer room, etc. Or, your setting could be in Dayton, Ohio and you might use the mall, the football stadium and the livingroom.

Characters: The characters in your story are very important.

- * How many characters will you choose for your story?
- * What are their names?

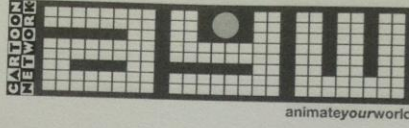
In Animate Your World: Shaping Character, there are six "animated actors" who can be used to play the parts of your characters. Before you write your story, you should look at these "actors".

Beginning of the Story: Depending on your characters and your plot, you will want to think carefully about how you begin your story.

- * Do you want to set up the problem immediately or will the plot/problem show up after viewers get to know your characters?
- * Which character or characters will be on the screen? What will they be doing and what will they say to get things started?
- * How will your characters' expressions, words and actions mix together to begin your story?

Animate Your World: Shaping Character has specific actions each character can perform. Look at the various animations found in the Cartoon Theatre, Character Corner and the Production Lab to see how the characters can move.





shapingcharacter

CHARACTER PROFILE - FORM

WHAT IS THE NAME OF THIS CHARACTER?

AGE:

GRADE (IF CHARACTER GOES TO SCHOOL):

WHERE DOES THIS CHARACTER LIVE?

LIKES: THINK ABOUT THINGS LIKE FAVORITE FOODS, COLOR, TV PROGRAM, MOVIES AND/OR SPORTS

DISLIKES:

WHO ARE HER/HIS FRIENDS?

WHAT ARE THIS CHARACTER'S POSITIVE TRAITS OR BEHAVIORS?

WHAT ARE THIS CHARACTER'S NEGATIVE TRAITS OR BEHAVIORS?



Appendix H
Pre-and-Post-Test

Pre-Test Evaluation

Directions: Please circle (○) the answer.

1. What is the first step after to open a file?
 - a) Turning on Power Button
 - b) Open Internet File
 - c) Double clicking on the document folder icon
2. Where do you save your work?
 - a) Documents
 - b) Students Folder
 - c) Program File
3. Where is student folder icon located?
 - a) My Document
 - b) Application
 - c) Temporary folder
4. What program do you use to create your own animation movie?
 - a) Microsoft Publisher
 - b) Microsoft Word
 - c) Animate Your World

5. What is the next step after you open Animate Your World Program?

- a) Save
- b) Publish
- c) Create Character

6. What do you click to create a picture theme?

- a) Background
- b) Voice
- c) Character

7. What do you click to make character move?

- a) Background
- b) Play movie
- c) Action

8. What action you take after voice recording?

- a) Record
- b) Play
- c) Trash

9. What action you if you want to see the movie?

- a) Return
- b) Play
- c) Save

Post-Test Evaluation Directions: Please circle (○) the answer.

1. What is the first step after to open a file?
 - a) Turning on Power Button
 - b) Open Internet File
 - c) Double clicking on the document folder icon
2. Where do you save your work?
 - a) Documents
 - b) Students Folder
 - c) Program File
3. Where is student folder icon located?
 - a) My Document
 - b) Application
 - c) Temporary folder
4. What program do you use to create your own animation movie?
 - a) Microsoft Publisher
 - b) Microsoft Word
 - c) Animate Your World
5. What is the next step after you open Animate Your World Program?
 - a) Save
 - b) Publish
 - c) Create Character

6. What do you click to create a picture theme?

a) Background

b) Voice

c) Character

7. What do you click to make character move?

a) Background

b) Play movie

c) Action

8. What action you take after voice recording?

a) Record

b) Play

c) Trash

9. What action you if you want to see the movie?

a) Return

b) Play

c) Save

Appendix I
Portfolio Evaluation Rubric

EVALUATION RUBRIC	High/Distinguished 3 Point	Medium/ Effective 2 Point	Low /Developing 1 Point
Craftsmanship/ Skills	Content and Skill are connected to assignment objectivity. Work shows neatness, and precision. Completed within the time frame	Task is connected to key skills and content in assignment objectivity. Art work match time frame.	Task is loosely to key skills and content in assignment objectivity.
Complexity	Task encloses different skills, content and higher – level of thinking.	Task encloses different skills in connection with high level of thinking.	Task encloses skills, but need a flowing connection.
Elements & Principles of Design	Subject was planned and thoughtfully chosen. Skilled steps were followed applying the elements of space, sketching, color, and composition.	Subject was planned. Basic steps were followed applying the elements of space, sketching, color, and composition.	Basic steps were followed applying the elements of space, sketching, color, and composition.
Creativity /Originality	Expression of ideas, style, and imagination were incorporated in connection with subject knowledge.	Ideas and style were incorporated within the subject.	Basic ideas were included within the subject.

Appendix J

Student Portfolio Score Sheet

Conceptual Content Characteristics (Tuman, 1999)

10. Realism: Elements pertaining real life experience
11. Fantasy: Elements reflecting exaggerated experiences
12. Humor: Elements of communication that provoke laughter
13. Action: Relate to motion of characters
14. Social: Elements of engagement in social relation
15. Care: Elements of concern for others
16. Conflict: Elements of disagreement
17. Heroism: Elements of idealistic act and sense of strength
18. Travel: Elements of place, change, and transition

Formal Language Characteristics

7. Spelling: Relate to accurate word spelling
 8. Rhyme: Relate to poetic style
 9. Rhythm: Relate to the rhythmic sound, voice interpretation
 10. Descriptive: Relate to expressive style of writing
 11. Politeness: Pertaining respective word use
 12. Completeness: Relate to comprehensive use of word flow
-

CYCLE II: Student's Portfolio Score Sheet

Student's Code #

Variable	Low 1	Medium 2	High 3
Conceptual Content Characteristics			
10. Realism	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
11. Fantasy	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
12. Humor	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
13. Action	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
14. Social	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
15. Care	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
16. Conflict	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
17. Heroism	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
18. Travel	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Formal Language Characteristics			
7. Spelling	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
8. Rhyme	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
9. Rhythm	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
10. Descriptive	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
11. Politeness	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
12. Completeness	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Appendix K

Staff Survey

Dear Staff Member

As a doctoral student in educational leadership, I am conducting a survey for my dissertation in Educational Leadership course at Rowan University. My survey explores the staff's opinion regarding the self-authorship afterschool program impact at the Boys & Girls Club of Atlantic City.

The data findings in this survey will be incorporated in fulfillment of research dissertation requirements under the supervision of Dr. Sisco, Department of Educational Leadership, Rowan University, Glassboro, NJ 08028.

The survey is designed to take few minutes of your time. Your participant is entirely voluntary, and you may withdraw consent and terminate your participation at any time without consequences. All responses are anonymous and all data gathered will be confidential. There will be no names or other identifying information collected.

I understand that your time is precious, but in order for me to validate the research you will have to sign the consent form and answer the questions following the consent form. Because time is a restricted a fast answer will be greatly appreciated.

If you have any questions feel free to contact me at the phone # 609-703-4402 or email: tionalub@comcast.net. Thank you for your cooperation and responding to this survey.

Sincerely

Fatjona Lubonja, Doctoral Candidate
Educational Leadership
714 Debora Street, Northfield, NJ 08225
email: tionalub@comcast.net
phone: 609-703-4402

1. I give my consent to participate in this survey exploring staff's perspective regarding the self-authorship program in the after-school community programs at Boys & Girls Club of Atlantic City

Signature of Participant _____

Signature of Investigator _____

The survey is designed to take few minutes of your time. Your participant is entirely voluntary, and you may withdraw consent and terminate your participation at any time without consequences. All responses are anonymous and all data gathered will be confidential. There will be no names or other identifying information collected.

Indicate your choice by using X to the answer that applies.

1. What is your gender?

1. Female []
2. Male []

2. What is your race?

1. African American []
2. Caucasian []
3. Hispanic []
4. Multiracial []

3. What is your relationship with the Boys & Girls Club?

1. Full time employ []
2. Part time employ []
3. Volunteer []

4. How many years of experience do you have with community programs?

1. Less than 1 year []
2. 1-2 years []
3. 3-4 years []
4. 5-6 years []
5. More than 7 years []

To what extent you rate the following statements:

	Poor	Fair	Good	Very Good
1. Students' participation in the afterschool community programs.	[]	[]	[]	[]
2. Students' participation in the self-authorship community program.	[]	[]	[]	[]
3. Communication between staff and students participating in the self-authorship program.	[]	[]	[]	[]
4. The impact the program had on attendance at the Boys & Girls Club of Atlantic City.	[]	[]	[]	[]
5. Efforts to reach in community children to participate at the afterschool programs.	[]	[]	[]	[]
6. Self-authorship program impact at the Boys & Girls Club of Atlantic City	[]	[]	[]	[]

To what extent is your agreement/disagreement for the following statements:

	Poor	Fair	Good	Very Good
7. Students' membership at the Boys & Girls Club of Atlantic City has increased the last year.	[]	[]	[]	[]
8. Students' attendance at the Boys & Girls Club of Atlantic City has increased the last year.	[]	[]	[]	[]

- | | | | | |
|---|-----|-----|-----|-----|
| 9. Students' daily attendance in the afterschool program has increased | [] | [] | [] | [] |
| 10. Participation in self-authorship program has a positive impact on students. | [] | [] | [] | [] |

How important are the following elements:

- | | Not Important | Important | Very Important |
|---|----------------------|------------------|-----------------------|
| 11. Students' participation in community programs at Boys & Girls Club of Atlantic City. | [] | [] | [] |
| 12. Interaction between student members and afterschool program. | [] | [] | [] |
| 13. Introduction of new programs such as self-authorship | [] | [] | [] |
| 14. Collaboration between Boys & Girls Club of Atlantic City and children in the community. | [] | [] | [] |