

Student Teachers' Perception of a Wellness Program within a Literacy Summer Camp

Victoria Hernandez, Camille Lewis, Re'Shaun Blake

Introduction

Abstract

Approximately 50% of teachers nationwide leave the classroom within the first five years (DeAngelis & Presley, 2011; Hunt J. & T. Carroll, 2003). This study's purpose was to investigate if a wellness program will reduce teacher's stress and burn out. This study investigated preservice teachers' prevention, perception, and response to a wellness program aimed at reducing teacher stress and burnout. The analysis of qualitative data collected from observations, focus groups, and interviews showed five main themes: psychological sense of community, self-awareness, relationship with scholars, self-efficacy, and knowledge transference. Research is needed to future determine the effects of a wellness program on preservice teachers.

Aims of the Research

This research was conducted because 50% of educators leave the classroom within their first five years of teachers and this is due to a lack of support and high stress. These stressors are supported by research to be heightened in lower income schools with a higher minority population. An investigation into the experience of preservice teacher's prevention, perception, and response to teacher stress and burnout is necessary so that effective interventions can be developed. With the proper support, teacher retention in urban schools can be increased and sustained.

Research Questions

How can a mental wellness program benefit preservice teachers prevention to burnout?

How can a mental wellness program benefit teacher retention in urban schools?

How can a teacher transfer what they learn in a mental wellness program into their classrooms?

Method

Research Design

The research was conducted through observations and field notes collected during each of the one-hour afternoon wellness sessions with Temple Fit.

Once Freedom Schools came to an end, there were semi-structured interviews conducted with the Student Leader Interns. To get a better understanding of the perspective of the wellness programs from the Servant Leader Interns' perspectives, we had a one-hour focus group.

Data were recorded in a research reflexivity journal.

Participants

Participants were sampled from the population of eight Servant Leader Interns (SLIs) at the FAMU COE-DRS Freedom School (FS).

Data Collection and Analysis

Qualitative Data

Data sources included observations, focus groups, and interviews.

When the data was initially coded, each of the SLIs revealed to have different experiences but shared similar commonalities as it related to Temple Fit.

After reviewing these themes, they were condensed into just five: transition from preservice to teacher, psychological sense of community, emotional burden, exposed occupational stress, and knowledge application.

The data was reviewed by group and analyzed.

Results

Conclusion

Every preservice teacher (SLIs) had a unique experience with the wellness program but they still had some commonalities throughout each of them. Overall, the pre service teachers felt that the wellness program was ill-scheduled but despite the scheduling this was a beneficial integration to their summer program. This program benefitted their perception on how they responded to administrators, stress, and the students in a positive way. There were five main themes that emerged from the data: psychological sense of community, transitional stress, emotional burden, occupational tension, and knowledge application.

Discussion

What can I do with this information?

How does this impact me?

How does this transfer into my profession?

Moving forward, there should be more research conducted so that we can continue to understand in depth the impact of a wellness program on teachers. Additionally, there should be a longitudinal study conducted to track these teachers in the field.

Key References

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