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A Multi-Case Study of AmeriCorps Tutoring Programs

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A dissertation submitted to the Education Faculty of Lindenwood University
in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of
Doctor of Education
School of Education

DECLARATION OF ORIGINALITY

I do hereby declare and attest to the fact that this is an original study based solely upon my own scholarly work at Lindenwood University and that I have not submitted it for any other college or university course or degree here or elsewhere.

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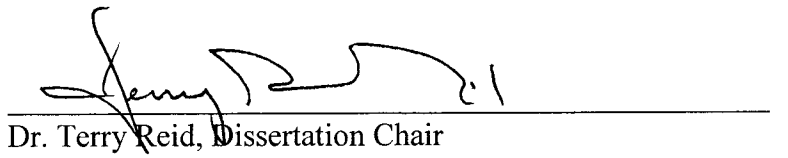

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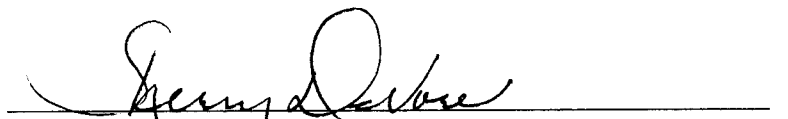

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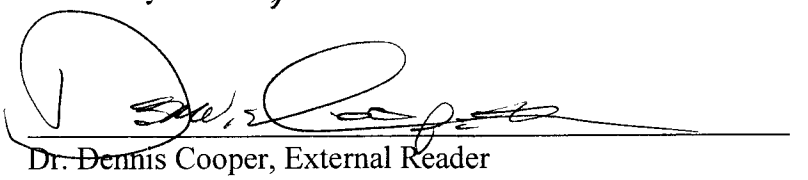

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DEDICATION

In honor of my loving husband Steve,

helpful son David, and

sweet daughter Elaine.

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The patience and support of my family have sustained me through the work and toil surrounding the completion of this study. I could not have completed this task without their sacrifice, understanding, and support. I thank my parents David and Nancy Hale for believing in me and encouraging me to strive for excellence and to set high goals. I thank my Aunt Wanda and Uncle Raymond for providing me with support throughout my undergraduate career. Their financial support and encouragement helped to provide the basis for my education. I also thank Dr. Sherry DeVore for her encouragement and support and for helping me understand how to tackle the joys and heartaches of a qualitative study.

Abstract

An analysis of the practices and results of AmeriCorps tutoring programs in a Midwest state was the basis of this study. Volunteer management theory, the theory of planned behavior, and social change and justice theory were used as the theoretical foundation of this qualitative, multi-case study. Understanding the essential components of effective AmeriCorps tutoring programs will assist program directors in establishing or improving AmeriCorps tutoring programs throughout the country. The essential components identified in this study will serve as a model for program directors and provide state and national AmeriCorps leadership insight as to the support needed to establish effective tutoring programs.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

LIST OF TABLES

LIST OF FIGURES

CHAPTER ONE – INTRODUCTION

Background

Educators across America are faced with a myriad of challenges ranging from increased competition from abroad, high dropout rates, and the standards movement. During this time of challenge, public opinion and frustration are on the rise, Howell, Peterson, and West (2008) explained:

> When asked to grade the nation's public schools as a whole, Americans offer decidedly mixed assessments. Most notably, more of them give the schools a D or an F than assign an A or a B. Only 20% of survey respondents give the schools in the nation as a whole one of the two top grades, over 50% give them a C, and no less than 25% grade them with a D or an F. (p. 3)

Comprehensive school reform, a focus of No Child Left Behind (NCLB) and a product of effective schools research, describes components of reform that appear to lead to improved student achievement. Partnerships with parents and communities are one of eleven areas of focus recommended to improve student learning (No Child Left Behind: A Desktop Reference, 2002). Butler and Grier (2000) explained that the utilization of volunteers in public schools is not a new concept; schools have utilized homeroom parents to meet a variety of needs from hosting parties to helping students. However, educators across the nation are now turning to volunteers to assist with the academic support at increasing rates.

According to the Volunteering in America (2008) research, rates of volunteer support have risen over the past seven years. Volunteer support in all areas of civic life showed dramatic increases, with over "60.8 million volunteers dedicating over 8.1 billion hours of service to community organizations in 2007" (Corporation for National and Community Service, 2007b, ¶ 1). The United States has had a long history of volunteer service. The Domestic Volunteer Service Act of 1973 set the stage for the formal encouragement of and support from the federal government for volunteer service; this legislation created the VISTA (Volunteers In Service To America) and Senior Corps programs and a governing agency called Action (Corporation for National and Community Service, 2007b). The National and Community Service Act of 1990 expanded the role of the federal government to further the support for volunteer service by creating the National and Community Service Act (Corporation for National and Community Service, 2008b). This act renewed the focus on and encouragement for volunteer service and created a new independent federal agency, The Commission on National and Community Service, later known as the Corporation (Corporation for National and Community Service, 2008b) was established, to connect Americans of all ages with opportunities to give back to their communities. The Corporation merged the programs and work of ACTION and the Commission on National and Community Service (Corporation for National and Community Service, 2007b).

According to the Corporation for National and Community Service (2008b), the Corporation for National and Community Service was begun in 1994, and AmeriCorps programs were launched at the same time, providing opportunities for Americans to make an intensive commitment to service. The AmeriCorps network of local, state, and

national service programs engage more than 70,000 Americans in intensive service each year and AmeriCorps members serve through more than 3,000 public agencies, nonprofits, faith-based, and other community organizations (Corporation for National and Community Service, 2008b). AmeriCorps members are "helping to meet critical needs in public safety, education, health, and the environment" (Corporation for National and Community Service, 2008b, ¶ 9). The variety of service opportunities is almost unlimited: "Members may tutor and mentor youth, build affordable housing, teach computer skills, clean parks and streams, run after-school programs, or help communities respond to disasters" (Corporation for National and Community Service, 2008c, ¶ 6).

According to the Corporation for National and Community Service (2008d), in Missouri, more than 17,000 people participate in national service each year. Not-for-profit organizations across the state host projects and programs ranging from working as school tutors, assisting in prisoner reentry programs, to working with seniors who are homebound (Corporation for National and Community Service, 2008d). Since 1994, more than 6,000 Missouri residents have completed one year of AmeriCorps service (Corporation for National and Community Service, 2008d).

AmeriCorps program director Brandal (2008) stated that five school districts in Missouri have recently turned to the AmeriCorps program for support in meeting educational goals. These schools have established tutoring programs designed to provide academic support to students (Brandal). Over 150 tutors each year provide students with academic support in school settings (Brandal). Thompson (2008), Missouri Community Service Commission Executive Director, reported that since the year 2000 the Missouri Community Service Commission has sponsored over 1,690 AmeriCorps Members

through the state with a large percentage of those members providing service in schools throughout Missouri. Thousands of elementary and middle school students have received support in both mathematics and reading as a result of these tutoring efforts (Thompson).

Conceptual Underpinnings of the Study

Volunteer management theory, social change and justice theory, and the theory of planned behavior provided the primary lens through which all information was viewed. Understanding of trends and practices in volunteering from both the state and national level provided historical and current perspectives on the influence and impact of volunteers on student learning. Analysis of the origins and growth of the AmeriCorps program at the state and national level provided a baseline for understanding. Exploration of the educational impact of volunteer-based tutoring, the role of school culture, and best practices recommendations in tutoring instruction provided a framework for viewing the selected AmeriCorps programs and a foundation for understanding their practices.

Providing volunteers with support combined with front-end planning, high quality recruitment, and thoughtful selection are the basic components of volunteer management theory (Volunteer Canada, 2008). McFarland (2004) explained that volunteers must become an integral part of the core of an organization and feel a part of the organization. Attention to recruitment and selection can result in increased volunteer participation, as many volunteers report not being asked to serve as the primary reason that they are not as involved as they might be otherwise (Independent Sector, 2003). Ellis (1996) expounded on the value of providing volunteers with an orientation to the organization. This familiarization with the policies, procedures, vision, and mission ensures that volunteers

are able to align their service with organizational needs and support the overall focus of the organization (Ellis).

Garrett (2005) explained that social change and social justice theory described the role of individual citizens working together to impact the basic constructs of society. This results in creating an environment where those with the greatest advantage work to improve the situation of those with the least advantage (Garrett). Snarr (2003) expounded on the role of volunteers as agents of social change, explaining that volunteers demonstrate a unique understanding of the needs of others and that this impacts the identity of the volunteers and results in individuals who are advocates for social change and social justice.

The theory of planned behavior, according to Azjen (1985), described the process by which individuals select volunteer opportunities and engage and participate in volunteer activities. Warburton and Terry (2000) provided support for the application of the theory of planned behavior to the domain of volunteerism. Warburton and Terry examined the efficacy of this theory in prediction of volunteer participation and further supported the efficacy of the theory of planned behavior in the understanding and prediction of participation in volunteerism.

An exploration of the impact and influence of volunteers at both the national and state level revealed steady increases in volunteer participation rates over the last decade (The Corporation for National and Community Service, 2007b). Analysis of volunteer demographics revealed trends that can be used to support expansion of volunteer programs as well as focus areas for future growth (The Corporation for National and Community Service, 2007b). At a time when budgets are shrinking, organizations are

looking to volunteer support to meet critical needs; if available millions of volunteers could immediately begin to provide service (Urban Institute, 2003). Missouri volunteer levels mirrored national trends over the last decade, with increased volunteer participation of over one million citizens volunteering each year (Corporation for National and Community Service, 2007b).

AmeriCorps programs across the country have capitalized on the surge in volunteer involvement by offering yearlong volunteer service opportunities across the nation (Corporation for National and Community Service 2008g). The Corporation for National and Community Service (2008g) explained that AmeriCorps consists of a network of national service programs that meet critical needs through partnerships with public agencies, nonprofits, faith-based, and other local organizations. The state of Missouri involves hundreds of AmeriCorps members each year in direct service that impacts local communities (Missouri Community Service Commission, 2008).

Moss, Swartz, Obeidallah, Stewart, Greene (2001) described the exploration of best practices in tutoring, which provided a basis for determining the research-based practices of AmeriCorps tutoring programs. Rasco (1999) reported on the many benefits that volunteer tutors offer children beyond academic support. Rasco expounded on the value of individual attention, intensive practice, motivation to master reading skills, and increased self-confidence. Children who have experienced volunteer-based tutoring significantly outperformed students in control groups in both reading fluency and comprehension, even after tutoring had ended (Burns, Senesac, & Silberglitt, 2008).

The traditions, norms, values, rituals, beliefs, and unwritten rules that make up school culture have a tremendous impact on volunteers (Deal & Kennedy, 1982). The

Center for Improving School Culture (2004) concurred, explaining people in any healthy organization must have agreement on how to do things and agree on what is worth doing. The manner in which the school staff members welcome volunteers is evident in the school culture, directly impacting the rate of volunteer support that schools experience (Beaudoin & Taylor, 2004). Volunteer coordinators must work as a liaison between the school culture and volunteers in order to maximize involvement (Silver, 1998).

Statement of the Problem

Throughout the nation, educators are turning to volunteers to assist with the task of ensuring that all students are reading at grade level (Moss, et al., 2001). Young (2007) reported that over "90% of children who received adult volunteer help experienced improvement in reading skills and became more confident as a result of tutoring" (p. 42). Broussard, Mosley-Howard, and Roychoudhury (2006) proposed that students averaging three to four contacts a week with their tutors cited greater academic motivation, improved attendance, and achievement efforts.

Elbaum, Vaughn, Hughes, and Moody (2000) reported that one-to-one, volunteer-based tutoring programs "offered great promise in increasing reading performance among at-risk elementary students" (p. 608). However, programs must be well designed and reliably implemented in order to make a significant contribution to enhanced reading performance (Elbaum et al.). Findings showed that college students and trained, reliable volunteers from the community could offer significant assistance to struggling readers (Elbaum et al.).

Moss, Hiller, Moore, and Gamse (1999) explained that educators seeking partnerships with organizations such as the Corporation for National and Community

Service and the AmeriCorps program can find a "well trained, dependable volunteer force to help address the educational needs of today's learners" (p. 6). Over 54% of AmeriCorps programs focus on educational issues. As a result, resources and training materials have been developed to support AmeriCorps tutors in providing high quality learning experiences. Tutors receive training and ongoing oversight focused on improving students' reading proficiency (Corporation for National and Community Service, 2008e).

This study was intended to explore the impact of AmeriCorps tutoring programs on student educational progress. Further exploration of the impact of school culture, best practices, and the participation of volunteer involvement assisted the researcher in gaining a more comprehensive understanding of AmeriCorps tutoring programs.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to explore the educational progress, changes in school culture, and levels of volunteer involvement experienced in school districts which host AmeriCorps tutoring programs. A qualitative, multi-case study was selected to allow the researcher an opportunity to examine and develop an understanding of the participants' feelings, perceptions, beliefs, and practices surrounding AmeriCorps tutoring programs within their district. Frechtling, Sharp, and Westat (1997) stated that qualitative research "allows the evaluator to capture the perspectives of project participants, staff, and others associated with the projects" (p. 14). Interviews with AmeriCorps program directors revealed the directors' perspective on effective program design, program effectiveness, and the impact of AmeriCorps tutoring programs in Missouri schools.

Research Questions

Qualitative research questions lend themselves to the analysis of complex and broad topics and generate information that is very rich and detailed in nature (Trochim, 2007). Throughout the study modifications to questions and assumptions may be made, based on the continual analysis and review of the collected data. Reviews of literature verified that the use of volunteers to address academic and social needs of students is increasing in many school districts. Butler (2001) explained that school districts must seek best practices in the use of volunteers in school settings. Analysis of the information presented in relevant research led the researcher to determine that current research was limited, regarding the impact of AmeriCorps tutoring programs. For that reason, the overarching questions used as the basis for this study were constructed around the impact of AmeriCorps tutoring programs on student educational progress, school culture, and volunteer participation. Six research questions emerged which guided this study based on the incorporation of available information:

1. What is the educational impact of AmeriCorps tutoring and how is educational progress measured?
2. How has the school culture impacted the AmeriCorps program?
3. In what ways has volunteer support in your school changed as a result of AmeriCorps tutoring?
4. How can AmeriCorps tutoring programs improve or enhance their educational impact?

5. What are the similarities and differences in the AmeriCorps tutoring programs in Missouri?
6. What elements are essential in creating an effective AmeriCorps tutoring program?

Limitations and Assumptions

Bogden and Biklen (1998) explained that the qualitative researcher joins subjects in their "natural settings, entering and spending time discovering the context of their subject matter" (p. 7). Furthermore, descriptive data is gathered in the form of words that might "unlock the clues to a more comprehensive understanding of what is being studied" (Bogden & Bilken, p. 7). Examination of the processes involved in the research and an inductive analysis of this information helped in discovering the meaning of the subject matter (Bogden & Biklen).

Limitations for this sudy were relative to the geographical area and design used by the researcher and are listed below:

1. Participation was limited to AmeriCorps directors in the state of Missouri who direct an AmeriCorps program that is currently in operation.
2. It was assumed that AmeriCorps directors had a thorough understanding of interview questions and that directors were sincere and frank in their response to questions.
3. The researcher's involvement as an AmeriCorps program director may result in bias.

Design Controls

Qualitative research provides a stage of openness from which new theories and phenomena can emerge, by providing a level of detail and depth that is difficult to achieve utilizing a quantitative approach (Ratcliff, 2009). Johnson and Christensen (2004) described qualitative research as providing both wide and deep angle lenses for use in examining both the depth and breadth of a phenomenon. Johnson and Christensen described this approach as a holistic approach to identify patterns, themes, and categories in an attempt to gain in-depth understanding of the subject at hand.

A descriptive multi-case study approach was selected for this study and theories for examining results were determined. Multi-case studies are used to provide an account of each case, as well as a cross-case comparison (Creswell, 1998). Yin (1994) explained that the purpose of a case study is to explore the decisions surrounding a specific phenomena or event, allowing researchers to focus on coming to understand why and how decisions are made and the results that follow. The constant comparative method was used to facilitate the analysis of this multi-case study. Dye, Schatz, Rosenberg, and Coleman (2000) explained that the constant comparative method provides the researcher a tool by which to continually clarify and capture the shifting information that emerges from the subjects.

Responses to open-ended, semi-structured interview questions were captured utilizing audio-recorded field interviews. All interviews were audio taped, transcribed, and returned to participants for review of accuracy and amendment prior to the coding of data. Field notes provided further insight as to the contextual setting of each interview and organization. Primary source documentary evidence further supported research,

providing a first-hand analysis of materials utilized in each program. All resources were used to triangulate the data and determine the educational and cultural impact of AmeriCorps tutoring programs.

Definition of Terms

The Corporation for National Service (2004) provided key terms and definitions, essential to the foundation of the study in the State Profiles and Performance Report:

*AmeriCorps*State.* "Three-fourths of AmeriCorps*State and National funds go to the states, where governor-appointed state service commissions manage their use. A population-based formula allotment determines the distribution of approximately one-half of these federal funds going to the states. A national competitive process for proposals submitted by the State Commissions governs how to distribute the balance" (The Corporation for National Service, 2004, p. B5).

Competitive funding. Competitive funds are awarded to state service commissions on a competitive basis to fund local nonprofit and public entities operating local community service projects (The Corporation for National Service, 2004).

Completion rates. The number of members who complete their term of service during a given fiscal year (The Corporation for National Service, 2004).

Education award. Full-time AmeriCorps members are eligible to receive an education award after one year of successful service in the amount of $4,725. Education awards can be used to pay education costs at any institution of higher education or training that receives federal financial aid, or to repay qualified student loans. A member has up to seven years after his or her term of service has ended to use the award (The Corporation for National Service, 2004).

Enrollment. Enrollment refers to the number of actual enrolled AmeriCorps members (The Corporation for National Service, 2004).

Member. Member is a term used to describe an AmeriCorps volunteer (The Corporation for National Service, 2004).

Summary

The objective of this study was to determine how AmeriCorps tutoring programs impact student educational progress, the school culture, and participation of volunteers in selected Missouri schools. A qualitative multi-case study was employed to gain an in-depth understanding of the participants' feelings, experiences, practices, and beliefs surrounding AmeriCorps tutoring programs.

In Chapter Two, a review of relevant literature was provided to explain the basis of volunteer involvement and impact on education through the lenses of volunteer management theory, social change theory, and the theory of planned behavior. In Chapter Three, an account of the research design and methodology was included. The research findings and qualitative data were presented in Chapter Four. The implications for further research and a summary of the study were included in Chapter Five.

CHAPTER TWO – REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Introduction

According to Ying Choo (2002), public concern toward the low achievement scores of American students and the achievement gaps of the most disadvantaged students has resulted in a response of alarm on the part of policymakers. The No Child Left Behind Executive Summary (2001) reported that national reading tests indicated almost 70% of inner city fourth graders do not have a basic level of reading proficiency in international math tests, and high school students in Cyprus and South Africa surpass American high school seniors in their results. Ying Choo (2002) explained that on the most superficial level, the failure of the school system to improve test scores has "thrust it to the forefront of the federal government's and the public's agenda" (¶ 4). Blitz (2001) reported:

> For many decades, education with its seemingly insurmountable challenges has captured the public spotlight. Ideally, education serves a critical role for society by cultivating future generations who will be able to express their individuality and creativity, thus improving society as a whole. However, this goal is often buried underneath the nation's obsessive pursuit to raise test scores as an indicator of improvement of the education system. (p. 24)

According to The Corporation for National Service (2004), as educators look for answers to the challenges faced within public schools, volunteer levels across the nation

increased in record numbers. Dugan (2008) stated that after the 2002 "Call for Service" by President George Bush, volunteer service has grown exponentially. On the national level, 60.8 million, or 26.2% of Americans age 16 and older volunteered through organizations in 2007 (Dugan). Dugan explained there were one million more volunteers in 2007 than 2002 and cross-sector support for service has never been stronger, as colleges adopt service learning, corporations expand social responsibility programs, and political leaders from both parties embrace citizen service. Dugan stated that Baby Boomers will double the number of older American volunteers in the coming decades, and young people are volunteering at higher rates than the last generation. David Eisner, CEO of The Corporation for National and Community Service, declared, "We have an unprecedented opportunity to seize this moment and usher in a new era of service in America," (Corporation for National and Community Service, 2008f , ¶ 2.)

In recent years, Americans have demonstrated growing interest in volunteering (Independent Sector, 1999). Policymakers have taken the position that volunteer programs can enhance the wellbeing of individuals and afford society an opportunity to address social problems (Freedman, 1993). The Corporation for National and Community Service (2008e) has established a strategic plan focused on maximizing the interest in volunteering to meet social needs. The focus of the strategic plan includes four broad goal areas:

1. Mobilizing More Volunteers: Volunteers are necessary for overcoming some of our nation's most pressing challenges. The Corporation aims to increase the number and percentage of Americans who volunteer and makes service opportunities available to Americans in order to help make this possible.

2. Ensuring a Brighter Future for All of America's Youth: Youth need caring adults in their families, schools, and communities in order to succeed. The Corporation will continue to support children in need by providing opportunities for more youth to benefit from receiving mentoring and other services, and for more youth to serve.
3. Engaging Students in Communities: Research shows that volunteering and volunteer service support enhances the learning experience. The Corporation is dedicated to expanding service learning in higher education institutions and K-12 schools across the country.
4. Harnessing Baby Boomers' Experience: The Baby Boomer generation is a highly talented, highly motivated group that could drive solutions to some of our nation's most intractable social problems. Capturing their experience and energy by engaging them in service is a high priority for The Corporation for National and Community Service. (p. 8)

The Corporation for National and Community Service (2008b) explained that youth need support from caring adults in their families, schools, and communities; in particular, youth who grow up in severely distressed environments are more likely to face challenges in achieving success in school and their careers. Volunteering through youth service and educational organizations is now much more prevalent than it was in the 1970's and 1980's, having increased by 63% since 1989 (Corporation for National and Community Service 2008b). Because adults in mid-life, ages 45 to 64 historically volunteer at higher rates than other age groups, it is possible that a shift in population toward this age group is partially responsible for the growth (Corporation for National

and Community Service, 2008f).

In Chapter Two, relevant literature was reviewed regarding prominent volunteer theories including volunteer management theory, social change and social justice theory, and the theory of planned behavior. Analysis of each theory provided explanations of the participation in and impact of volunteer activity. A discussion of the historical and current impact of volunteer service and national and local AmeriCorps programs revealed the scope of program impact on both the volunteer and those they serve.

The review of literature prompted the researcher to investigate the educational impact of volunteer-based tutoring programs and methods used to determine program effectiveness. The impact of school culture on AmeriCorps tutoring and volunteer programs was examined. An analysis of best practice recommendations was explored.

Volunteer Theory

Analysis of the following theories provided an explanation of the participation and impact of volunteer activity:

Volunteer Management Theory

Volunteer Canada (2008) explained that volunteer management theory consists of three essential components "planning, recruitment and selection, and support" (¶1). Planning provides a solid foundation for the establishment of any volunteer program and involves obtaining buy-in, designing volunteer positions, creating application forms, developing applicable policies and procedures, and educating others in the organization about involving volunteers (Volunteer Canada). According to Lynch and McCurley (1999), "job descriptions provide volunteers with thoughtfully prepared, clearly defined explanations of duties and responsibilities, a primary component of planning and the

building blocks of volunteer programs" (¶ 20). Graff (1997) explained that policy development establishes values, beliefs, and direction for volunteer involvement by "connecting the program to the larger organization and its mission" (p. 9). McFarland (2004) expounded on the importance of top-level leadership in setting the tone for "weaving volunteers into the fabric of organization" (p. 26) and in establishing a tone of mutual respect and sense of teamwork.

Recruitment and selection, according to Volunteer Canada (2008), are the second components of volunteer management theory. Independent Sector (2003) found the number one reason given by non-volunteers for their lack of involvement was that they had never been asked to serve. According to Safrit (2006), recruitment and selection are crucial components in volunteer management theory and involve multiple components including:

1. Assessing organizational climate for readiness of new volunteers.
2. Assessing organizational needs for volunteers.
3. Assessing needed skills and abilities for specific volunteer positions.
4. Developing selection process consistent with position responsibilities.
5. Conducting targeted recruitment of volunteers.
6. Matching potential volunteers with positions, based on skills, abilities, and interests.
7. Assessing skills/interests of potential volunteers for other positions.
8. Reassigning volunteers when they are unsuccessful in current positions.
9. Promoting diversity in volunteer recruitment.
10. Including other stakeholders in the volunteer selection process.

11. Designing recruiting strategies with boards and administrators.

12. Evaluating selection process against best practices. (p. 3)

Support, the third component of volunteer management theory, according to Volunteer Canada (2008), provides volunteers with the basics of orientation and training, supervision, evaluation, and recognition. According to Ellis (1996), orientation is necessary for every new volunteer and provides the overview of the total organization, regardless of the specific assignment. Ellis expounded, stating, "orientation places the work into context and allows for consistent introduction of policies, procedures, rights, and responsibilities" (p. 102). Culp, Deppe, Castillo, and Wells (1998) concurred, stating orientation and training provided volunteers the opportunity to become acquainted with the "role, organizational culture, and environment of the agency" (p. 38). Orientation provided new volunteers with generalized information and a "big picture look at the organization and its volunteer program" (Culp et al., p. 39). The need for orientation and training is compelling:

> Volunteers generally come to their new role with varying levels of knowledge about the organization. An effective orientation program introduces the volunteers to the organization as a whole and to their specific job responsibilities. Orientation can be beneficial in assuring that volunteers have accurate information regarding the organization's purpose, programs, policies, and expectations. In today's service arena, volunteers should also be oriented in risk and liability management. (Culp et al., p. 36)

Dewitt (1995) argued that volunteers often assume high profile public roles on behalf of non-profit organizations and agencies. Clientele who participate in and benefit

from participation in programs administered by nonprofit organizations often have their greatest contact with volunteers. Culp et al. (1998) contended that informed volunteers possess a positive attitude toward the organization for which they are volunteering, positively represent the organization, and carry out their responsibilities effectively.

Supervision and evaluation are beneficial for both volunteers and the nonprofit agencies in which they serve, by assuring that the volunteer is effectively fulfilling his or her role and the volunteers' needs for affirmation are also being met (Volunteer Canada, 2008). Fisher and Cole (1993) explained that the "evolution and improvement of volunteers is based on what occurs through their interactions with each other and, more significantly, through their interactions with their supervisor" (p. 111). In a study of volunteer satisfaction, Gidron (1983) found that adequate supervision and assistance from supervisory staff were important determinants of individuals' satisfaction with their volunteer experience. Colomy, Chen, and Andrews (1987) indicated that the competence of the immediate supervisor and the guidance and support provided by the supervisor ranked fourth and fifth out of twenty factors important to volunteers' effectiveness. Fisher and Cole (1993) argued:

> Because the quality of the relationship between volunteer and supervisor is so critical, the question of who supervises is vitally important to the success of the volunteer program. Equally essential is the allocation of adequate resources for the supervision of volunteer efforts: supervisory costs are likely to be the highest of all those associated with the management of the volunteer program (p. 109).

According to Ellis (2000), recognition of volunteers and their efforts is crucial. Ellis explained recognition:

1. Makes volunteers feel appreciated for their work both collectively and individually;
2. Helps volunteers feel a part of the bigger picture and get to know one another;
3. Educates executives and the board about the impact volunteers have made throughout the year;
4. Acknowledges that paid staff members contribute to the success of volunteers as well as vice versa; and
5. Recommits everyone to further enthusiastic volunteer service. (¶ 6)

Merrill (2005) explained that a volunteer recognition program should consider both extrinsic and intrinsic recognition. Extrinsic recognition included tangible, outward forms of recognition, while intrinsic recognition involved less tangible, inward forms of recognition; both forms are important components of volunteer management theory (Volunteer Canada, 2008).

Social Change and Social Justice Theory

Garrett (2005) described the social justice theory of the twentieth century political philosopher, John Rawls, who viewed society as a "fair system of cooperation over time, from one generation to the next" (¶ 1). Rawls described the fundamental political relationship of citizenship within the basic structure of society as a "structure we enter only by birth and exit only by death and a relation of free and equal citizens who exercise ultimate political power as a collective body" (Garrett, ¶ 1). Garrett explained that Rawls' concerns with social justice supports a society which is assumed to consist of "free and equal persons, of political and personal liberties, of equal opportunity, and cooperative arrangements working together to benefit all members of society" (¶ 4).

Garrett described efforts to meet the needs of those least advantaged are the responsibility of those with the most advantage. Reeler (2005) expounded on the impact of social change theory, stating:

> Change cannot be engineered but can only be cultivated. Seeds must be chosen whose fruits not only suit the taste of the eaters, but also suit the soil in which they are planted, the conditions for their fruition. Processes of change, whether emergent, transformative, or projectable, are already there, moving, or latent, and must be read and worked with as natural processes inherent to the lives and cultures of people themselves. This kind of orientation, applied respectfully and skillfully, may indeed yield the impact and sustainability that is so desperately sought. Perhaps then our obsession with accountability may be allayed, not because we will have learned how to better measure impact, but because we will have learned to practice better, to read change more accurately, and work with it more effectively. (p. 33)

Snarr (2003) described volunteer efforts at the university setting in particular as being "movement halfway houses" (p. 28) that educate future leaders for social justice and social change. By understanding the needs of others and in so doing reshaping one's own identity, volunteers develop a "richness of character based on giving and caring for others" (Snarr, p. 29). Volunteers as change agents are those who bring together both the personal and the political breaking through the cycle of "remedial charity and systematically addressing preventive justice" (Snarr, p. 30). Snarr described these volunteers as not just "companions of those in need but warriors for social change" (p. 30).

Theory of Planned Behavior

According to Allen and Rushton (1983), researchers have demonstrated that only a "select group of individuals are attracted to volunteering" (p. 38), despite the belief that volunteerism is beneficial for both individuals and society. Azjen (1985) explained that the theory of planned behavior is one social psychological theory that has been employed to study volunteering. The theory of planned behavior, explained Azjen, was developed to account for the process by which "individuals decide on, and engage in, a particular course of action" (p. 22).

Azjen (1991) posited that the theory of planned behavior supports a person's intention to perform a behavior and is the "most proximal determinant of behavioral choice" (p. 198). Okun and Sloane (2002) described the primary components of the theory of planned behavior in relation to volunteering:

> Intent to perform a behavior, in turn, is a function of three determinants: attitude, subjective norm, and perceived behavioral control. Thus, intent is hypothesized to mediate the effects of attitude, subjective norm, and perceived behavioral control on behavioral performance. Depending on the difficulty of engaging in the behavior, perceived behavioral control might also exert a direct effect on behavioral performance. (p. 247)

Azjen (1988) postulated the "immediate antecedent of behavior to be the person's intention to perform the behavior" (p. 101). Intentions, in turn, are proposed to be a function of three independent determinants. The first determinant of intention is the person's attitude, "conceptualized as the overall evaluation, either positive or negative, of performing the behavior" (Azjen, p. 33). The second determinant of behavioral intentions

is subjective norm, which reflects "perceived social pressure to perform or not perform the behavior" (Azjen, p. 117). The third determinant of behavioral intentions is perceived behavioral control, which demonstrates the extent to which the person perceived the behavior to be under "volitional control" (Azjen, p. 103). Ajzen (1991) argued that perceived behavioral control indirectly affects behavior via intentions, has a direct effect on behavior, or both. Warburton and Terry (2000) provided support for the application of the theory of planned behavior to the domain of volunteerism and examined the efficacy of this theory in prediction of volunteer participation and further "supported the efficacy of the theory of planned behavior in the understanding and prediction of participation in volunteerism" (p. 249).

Volunteer Service

National Trends

A discussion of the historical and current impact of volunteer service, and national and local AmeriCorps programs revealed the scope of program impact on both the volunteer and those the volunteers serve. The Corporation for National and Community Service (2007b) reported that between 2002-2007, 26.2% to 28.8% of the U.S. population, over 61 million adults, volunteered throughout the United States, resulting in the national volunteer rate remaining at historically high levels compared to past decades. According to Volunteering in America (2008), 26.7% of those volunteering serve in a tutoring or mentoring capacity. The Bureau of Labor Statistics (2008) revealed volunteer demographics to demonstrate that:

1. Women volunteered at a higher rate than men across all age groups, educational levels, and other major characteristics.

2. Persons age 35 to 54 continued to be the most likely to volunteer (30.3%), while persons in their early twenties were the least likely to volunteer.
3. Whites continued to volunteer at a higher rate (27.9%) than blacks (18.2%), Asians (17.7%), or among Hispanics (13.5%).
4. Married persons volunteered at a higher rate (31.9%) than those who had never married (19.2%) and those with other marital statuses (20.9%).
5. Parents with children under age 18 were substantially more likely to volunteer than were persons without children of that age, 33.7% versus 23.2%.
6. Individuals with higher levels of educational attainment volunteered at higher rates than did those with less education. Among persons age 25 and over, more than four in ten college graduates volunteered compared with fewer than two in ten high school graduates and almost one in ten of those with less than a high school diploma.
7. Among employed persons, 28.3% had volunteered during the year ended in September 2007. By comparison, 23.2% of unemployed persons and 22.3% of those not in the labor force volunteered. Among the employed, part-time workers were more likely than full-time workers to have participated in volunteer activities 35.4% versus 26.9%.
8. Volunteers of both sexes spent a median of 52 hours on volunteer activities during the period from September 2006 to September 2007. Median annual hours spent on volunteer activities ranged from a high of 96 hours for volunteers age 65 and over to a low of 36 hours for those 25 to 34 years old.
9. Most volunteers were involved with either one (68.8%) or two (19.7%)

> organizations. Individuals with higher educational attainment were more likely to volunteer for multiple organizations than were those with less education. Parents also were somewhat more likely to volunteer for more than one organization than were persons without children under 18. (pp. 1-3)

The Corporation for National and Community Service (2007b) explained that one out of every three people who volunteer each year do not volunteer the following year. The dramatic cycling of people in and out of the volunteer force reinforces the fact that volunteer management is critically important and that "creating positive volunteer experiences is key to growing a widespread culture of service" (Corporation for National and Community Service, 2007b, p. 5). According to the Urban Institute (2004), more than nine of ten organizations are ready to take on more volunteers at their present capacity. It is estimated that 2.5 million volunteers could be immediately put to work if they were available (Urban Institute).

Hager and Brudney (2004) recommended cultivation of a well-managed volunteer program to maximize the benefits and minimize the challenges of working with volunteers. They argued that benefits from volunteers and challenges in managing them are two sides of the same coin. Knowing the stance of an organization on these two issues provides insight as to their ability to work effectively with volunteers. Considering that four of five U.S. charities report utilizing volunteers, Hager and Brudeny proposed that volunteer management is an area in which charities must invest in order to maximize volunteer potential. However, The Urban Institute (2004) reported that only one-third of charities and organizations have paid volunteer managers, and of those that do have paid volunteer managers in place, less than one-third have received any formal training or

utilize volunteer management practices. Furthermore, The Urban Institute reported that the best-prepared and most effective volunteer programs are those with paid staff members who dedicate a substantial portion of their time to management of volunteers.

Hager and Brudney (2004) recommended that charities interested in increasing retention of volunteers should invest in "recognizing volunteers, providing training and professional development for them, screening volunteers, and matching them to organizational tasks" (p. 1). The Urban Institute (2003) stated that volunteers are valuable human resources, explaining that:

> Four out of five charities use volunteers to help them meet organizational needs for service and administration. Most charities could not get by without their volunteers, and they certainly would be less productive and responsive without them. Turnover of volunteers can disrupt the operation of the charity, threaten the ability to serve clients, and signal that the volunteer experience is not as rewarding as it might be. Therefore, efforts must be made to maximize volunteer management practices. (p. 12)

The Corporation for National and Community Service Volunteering in America Research (2008f) highlighted the largest difference in how time is spent between recent volunteers, former volunteers, and non-volunteers is in how much television they watch.

> Volunteers, on average, are about as busy as others, yet they make the time to serve others. In a typical week, recent volunteers spend approximately 15 hours watching television compared to 21 hours for former volunteers and 23 hours for non-volunteers, the difference of about one hour-long show per day.

> On average, non-volunteers watch 436 more hours, the equivalent of over 10 weeks of full-time work, of television than recent volunteers each year. (p. 6)

The Corporation for National and Community Service (2008e) reported that the volunteer rate among Baby Boomers, born 1946-1964, is highest in the Midwest, at 36.9%. Boomers involved in professional or managerial activities are most likely to continue volunteering, demonstrating a retention rate of 74.8%, while Boomers' participation rates decrease to 55% if their activity is primarily to engage in general labor or supply transportation (Corporation for National and Community Service, 2008e). College students, on the other hand, are almost twice as likely to volunteer as their same age peers who are not pursuing higher education; surprisingly, college students who work part time are over 15% more likely to volunteer than college students who do not work (Corporation for National and Community Service, 2008e). As with Boomers, college students in the Midwest have the highest rates of volunteer service (Corporation for National and Community Service, 2008e).

The Corporation for National and Community Service (2007a) reported that over the last two decades a growing body of research has come to light, indicating volunteering provides both health and social benefits to those who volunteer, including: "lower mortality rates, greater functional ability, decreased illness, increased physical and social activity, and lower rates of depression" (¶ 1) than those who are not engaged in volunteer efforts. Senior adults and those volunteers who devote a "considerable amount of time, more than 100 hours per year, are those most likely to exhibit positive health outcomes" (Corporation for National and Community Service, 2007a, ¶ 1). "At a time when record numbers of individuals are nearing retirement, over 77 million Baby

Boomers, the advantages of volunteering will be more important than ever before" (Corporation for National and Community Service, 2007a, ¶ 2).

There appeared to be a "volunteering threshold" (Corporation for National and Community Service, 2007a, ¶ 2) in the amount of volunteering in which volunteers engage in order to derive health benefits from volunteer activities. The definition of the "volunteering threshold" (Corporation for National and Community Service, 2007a, ¶ 2) varies among researchers from volunteering with two or more organizations (Oman, Thoresen, & McMahon, 1999), to volunteering 100 hours or more (Luoh & Herzog, 2002) or volunteering at least 40 hours per year (Musick, Herzog, & House, 1999). Thoits and Hewitt (2001) reported that volunteers experienced higher levels of happiness, life-satisfaction, self-esteem, sense of control over life, and physical health over time than individuals who do not volunteer. This suggests that volunteering may be the best way to prevent poor health in the future (Thoits and Hewitt). In addition to individual health benefits for volunteers, the economic impact of volunteer activity, when viewed through the lens of healthcare cost, is significant. The Corporation for National and Community Service (2007a) explained that "states with high volunteer rates also have fewer rates of mortality and incidences of heart disease, while health problems are more prevalent in states where volunteer rates are lowest" (¶ 2).

Missouri Trends

According to the Volunteering in America Report from the Corporation for National and Community Service (2007b), over 1.36 million Missourians dedicated nearly 1.88 million hours of volunteer service in 2006, showing an increase of 11.8 percentage points in the volunteer rate, making it the fifth highest increase among states

in the nation (¶. 1). Missouri ranked tenth in the nation in participation in "civic life activities such as voting, attending public meetings, and community improvement efforts" (Corporation for National and Community Service, 2007b, ¶ 3). The report discovered that nearly 36% of Missouri citizens engaged in civic life by volunteering, working with their neighbors, or attending public meetings. Additionally, in the state of Missouri, volunteer rates over a three-year period (2004-2006), were twentieth within the fifty states, with 31.8% of citizens participating in volunteer activities, and participation with youth service or education organizations increased from a rate of 15% in 1989 to nearly 28% in 2006 (¶ 4). On average, Missouri's nearly one and a half million volunteers dedicated over one hundred eighty-eight million hours of service per year between 2005 and 2007 (Corporation for National and Community Service, 2008b, ¶ 6)

AmeriCorps National

The AmeriCorps program has enjoyed strong bipartisan support since its inception in 1993, when President Bill Clinton signed the National and Community Service Trust Act, which established the Corporation for National and Community Service and "brought the full range of domestic community service programs under the umbrella of one central organization" (Corporation for National and Community Service: History, 2008c, ¶ 1). Upon swearing in the first class of members, Clinton stated that:

> Service is a spark to rekindle the spirit of democracy in an age of uncertainty. When it is all said and done, it comes down to three simple questions: What is right? What is wrong? And what are we going to do about it? (¶ 5)

This legislation formally launched AmeriCorps, a "network of national service programs that engage Americans in intensive service to meet the nation's critical needs in

education, public safety, health, and the environment" (Corporation for National and Community Service, 2008g, ¶ 2), and built on the first National Service Act signed by President George W. Bush in 1990.

According to the Corporation for National and Community Service (2008g), on July 3, 2003, President George W. Bush signed the Strengthening AmeriCorps Program Act. This act nearly doubled the number of AmeriCorps members and incorporated two existing national service programs: the longstanding VISTA (Volunteers in Service to America) program, created by President Lyndon Johnson in 1964, and the National Civilian Community Corps (NCCC) (Corporation for National and Community Service, 2008g). According to the Corporation for National and Community Service (2006a), the Corporation was established in 1993 and

> Engages Americans of all ages and backgrounds to serve their communities and country. Participants of Corporation programs contribute approximately 200 million service hours domestically each year. These programs, each with its own purpose and structure, are united for a common purpose, engaging citizens dedicated to making their communities better. (p. 1)

The Corporation for National and Community Service (2008) explained that AmeriCorps consists of a "network of national service programs AmeriCorps State and National, AmeriCorps NCCC (National Civilian Community Corps), and AmeriCorps VISTA that meet critical needs through partnerships with public agencies, nonprofits, and faith-based and other local organizations" (p. 1). Additionally, each year more than 70,000

AmeriCorps members, and the 600,000 volunteers whom they recruit and supervise, serve in schools, parks, and other nonprofit organizations across America (Corporation for National and Community Service, 2008g).

AmeriCorps members gain new skills and experiences and find the tremendous satisfaction that comes from helping others. In addition, full-time members who complete their service earn a Segal AmeriCorps Education Award of $4,725 to pay for college, orgraduate school, or to pay back qualified student loans; members who serve part-time receive a partial Award. AmeriCorps members may also receive a living allowance during their term of service of $11,400 per year, as well as health insurance (Corporation for National and Community Service, 2008c).

The Corporation for National and Community Service (2006a) explained that to be eligible to serve in AmeriCorps members must be "at least 17 years of age, a U.S. citizen or lawful permanent resident, and be willing to serve in a full-time or part-time capacity for a 10- to 12-month period" (p. 2). The benefits of service extend to both members and those they serve, the Corporation for National and Community Service (2006b) reported that:

1. 92% of AmeriCorps sponsoring organizations say members helped them increase the number of persons the groups served to a large or moderate extent.
2. 72% of AmeriCorps members continue to volunteer in their communities after their term of service ends.
3. 87% of former AmeriCorps members accepted public service employment including governmental and nonprofit work within three years after

completing their AmeriCorps service.

4. 86% of former AmeriCorps members indicated that their service experience and training helped to a great or moderate extent in their job, educational pursuits, or community service activities.
5. Each year, AmeriCorps leverages more than $200 million in matching funds from non-federal sources to support members and programs. (p. 2)

Missouri AmeriCorps

The Missouri Community Service Commission (2008) explained that their goal is to

> Connect Missourians of all ages and backgrounds in an effort to improve unmet community needs through direct and tangible service and serves as the administrator for AmeriCorps State funding in Missouri by awarding monetary grants and providing technical assistance and support .(¶ 1)

Since 1994, more than 6,000 Missouri residents have completed one year of AmeriCorps service (Corporation for National and Community Service, 2008d). More than 17,000 people participated in all four branches of national service annually, while, not-for-profit organizations hosted 106 projects and programs (Corporation for National and Community Service, 2008d). In 2008, the Corporation for National and Community Service committed more than 12 million dollars to support Missouri's Senior Corps, AmeriCorps, and Learn and Serve America programs (Corporation for National and Community Service, 2008d). During the 2007-2008 period, more than 870 individuals served at AmeriCorps sites in Missouri (Missouri Community Service Commission, 2008). Brandal (2008) reported this results-driven service focused on education,

environmental, public safety, and other pressing needs in communities across Missouri, with over half of the programs focused on tutoring and mentoring youth.

According to the Corporation for National and Community Service (2006b), Missouri AmeriCorps Programs in 2004 consisted of thirteen programs with 223 Members serving Missouri citizens. Programs provided tutoring and mentoring services to over 8,500 students in grades 1-12, in addition to a host of public safety, homeland security, volunteer leveraging, and community strengthening areas of service (Corporation for National and Community Service, 2006b). The overall funding for the state totaled over $2.5 million (Corporation for National and Community Service, 2006b).

AmeriCorps Tutoring Program Analysis

Educational Impact and Program Effectiveness

Rasco (1999) explained that tutors offer children individual attention, intensive practice, and motivation to master reading skills. Tutors not only complement the instruction students receive from their teachers, they also give children the "intangible gift of adult attention and concern" (Rasco, 1999 p. ii). Cohen, Kulik, and Kulik (1982) expounded, stating that children in tutoring programs achieve academic gains and increased self-confidence. Wasik and Slavin (1993) explained that extended reading time gives children more chances to practice and master reading skills, as well as more opportunities for students to come to love reading and the "limitless world of the printed page" (p. 239). Topping and Whitley (1990) discovered that elementary and junior high students who were tutored for 8.6 weeks improved their reading comprehension at 4.4 times the normal rate and word recognition at 3.3 times the normal rate. Even four

months after the end of tutoring, the average tutee was still improving at twice the normal rate in both comprehension and word recognition (Topping and Whitely).

According to Ainsworth (1999), a 1995 Education Testing Service report revealed that only 13% of those students who dropped out reported having been offered special tutoring by school staff and only 16% were offered tutoring by their parents or guardians. Ainsworth further explained that one-to-one tutoring is beneficial because tutors can adapt instruction to the learner's pace, learning style, and level of understanding. Ainsworth stated that because feedback and correcting are immediate, basic misunderstandings can be quickly identified and corrected and more difficult material introduced as soon as the student is ready. Tutoring also has a positive emotional impact providing children with extra attention and emotional support (Ainsworth).

Burns et al. (2008) described the benefits of volunteer tutoring programs, stating that students who experienced tutoring significantly outperformed students in a control group in both reading fluency and comprehension, two years after the tutoring had ended. Osborn, Freeman, Burley, Wilson, Jones, and Rychener (2007) concurred, explaining that students receiving tutoring interventions outperformed comparison students in reading over a six-month period. Cohen et al. (1982) reviewed 65 comparative studies of tutoring and discovered that the effects of one-on-one tutoring were significant. Furthermore, the majority of studies reported a positive effect of tutoring programs, with one program reporting 66% of the students from classrooms with tutoring programs outperformed the average student in the control classrooms (Cohen et al.). Student attitudes were more positive and student self-concepts were more favorable for students in classrooms with tutoring programs (Cohen et al.).

Elbaum et al. (2000) compiled general tutoring program design conclusions:

1. Students who were tutored by their classmates or by older students made greater academic gains than did untutored students. (p. 605)
2. College students and trained, reliable volunteers were able to provide significant help to struggling readers. (p. 616)
3. The same amount of instructional time delivered more intensively increased frequency of sessions and tended to have more powerful effects. (p. 613)
4. Two studies compared a one-to-one intervention over the small-group intervention: both studies indicated no advantage for one-to-one over small-group instruction. (p. 616)

Morris, Shaw, and Perney (1990) described the success of an after-school tutoring program involving low-achieving second and third graders. The students who were tutored twice a week for one hour by volunteers experienced strong improvements in reading skills and the tutored group outperformed a closely matched comparison group on word recognition, passage reading accuracy, and spelling (Morris et al.). Morris et al. declared that over 50% of the tutored children made a full year's gain in reading, while only 20% of the comparison group children made similar progress.

School Culture

Culture is defined by Deal and Kennedy (1982) as "the underlining set of norms, values, beliefs, rituals, and traditions that make up the unwritten rules of how to think, feel, and act in an organization" (p. 4). The Small Schools Project (2008) explained that every organization has a culture, but the school's culture is often "below the stream of

consciousness and affects how people interact in an organization" (p. 1). Culture is the unwritten rules about interaction, problem solving, and decision-making.

Deal and Peterson (1993) offered the most succinct definition of school culture, stating culture is an inner reality. Robbins, Alvy, and Harvey (1995) expanded the definition by explaining: "This inner reality reflects what organizational members care about, what they are willing to spend time doing, what and how they celebrate, and what they talk about" (p. 23). Phillips (2003) characterized school culture as the "beliefs, attitudes, and behaviors that characterize a school" (p. 43) in terms of

1. How people treat and feel about each other,
2. The extent to which people feel included and appreciated,
3. And rituals and traditions reflecting collaboration and collegiality. (p. 43)

The Center for Improving School Culture (2004) explained that culture includes a composite of the values, rituals, and beliefs shared and demonstrated by participants within the organization and influences everything that happens in a school. According to the Center for Improving School Culture, people in any healthy organization must have agreement on "how to do things and agree on what is worth doing" (¶ 6). Wagner (2000) conceptualized school culture as shared experiences both in school and out of school traditions and celebrations, a sense of community, family, and team. Beaudoin and Taylor (2004) explained that many schools may experience lower volunteer rates than would truly serve schools due to the way the school culture embraces volunteers. Volunteers bring their own unique view of culture based on "their own school experience, either positive or negative, coupled with a hesitancy and concern as to how their involvement may impact their own children's education" (Beaudoin & Taylor, p. 153).

School communities greatly benefit from volunteer involvement, according to Silver (1989). Directors of volunteers must manage the volunteer culture working as a liaison between the volunteer program and the larger organization, becoming the link between the organizational culture and the volunteer culture, and bringing the two together. Silver expounded

> We expect volunteers to fit in, yet we often leave them on their own to discover just exactly what they are to fit into and how they are expected to do this. This type of trial-and-error training is costly in time and people. It reminds me of doing marriage counseling and hearing repeatedly that one partner expected the other to read his/her mind, anticipate his/her needs and desires, and just know how to fulfill them. Few of us are mind readers, yet we expect our volunteers to know what we want and how to do it. To complicate matters, we often try to hide our organizational dynamics, which we sometimes see as secrets or our dirty laundry from our volunteers. We train them on how we would like our agency to perform and tell them precious little about how it actually works. To the extent that we withhold or disguise the organizational culture from our volunteers, we set them up for failure. (¶ 4)

Martin, Douglas, and Henry (2004) explained that culture has both visible and invisible aspects. Schools, they explained, have distinct cultures characterized by specific values, language, rules of behavior and etiquette, and acceptable dress. The Resource Center (2008) prepared tutors for the school culture explaining:

> Our values, beliefs, and past experiences are important parts of who we are, parts that we can't and likely wouldn't want to change. It's important, however, to be

> conscious of the values, beliefs, and past experiences we bring into our work with schools. This self-awareness can help us respond "in the present" to current realities. For example, a tutor who had a difficult time with math may unknowingly communicate a negative attitude about math to a student. Having a chance to discuss these attitudes, feelings, and experiences can help tutors and mentors respond objectively and more sensitively. (¶ 4)

Martin et al. (2004) recommended three phases to assist tutors in adapting to school culture:

1. Suspending Assumptions: Tutors are encouraged to examine their own assumptions about school based on their past experiences and beliefs. Members should also put into perspective their expectations for their year of service. (p. 3)
2. Observation and Imitation: Seeking and cultivating allies who are familiar with the school culture including an on-site mentor are recommended strategies as well as learning the language of the school site. (p. 5)
3. Reinforcement and Internalization: Developing and using communications systems effectively, collaborating with teachers, and joining in teamwork are helpful integration strategies. (pp. 9-10)

Bergin (2008) stated that volunteers are the "lifeblood of any school" (p. 4), with school principals and staff relying on volunteers to accomplish a variety of tasks. Bergin expounded that, by honoring this "incredibly valuable commodity" (p. 4) and investing a little time and a little thought, school leaders can create a healthy and vibrant experience for volunteers.

Best Practice Recommendations

According to the U. S. Department of Education (1997), research has consistently shown that well-designed, volunteer-based tutoring programs can be effective in improving children's reading skills. Students with below-average reading skills who were tutored by volunteers showed significant gains in reading skills, when compared with similar students who did not receive tutoring from a high-quality tutoring program (U. S. Department of Education, 1997). In the field of literacy tutoring, a review of the available studies indicated that effective tutoring intervention programs required three critical components: adequate tutor training (Fountas & Pinnell, 1997; Moss et al., 2001; Wasik, 1998), quality supervision of tutors (Morris, 1993), and well-planned tutoring sessions (Klenk & Kibby, 2000). Each intervention program component is crucial for the success of a tutoring program. Fitzgerald (2001) agreed and recommended using structured lessons during tutoring.

Armbuster, Lehr, and Osborn (2001) suggested that tutoring programs adopt a "balanced and integrated approach" (p. 201), in order to support a wide range of student skills. Tutors are encouraged to plan tutoring sessions that include a variety of strategies that support the five components of the National Reading Panel, and consult school professionals for their recommendations as well (Armbuster et al.) . According to Armbuster et al., important components include:

1. Reading children's literature and stories aloud to students
2. Utilizing skills as students read and practice leveled texts
3. Talking about stories, experience, and meaning
4. Writing and journaling

5. Re-reading familiar texts for speed, accuracy, and expression
6. Learning high frequency words
7. Hearing and repeating word and letter sounds
8. Participating in letter-sound games and activities
9. Making music and rhymes and engaging in dramatic play. (p. 201)

Leal (2004) described the most commonly noted components of successful tutoring as providing many opportunities for successful reading including:

> Regular fluency reading practice at both the instructional and independent levels; regular strategic reading practice for meaning and to identify missing skills for word recognition; focused reading for meaning, including narrative and expository comprehension strategies; and working with words. (p. 2)

Leal believed that motivating and encouraging students to succeed is the most critical aspect of tutoring. Juel (1996) explained the loss of interest in reading and self-confidence is responsible for the lack of successful reading by struggling readers, and this loss is an important factor in students failing to conquer reading difficulties. According to Leal, helping students gain self-confidence means including a systematic focus on motivation. Leal explained that:

> Only when students fall in love with reading, books, and learning itself will remediation be long lasting. To accomplish the great challenge of motivating at-risk students, three types of motivation must be tied to reading and writing experiences: motivating, caring relationships, motivating materials, including appropriate reading levels, and motivating goals and activities with student ownership and choices. (p. 6)

Leal continued explaining that motivating, caring relationships are crucial to the success of tutored children. Many at-risk children "give up on their teachers and schools, believing that adults do not care if they succeed or not" (Leal, 2004, p. 5). Cobb (1998) expounded on the importance of predictable, dependable social interactions between the tutor and the tutee as being crucial to the tutee's success. Cobb concluded that when the tutor is "clearly committed to the student and displays a genuine interest in the student's life, in and out of school, the effects of the tutoring increased dramatically" (p. 74). Cobb found that successful tutors:

> Regularly took the first two to three minutes of each session to "chat" with the student about life in and out of school. These tutors commonly used "with-it" slang, and held a strong commitment to helping their student. Other motivating strategies for effectively relaying an "I Care" attitude and strengthening the relationship included holding direct eye contact with the tutee, sitting side-by-side, and using frequent and varied verbal and nonverbal praise. The tutor's behavior and body language should relay the message that the child is the most important person in the world to him or her at that time. (pp. 74-5)

Hertz (1998) recommended goal setting to motivate students in tutoring sessions, explaining that goal setting directs students to "focus their attention, motivates them to persist in meeting the objectives, and helps them to formulate strategies to accomplish a goal" (p. 133). Sweet and Guthrie (1996) concluded that motivating goals assists students in increasing reading abilities. Hertz (1998) expounded, stating goals should be specific and provide somewhat of a challenge for the student. However, it is important that a

student does not get "overly discouraged or exhausted trying to reach an unattainable goal" (Hertz, p. 140).

Linking America Reads through National Service (LEARNS) focused on the importance of cultivating relationships with many different partners. These relationships are based on how tutors and partners can assist each other in "understanding the entire community's needs, providing quality resources, and delivering effective services" (LEARNS, 2008 p. 3). Venezky and Jain (1996) expressed the importance of tutors coordinating lessons with good classroom reading practices in order for performance to be maximized.

Fager (1996) compiled an analysis of best practices according to recent research that explained that tutoring programs help students by improving academic skills, self-esteem, confidence, and social skills. These programs resulted in lowering high school dropout rates and providing youth with positive companionship and friendship, emotional support, and role models (Fager). Fager proposed that through tutoring, instruction can be tailored to students' specific learning styles and needs, allowing students to progress at their own rate, while receiving personalized feedback and encouragement; all of this should be done in a competition-free learning atmosphere.

Intensive and ongoing training for tutors, argued Wasik and Slavin (1993), resulted in tutees that outperformed students whose tutors did not complete ongoing training sessions. Jenkins and Jenkins (1987) reinforced the importance of training in interpersonal skills, so tutors do not become impatient with tutees. Warger (1991) expounded that tutor training is key to program successes, explaining training should

include strategies for "reinforcing correct responses and properly correcting incorrect responses" (p.42).

Invernizzi and Quellette (2001) described effective tutoring programs as those in which reading specialists or reading teachers train tutors and supervise the tutors' work, assess and diagnose children's reading problems, and determine what concepts and skills need to be addressed, as well as furnishing materials and providing constant feedback. Wasik (1998) concluded the most important aspect was the reading specialist's ability to instruct the tutors in what strategies and techniques need to be implemented, in order to have a positive impact on the children. Pearce (2002) explained that designing tutoring training to reflect adult learning principles, coupled with ongoing evaluation, tutor input, and feedback, resulted in "increased effectiveness and comfort with tutoring roles" (¶ 4). Belzer (2006) expounded on the manner in which tutoring is delivered, proposing that "just in time" (p. 111) tutoring focused on specific needs and strengths of students, and tutors might be a more efficient use of time than the traditional pre-service training.

Cohen et al. (1982) explained that well-structured tutoring sessions, involving carefully scripted content and instructions, demonstrated higher achievement gains than unstructured programs. Utilizing well-rehearsed scripts for responding to student errors, explained McArthur, Stasz, and Zumidzinas (1990), is a strategy that the most successful tutors often used. Clowes (2006) described a structured curriculum involving explicit instruction as a key feature of proven high-quality tutoring procedures.

Baker, Gersten, and Keating (2000) recommended intensive, structured, and consistent tutoring programs that build on tutors who are faithful in attendance and committed to their work. Headrick (1999) recommended two to four training sessions per

week that are consistent over an extended period of time. Wasik (1998) stated a minimum of one and a half to two hours per week is needed to ensure that relationships are built and that children will benefit from the interventions. Juel (1996) reported successful tutor-tutee relationships were characterized by strong reinforcement of progress, and a high number of reading and writing experiences in which the student moved from being fully supported to working independently through careful monitoring and reinforcement. Invernizzi and Quellette (2001) explained well-structured, systematic tutoring programs that are assessment-based often produce the greatest gain for children at risk.

Summary

A review of related literature was presented in Chapter Two, for the purpose of providing a basis for the conceptual and theoretical underpinnings of this study. Volunteer theories, including volunteer management theory, social change theory, and the theory of planned behaviors were selected as the theoretical frameworks for inquiry. Analysis of each theory provided explanations of the participation in, and impact of, volunteer activity. A discussion of the historical and current impact of volunteer service, and national and local AmeriCorps programs revealed the scope of program impact on both the volunteers and those they serve.

The preceding literature thus prompted the researcher to explore further the educational impact of volunteer-based tutoring programs and methods used to determine program effectiveness. The impact of school culture on AmeriCorps tutoring and volunteer programs was examined. An exploration of best practice recommendations for developing high-quality, volunteer-based tutoring programs was included.

In Chapter Three, the research design and methodology used in this study were explained and a description of the project design, a qualitative, multi-case study, was presented. Components and process involved in implementation of the constant comparative method were reviewed. Chapter Four provided a presentation of the findings and an analysis of data. In Chapter Five, the results of the study were revealed, and a summary of implications was presented for further exploration and research.

CHAPTER THREE – RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

Introduction

Across the United States over 30% of high school seniors do not graduate and only 31% to 39% of students score at a level of proficiency on national assessments, according to the Nation's Report Card (National Center for Education Statistics, 2008). Adelman and Taylor (2008) explained that volunteers could help to enhance a student's motivation and skills, as well as help to counter the negative effects that arise when a student is having difficulty in school. Gerber (1991) expounded, stating, "individuals from all walks of life are attracted to the opportunities for service that are present in public schools" (p. 35). Volunteers are no longer just the parents of students in the schools, but older students, retirees, business partners, and individuals engaged in all types of service (Gerber).

Eisner (2008), the director for the Corporation for National and Community Service, recently made the case for national service during a public address at Georgetown University. He stated that

> Today through rigorous research, we know that schools supported by a high level of community volunteering, regardless of the wealth or demographics of that school, are far more likely to have students that succeed and graduate than schools without that volunteer support. And this new body of service-related research tells us something else. It tells us that people who volunteer are healthier and happier

> than people who don't. For kids, research also tells us that service drives increases in academic achievement, increases in school attendance, and decreases in risky behavior. (¶ 2)

Eisner further expounded on the importance of responding to the crisis in our nation explaining:

> I'm sure some of you have heard before that the Chinese word for "crisis" is written by connecting the characters for two other words. One word is "danger" – and the other word is "opportunity." America today is facing a series of crises that also represent for us a true opportunity to innovate in a way that bets on American citizens to be a part of the solution in ways that are both new and that hearken back to our earliest traditions. The drivers of this opportunity are these:
>
> The need is dire.
>
> Our resources are scarce.
>
> Our service and volunteering infrastructure is ready.
>
> Our youth are ready.
>
> And Americans of all ages are waiting to be asked.
>
> This is an incredible moment, and we must seize it. (¶ 3-4)

Chapter Three provided the methodology and rationale for the design of this study. A qualitative, multi-case study was utilized as a basis for exploring phenomena surrounding successful AmeriCorps tutoring programs. A review of the problems and purposes involved in this study provided a framework for study design and inquiry.

The population and sample were described and the protocol utilized in conducting the study was offered. A rationale for the selection of qualitative research was provided

and a description of study design was shared. Data analysis methods presented were detailed and an explanation of measures taken to assure credibility and consistency were described. The biases and assumptions of the researcher were explored and shared.

Problem and Purpose Overview

The purpose of this study was to develop an understanding of the role and impact of AmeriCorps tutoring programs in public schools. Secondly, this study provided an in-depth analysis of the role of AmeriCorps directors in supporting AmeriCorps members, many of whom do not have a background in education, in becoming an integral component of the school, and contributors to student academic success. The practices, experiences, and opinions of AmeriCorps program directors were examined from the perspective of volunteer management theory, social change and social justice theory, and through the theory of planned behavior. Furthermore, the process of inquiry provided the basis for exploring the premises of this study: How do AmeriCorps tutoring programs impact student educational progress, school culture, and volunteer participation?

Research Questions

Throughout the review of relevant research and exploration of the impact of AmeriCorps tutoring programs, the overarching question was refined. As the qualitative multi-case study was approached from an inquiry perspective, six research questions guided the investigation and provided a basis for the study:

1. What is the educational impact of AmeriCorps tutoring and how is educational progress measured?
2. How has the school culture impacted the AmeriCorps program?

3. In what ways has volunteer support changed as a result of AmeriCorps tutoring?
4. How can AmeriCorps tutoring programs improve or enhance the educational impact?
5. What are the similarities and differences in the AmeriCorps tutoring programs in Missouri?
6. What elements are essential in creating an effective AmeriCorps tutoring program?

Population and Sample

Purposeful selection of participants in qualitative research involving case sampling, explained Rossman and Rails (2003), and allows the researcher to "study a specific set of events, processes, or participants" (p. 137). Byrne (2001) explained that sample size and selection are influenced by a host of factors ranging from demographics to geographic locations of participants and feasibility of data analysis. The population group for this study was made up of four AmeriCorps program directors in a Midwest state. The sample size was limited due to the availability of the population and the geographic location of prospective subjects. Constraints that were considered in making participant selections limited focus to program directors with at least a full year of program experience. Only AmeriCorps programs that were in current existence were considered for this study. At this time, only four individuals in the selected Midwest state met the established criteria.

Case Study Protocol

Yin (1994) recommended the inclusion of the following components when establishing case-study protocol: overview of the project, field procedures, questions, and a guide for the report. The rights of the participants were safeguarded by following the procedures outlined by Lindenwood University. Initial approval of the study was secured through the University and participants were contacted face-to-face during an AmeriCorps state directors' meeting to discuss the dates and protocol of the interviews. At that same time, a set of the projected interview questions (see Appendix B), and the letter of informed consent (see Appendix C) were hand delivered to all program participants. This allowed participants time to reflect prior to the interview and time to prepare any materials that might be beneficial in gaining a more thorough understanding of their programs.

The researcher traveled to the program site of two of the four participants and met the other two participants at sites of their choosing. Open-ended, semi-structured interviews were conducted over a two-hour period with each participant. Prior to the initial interview, participant anonymity was ensured, in order to encourage honesty and open discourse regarding the topics discussed. Prior to the beginning of each interview, participants were asked to read and sign the letter of consent to participate in the study (see Appendix D). After informed consent was established, data collection began.

Throughout the interview process, field notes and a running account of observations were taken by the researcher to aid in the interpretation of the audio-recorded interview. The interview questions were audio taped in order to ensure that participant responses were properly transcribed. Recorded interviews were transcribed

exactly as recorded and then sent to the program participants for review, clarification, and approval of accuracy. Participants were asked to inform the researcher if any clarifications and changes were needed in the transcripts, based on this input.

Participants also provided the researcher with a variety of documents related to their AmeriCorps programs. Documentary evidence included such items as assessment tools, performance measures, forms, and handbooks. Documentary evidence was utilized in order to triangulate findings. All documentation related to interviews was maintained in a locked cabinet secured by the researcher. All documents related to participant interviews will be destroyed three years from the completion of the study.

Rationale for Qualitative Research

Ratcliff (2009) explained that qualitative research provides a level of depth and detail that may not be available from a standardized questionnaire. This allows for a level of openness from which new theories and phenomena can be acquired. Ratcliff (2009) argued that qualitative research attempts to "avoid pre-judgments while capturing what is happening in a given situation providing a view into the lives of those studied" (¶ 6). Collier (2005) expounded on the advantages of qualitative methods and their more inductive nature, explaining that they are "well suited for studies in which large standardized data sets are not readily available or in cases where there is limited prior knowledge, or in which the change of that knowledge is rapidly evolving" (p. 2). Bogden and Biklen (1998) described qualitative research as being "focused on accuracy and a comprehensive understanding of data" (p. 37) that led to a deeper understanding of human behaviors and experiences, which support the "development of synthesized concepts related to the topic of study" (p. 41). Johnson and Christensen (2004) described qualitative research as providing both wide and

deep angle lenses for use in examining both the depth and breadth of a phenomenon. They described this approach as a holistic attempt to identify patterns, themes, and categories in an attempt to gain in-depth understanding of the subject at hand.

Study Design

The meaning of the data was analyzed using a multi-case study design. Yin (1994) explained that the purpose of a case study is to explore the decisions surrounding a specific phenomena or event, allowing researchers to focus on coming to understand why and how decisions are made and the results that follow. Yin (1994) continued explaining that case studies can be exploratory, explanatory, or descriptive in nature. A descriptive multi-case study approach was selected for this study and theories for examining results were determined. Multi-case studies are used, according to Creswell (1998), to provide an account of each case as well as a cross-case comparison. Bogden and Biklen (1998) explained that multi-case studies provide opportunities for comparative analysis of two or more case studies that are selected, based on the presence of a particular characteristic of study.

During this study, data were extracted primarily from transcriptions of oral interviews coupled with analysis of field notes and primary source documents, allowing for a triangulation of information. Cohen and Manion (1994) described triangulation as adding depth, texture, and multiple insights into the analysis, thus enhancing the validity and reliability of the results. Triangulation, according to Chenail (1995), allowed researchers to "use different sets of data, different types of analyses, and different theoretical perspectives to study one particular phenomenon" (p. 56). These different perspectives are then studied to understand the phenomenon and provide insight

(Chenail). Patton (2001) advocated the use of triangulation in qualitative research, stating that "triangulation strengthens a study by combining methods. This can mean using several kinds of methods or data, including using both quantitative and qualitative approaches" (p. 247).

Validity or trustworthiness of qualitative research can be tested when it is determined that findings and results can be generalized to other settings (Golafshani, 2003). Patton (2001) concurred explaining that being able to generalize to other settings is one of the primary criteria necessary for quality case studies. Seale (1999) expounded, "trustworthiness of a research report lies at the heart of issues conventionally discussed as validity and reliability" (p. 466). Golafshani (2003) elucidated

> Reliability and validity are conceptualized as trustworthiness, rigor, and quality in [the] qualitative paradigm. It is also through this association that the way to achieve validity and reliability of a research [project] get affected from the qualitative researchers' perspectives, which are to eliminate bias and increase the researcher's truthfulness of a proposition about some social phenomenon. (p. 606)

Bogden and Biklen (1998) detailed the importance of data, explaining that data is both the

> evidence and the clues when gathered carefully [data] serves as the stubborn facts that save the writing you do from unfounded speculation…grounding qualitative researchers to the empirical world. (p.106).

Bogden and Biklen emphasized the importance of maintaining well-organized data utilizing a structured, predetermined system to aid in ensuring that accuracy and order are

maintained throughout the study. In this study, responses to open-ended, semi-structured interview questions were captured utilizing audio-recorded field interviews. All interviews were audio taped, transcribed, and returned to participants for review of accuracy and amendment prior to the coding of data. Field notes provided further insight as to the contextual setting of each interview and organization. Primary source documentary evidence further supported research providing a first-hand analysis of materials utilized in each program. All resources were used to triangulate the data and determine the education and cultural impact of AmeriCorps tutoring programs.

Data Analysis

Volunteer theory, specifically volunteer management theory, the theory of planned behavior, and social justice and social change theory were used as the lenses through which all data was viewed. Trochim (2007) examined the use of grounded theory, a "complete iterative process for raising the questions that help to guide the research" (p. 14). These questions are not intended to be static but to help the researcher "sift through the hard data to uncover the core theoretical concepts that lie within the data thus constructing tentative linkages, theoretical concepts based on the data" (Trochim, 2007 p. 16).

The constant comparative method was used to facilitate the analysis of this multi-case study. Dye et al., (2000) explained the constant comparative method through the metaphor of a kaleidoscope, stating:

> Although we found qualitative data analysis to be a complex process, the kaleidoscope metaphor became a helpful template, which enabled us to make better sense of the emerging data. By using this metaphor, we learned the

> importance of allowing categories to fit the data, rather than actively creating categories to fit the data. We used the constant comparative method of analysis to organize our data bits and categories, visually representing this process through the kaleidoscope metaphor: the loose bits of colored glass represented our data bits, the two plain mirrors represented our categories, and the two flat plates represented the overarching category that informed our analysis. This metaphor helped us to conceptualize the process of ongoing category refinement that ultimately led to the development of our final category array. (¶ 28)

In this study, the constant comparative method provided a means for organizing and analyzing the data to determine the patterns of response and central themes.

Analysis of the data, according to Ratcliff (2009), follows a clearly determined path and results in a rich compilation of results. Ratcliff listed the steps for data analysis in a concise fashion:

1. Look at the document, transcripts, and field notes.
2. Look for indicators of categories in events and behavior, name and code them.
3. Compare codes to find consistencies and differences.
4. Note consistencies between codes, which reveals categories.
5. Categorize specific events.
6. Make memos of the comparisons and emerging categories.
7. Eventually the category saturates when no new codes related to it are formed.
8. Eventually certain categories become more central focus - axial categories and perhaps even core categories. (¶ 5)

Bogden and Biklen (1998) described the development of a coding system as resulting from "searching through the data for regularities, patterns, and emerging topics" (p. 171). Baptiste (2001) further detailed the process of tagging or selecting from an "amorphous body of material, bits and pieces that satisfy the researcher's curiosity, and help support the purpose of the study" (¶ 14). Baptiste continued describing the process for sorting through the data to determine what is relevant and important and proposed the use of "labeling, assigning some distinguishing mark to selected data" (¶ 16). After tagging and labeling, data are categorized based on similarity of characteristics and begin to provide explicit definitions for their analysis. Baptiste explained that the final step of analysis involved classification to "tag, label, define, and refine groups of data. This is a messy process that goes back and forth between the four intellectual moments: tagging, labeling, defining, and refining" (¶ 17).

Coffey and Atkinson (1996) explained, "The segmenting and coding of data are often taken-for-granted parts of the qualitative research process. All researchers need to be able to organize, manage, and retrieve the most meaningful bits of our data" (p. 26). In this study, the researcher created a coding system for the identification of categories, classification of information, and derivation of themes from interview transcripts. Open coding was used to identify and classify data. Hoepfl (1997) described the process of open coding:

> The researcher must identify and tentatively name the conceptual categories into which the phenomena observed will be grouped. The goal is to create descriptive, multi-dimensional categories which form a preliminary framework for analysis. Words, phrases, or events that appear to be similar can be grouped into the same

> category. These categories may be gradually modified or replaced during the subsequent stages of analysis that follow. (¶ 22)

Next, axial coding was used to re-examine the categories and determine connections between each sub-category. Hoepfl (1997) explained that:

> Discrete categories identified in open coding are compared and combined in new ways as the researcher begins to assemble the big picture. The purpose of coding is not only to describe but, more importantly, to acquire new understanding of a phenomenon of interest. Therefore, causal events contributing to the phenomenon; descriptive details of the phenomenon itself; and the ramifications of the phenomenon under study must all be identified and explored. During axial coding, the researcher is responsible for building a conceptual model and for determining whether sufficient data exists to support that interpretation. (¶ 32)

The researcher examined results from transcribed audio recordings, primary source documents, and field notes to provide a basis for reaching conclusions regarding the impact of AmeriCorps tutoring programs on student academic achievement and school culture.

Credibility and Consistency

Trochim (2007) explained, "credibility criteria involves establishing that the results of qualitative research are credible or believable from the perspective of the participant in the research" (¶ 6). The researcher shared results and themes that emerged during data analysis with the participants to ascertain that the interpretation of the researcher reflected the experiences of the participants. Patton (2001) recommended this practice as a form of analyst triangulation. Further triangulation of sources was also used

to compare evidence in documents, field notes, and transcribed interviews. This study provided four AmeriCorps program directors' insights, opinions, experiences and perspectives. The study may serve as motivation for further investigation into best practice strategies among AmeriCorps program directors.

Kuzel and Like (1991) summarized techniques that can be utilized during data collection to increase the validity of qualitative research findings. First, member checking involves checking with the participant both during and after the interview, to clarify understanding of answers to questions by restating, summarizing, and paraphrasing information for clarity (Kuzel & Like). Member checking consists of "reporting back initial findings to participants, asking for commentary on the findings, and incorporating their critiques into the findings" (Kuzel & Like, p. 147). Second, disconfirming evidence involves the researcher "seeking accounts from participants that differ from the main accounts in critical ways, which may strengthen the validity of the data" (Kuzel & Like p. 149), noting that lack of disconfirming evidence leads to increased validity (Kuzel & Like). Kuzel and Like continued explaining that the triangulation of multiple data sources and participants, "confirms research findings and provides multiple perspectives for gaining a complete understanding of a phenomenon" (p. 153). Lastly, thick description provides a detailed view of the phenomenon, including the "researchers interpretation, the observed context, and processes as well as a detailed accounting of the methods and procedures followed during and after data collection" (Kuzel & Like, p. 155).

Guba and Lincoln (1981) proposed criteria for use in the evaluation of qualitative research findings in order to enhance validity and reliability, and to enhance trustworthiness:

1. Credibility is analogous to internal validity and reflects the believability of the approximate truth about casual relationships, or the impact of one variable on another. By involving the participants' perspectives in member checking of analysis and gaining feedback on results, credibility can be increased.
2. Transferability is analogous to external validity, and reflects the extent to which findings can be generalized to other settings, contexts, or populations. Transferability can be increased through detailing the contexts, research methods, and assumptions at the basis of the study.
3. Dependability is analogous to reliability, the consistency of observing the same finding under similar circumstances, and reflects the importance of describing the circumstances and contexts. Altering the research design as new findings emerge through data collection can lead to increases in dependability.
4. Confirmability is analogous to objectivity, and reflects the awareness of and accounting for the researcher's individual subjectivity or bias and refers to the ability of findings to be confirmed or corroborated by others. Data audits, focused on areas of bias or distortion as well as searching for results that are contrary to other findings, can result in an increase in confirmability. (p. 111-113)

Credibility and consistency were established in this study through the researcher's use of detailed contact logs representing all interactions with the participants during this study. A formal procedure was established for conducting all interview sessions and the researcher maintained rich, descriptive field notes. A standard protocol for data analysis was employed. The researcher maintained all documents, field notes, and transcriptions

in a locked file throughout the research project. Participants were provided copies of the transcribed interview for clarification prior to coding, as well as an overview of emerging themes from coding analysis, in order to maintain the intent of their discourse.

Researcher's Biases and Assumptions

According to Bogden and Biklen (1998), qualitative researchers must remain continually aware of their own biases, in order to "objectively study the subject states of their subjects" (p. 33). The collection and analysis of detailed data assist in diminishing the prejudiced opinions of the researcher. Bogden and Biklen continued to explain that a researcher's standpoint is simply a "point of entry into the data and that the complexity of qualitative research assists in eliminating researcher biases as they become surrounded by their research findings" (p. 34). Brown (1996) concurred,

> People and their interactions are more than a collection of objective, measurable facts; they are seen and interpreted through the researcher's frame. That is, how she or he organizes the details of an interaction, attributes meaning to them, and decides consciously or unconsciously what is important and what is of secondary importance or irrelevant. (p. 16)

Mehra (2002) explained that a researcher's personal beliefs and values are represented from the time the research topic for study is selected, through the choice of methodology and interpretation of findings. Therefore, Mehra argued that the researcher's job is

> To keep the two voices separate, emic the insiders' or participants' voice and etic the outsider's or researcher's voice, as much as possible in your data, and decide which voice will be the predominant voice in your text. The etic voice is, of course, always there, hidden maybe, but [it] is always present in the text by way

> of how the text is organized, how the data is presented, what quotes are used, and what data is ignored. If you are interested in the emic voice being the predominant voice to tell the story, then it is important that you keep your personal judgments/interpretations out as much as possible. (¶ 14)

The researcher's personal involvement as a first-year AmeriCorps director was considered when determining biases. The researcher was also aware of a pervasive belief in the value of volunteer service, both within and outside the school setting. The primary role of the researcher was to explore the experiences, learning, perceptions, and practices of AmeriCorps directors in established programs, while keeping personal biases and assumptions removed from analysis of findings. The established protocols, interview questionnaires, coding systems, and triangulation of data assisted in lessening the impact of researcher bias and limiting the assumptions of the researcher.

Summary

In Chapter Three, the research design and methodology were discussed and an explanation of the basis for a qualitative, multi-case study was provided. A detailed explanation of the problem and purpose overview provided a basis for the importance of research related to the impact of AmeriCorps tutoring programs on student achievement, school culture, and volunteer involvement. Research questions established to guide the study were reviewed. The population and sample were detailed and the limitations discussed. A review of the case study protocol provided insight into the processes of the researcher to protect the participants and the integrity of the study. A rationale for the selection of a qualitative research approach was provided. The design of the study was reviewed in great detail and the data analysis protocols were discussed. A review of the

credibility and consistency of the study was documented and a thorough examination of the researcher's biases and assumptions were discussed.

In Chapter Four, the data was analyzed through the lenses of volunteer management theory, social justice and social change theory, and the theory of planned behavior. The processes used in data analysis were discussed and connections to the themes of the study problem, purpose, and research questions were explained. Chapter Five included a summary of research findings, limitations, and implications for further research.

CHAPTER FOUR – PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS OF DATA

Introduction

The objective of this study was to explore the educational progress, changes in school culture, and levels of volunteer invovlement experienced in school districts which host AmeriCorps tutoring programs. A qualitative, multi-case study was utilized to allow the researcher to develop an understanding of the participants' beliefs, feelings, experiences, and perceptions surrounding AmeriCorps tutoring programs within their district. Interviews with Missouri AmeriCorps program directors revealed the directors' perspective of effective program design, program effectiveness, and the impact of AmeriCorps tutoring programs in Missouri schools, as viewed through the theoretical constructs of volunteer management theory, social change, and social justice theory and the theory of planned behavior. Hartley (2004) proposed the importance of utilizing theory development as a means of facilitating data collection. However, Hartley explained that the "theoretical frameworks explored at the beginning of research might change throughout the study" (p. 323). The following research questions were the underpinnings of the study and were the basis of data analysis:

1. What is the educational impact of AmeriCorps tutoring and how is educational progress measured?
2. How has the school culture impacted the AmeriCorps program?
3. In what ways has volunteer support changed as a result of AmeriCorps tutoring?

4. How can AmeriCorps tutoring programs improve or enhance the educational impact?
5. What are the similarities and differences in the AmeriCorps tutoring programs in Missouri?
6. What elements are essential in creating an effective AmeriCorps tutoring program?

Interviews with AmeriCorps program directors occurred in their school settings or at state directors' conference meetings. Program specific documents, performance measures, performance measure results, orientation and training protocols, program evaluation materials, school district report cards, assessment data, were analyzed to provide a more comprehensive understanding of the AmeriCorps programs. Transcripts from interviews were coded and evaluated to discover central themes. Axial coding was then employed to compare responses between and among program directors. A final analysis provided central themes and subcategories for deeper understanding of current practices in selected AmeriCorps programs. Triangulation of data was established by evaluating findings from interviews, site visits, observations, field notes, primary source documentation, discussions, and quantitative data. Through analysis of this information, three broad themes were established: focusing on results, communication, and the Corps community.

Organization of the Chapter

Chapter Four provided a précis of the data regarding selected AmeriCorps programs and an explanation of the data collection methodology. Secondly, the data analysis method was presented. Lastly, three primary themes focusing on results,

communication, and the Corps community and supporting data were discussed and supporting data was offered for review.

Participant confidentiality and anonymity were maintained by employing a coding system consisting of fictitious names of the participants and a corresponding code: Mrs. Fonder, program director one (PD1); Mrs. Flower, program director two (PD2); Mrs. Datlin, program director three (PD3); and Mrs. Couch, program director four (PD4). Codes were also developed to assist with the identification of documents (DOC) and field notes (FN). A more detailed explanation of the coding system used to identify the question and line numbers in transcripts is located in Appendix G.

Part I: The Participants and AmeriCorps Program Demographics

The participants interviewed in this study have served as AmeriCorps program directors for a minimum of two years in a Midwest state. AmeriCorps program requirements include the creation and ongoing monitoring of performance measures focused on specific program outcomes. Program reporting statistics and school district report cards provided an analysis of the population served, as well as the AmeriCorps member population.

The participants were selected, based on their experience as AmeriCorps program directors. Both member experience and program statistics vary greatly between programs. Participant and program specific data are presented in Table 1.

Table 1. *Participants and Program Demographics*.

Participants	Years of Director Experience	Number of AmeriCorps Members	Number of Students Served
Mrs. Fonder	15	40	300
Mrs. Flower	3	16	300
Mrs. Datlin	6	37	875
Mrs. Couch	3	15	130

Mrs. Fonder

Mrs. Fonder has been a program director for over fifteen years. She established the first AmeriCorps tutoring program in her state at the inception of AmeriCorps in 1994 (FN-1-9). Mrs. Fonder is employed by a nonprofit organization that contracts with the school district to provide AmeriCorps services to at-risk students. Mrs. Fonder described her experience prior to becoming a program director:

> I have an undergraduate degree in social science and community organization. I have a master's degree in criminal corrections. My husband is involved in the whole notion of youth Corps and together with him I became involved in the whole AmeriCorps experience. The emphasis for me probably was building community among those young people. I spent 11 years doing crisis intervention out of a police department so I've spent a lot of time with youngsters and I've been very involved in the St. Louis community and service learning, and I've done workshops and been a lead on several conferences (D1-1-7).

The AmeriCorps program that Mrs. Fonder leads incorporates forty AmeriCorps members located at eight schools in a large urban school district with enrollment exceeding 33,000 students (DOC-1). Mrs. Fonder was instrumental in the application for grant funding in 1994 and has served as program director since that time. AmeriCorps members work in a one-on-one setting to provide kindergarten through third grade students with reading tutoring and support over the course of one school year. Members typically provide tutoring service to six students each day (D1-2-3).

Schools within the district compete for the opportunity to host an AmeriCorps program, through a process involving applications, interviews, and site visits. Mrs. Fonder's AmeriCorps program is competitively funded at the national level through the Corporation for National and Community Service and is administered through the Partnership for Youth, Inc. organization. The Partnership for Youth, Inc. is a nonprofit agency made up of a board of directors who have contracted with the school district to provide tutoring support to district students, with only a minimal financial match by the school district. Not being directly connected to the school provides the program board of directors with a great deal of anonymity and ability to establish parameters, which the schools must meet, in order to receive AmeriCorps tutoring services (D1-9-4).

Mrs. Flower

Mrs. Flower is an employee of a small rural school district serving a population of 2,000 students (DOC-1). Mrs. Flower holds a dual role in the district, serving as the district volunteer coordinator and AmeriCorps program director. Mrs. Flower's background is in the areas of business and marketing. She has obtained a marketing degree and worked in the business sector for many years before working to establish the

volunteer coordinator position within her school district (FN-2-24). Mrs. Flower described her unique career path and subsequent employment as a school district employee in her hometown explaining:

> Professionally, my experience probably doesn't align with most people in the education field, which is where I find myself as an AmeriCorps director. I took a really crazy path to get here. Most of my background is in business. The reason I ended up an AmeriCorps director in the …. school district is that I was a mommy and I was really active with my kids' education. I saw some needs in our existing school district and after talking with our existing superintendent we decided there were some things that we could do about that. So, we began a volunteer program. After learning how to fund a volunteer program and realizing the connections to our community, we followed through with AmeriCorps because AmeriCorps really engages the community in our school (D1-1-11).

The AmeriCorps program that Mrs. Flower directs consists of eleven full-time and five part-time AmeriCorps members. The program is in its third year of operation and Mrs. Flower was involved in the initial grant application process and has maintained involvement as director since that time. AmeriCorps members serve at five school sites within the rural school district, providing one-on-one and small group support in the areas of reading and mathematics (FN 2-22). Tutoring support is provided for students in kindergarten through grade twelve, including students at the district alternative school. District administrators are very involved in determining both the scope and focus of AmeriCorps service. Mrs. Flower's AmeriCorps program is funded at the state level

through a three-year renewable grant and members serve an average of twenty-one students each day.

Mrs. Datlin

Mrs. Datlin is the AmeriCorps program director for a Corps of thirty-seven AmeriCorps members who are serving in two school districts, including nine school sites in a primarily rural county. Mrs. Datlin is employed by a countywide community resource council, which provides a variety of programs to support at-risk youth in the rural community. Mrs. Datlin has been involved with the AmeriCorps tutoring program since its inception in 2004. She was instrumental in writing the grant that established the program. Prior to becoming a program director, Mrs. Datlin enjoyed a wide and varied career path utilizing her business administration degree. She shared her past experiences stating:

> I had a variety of careers before becoming an AmeriCorps director. I was in banking for about ten years. My education is actually in business administration. I served the retail sector of the banking services and managed the teller line. I served as a bank teller for a period of time and was responsible for a lot of reporting, compliance, and audit preparation activities. I was also heavily involved with youth ministry for a period of time. I would credit those two experiences with bringing me to my current position with AmeriCorps and being able to execute my activities as program director. In 2003, I served as an AmeriCorps member for one year. During that time, I served in a fellowship in the … County Community Resource Council and one of my main functions was to help a group of volunteers and community partners to develop and plan for the

> opening of the volunteer center and submission of the AmeriCorps application. I had limited experience in grant writing but I quickly learned how to bring these partners together to be able to come up with a program design (D3-1-6).

The AmeriCorps program that Mrs. Datlin administers consists of thirty-seven AmeriCorps members serving students in pre-kindergarten through ninth grade in the areas of literacy and mathematics. Tutors work in one-on-one and small group settings. The community partnership is a nonprofit organization that partners with all of the school districts and school sites within the county to provide academic support both during the school day and in after-school programs (FN-3-7). Mrs. Datlin works closely with district superintendents to determine the focus areas and directions of AmeriCorps tutoring. Mrs. Datlin's program is funded at the national level through competitive funding from the Corporation for National and Community Service. AmeriCorps members in this program typically serve twenty students each day.

Mrs. Couch

Mrs. Couch facilitates an AmeriCorps tutoring program in a rural K-12 school district serving 130 students (DOC-1). Mrs. Couch brings a more traditional educational background to her director's role. Mrs. Couch has a degree in English and a minor in French. She has completed all of the requirements necessary for obtaining her education degree, except for student teaching. Mrs. Couch is an employee of the school district, where she formally served as a volunteer (FN-3-7). She described her experience stating:

> I worked as a K-12 substitute teacher in the school district. I have also done a lot of volunteer work organizing projects and volunteers and things like that, basically, a lot of service volunteering to the community. When the existing

> director retired, I was approached about taking on this position. I stepped into an existing program and starting its seventh year. I had a great foundation and base and I was able to walk in to something that was already in existence, which helped with the learning curve (D4-1-5).

Mrs. Couch works side by side with all 15 AmeriCorps members tutoring in the "AmeriCorps Tutoring Room" located in the district's only elementary school. She provides direct oversight and support as tutors provide one-on-one instruction to students in kindergarten through fourth grade. Tutors in her small rural school serve over 30% of the school population each year and see an average of 150 students each day (FN-4-15).

Part II: Compendium of Findings

Protocol

AmeriCorps program directors were approached during a statewide director-training meeting to discuss their interest and willingness in participating in this study. At this time, the researcher discussed the parameters of the study with members and provided members with a copy of the interview questions along with an informed letter of consent for their review. The researcher then contacted each director to schedule an individual field interview and site visit. Two of the four directors elected to conduct interviews at state director trainings rather than on site due to distance and weather conditions. Follow-up phone calls were made to confirm interview dates.

Interviews

At the onset of each interview, participants were provided with an additional copy of the letter of informed consent and interview questions. Questions regarding interview protocol and protections were discussed prior to the beginning of each interview.

Interview sessions were audio taped, with the permission of the participants, in order to provide correct and complete records of participant responses. Transcriptions of interviews were sent to participants via email to assure accuracy and intention of all communicated information.

Field Notes

Observations and conversations that occurred outside of the audio taped interview were noted in detailed field notes. The notes were utilized to assist in triangulation of data between interviews and documents. Field notes also provided details from ongoing conversations and observations with program directors. Information from the written notes was utilized in the construction of themes and sub-themes, as well as in examining connections to volunteer theories. The use of field notes assisted the researcher in further triangulating the results of the study.

Documents

Each program director was asked to provide the researcher with a copy of the annual end-of-year report from the previous year, as well as a copy of the current performance measures and general program demographics. The researcher accessed school district report cards and annual performance reports found via the Missouri Department of Elementary and Secondary Education website. The documents provided wide-ranging views of the status of both the school districts and the individual AmeriCorps programs. These documents aided in further triangulation of data and provided the researcher with a deeper, more complete understanding of the intricacies of program design and the setting in which each program functioned.

Process of Analysis

According to Patton (1990), the analysis of qualitative research including field notes, interviews, observations, and documents begins with grouping data to common questions and analyzing the different themes and perspectives that emerge. Seidel (1998) provided a description for the process of qualitative data analysis as that of "noticing, collecting, and thinking about interesting things" (¶ 5). Seidel utilized the analogy of a jigsaw puzzle to describe the process of data analysis, explaining that data analysis, just as jigsaw puzzle construction, is not a linear process; explaining that qualitative data analysis is both iterative and progressive because it is a cycle that keeps repeating. Seidel described the process as an "infinite spiral" (¶ 7), in which researchers are thinking about the data, as they are continually noticing new information, themes, and categories in the process. Seidel (1990) expounded that qualitative analysis is also "recursive because researchers find themselves revisiting components of research and discovering an endless number of themes to explore, data to collect, and questions to ask" (¶ 8). Seidel (1990) continued describing qualitative analysis as holographic stating that a holistic view of the research includes ensuring that "each step in the process contains the entire process and is continually developed" (¶ 9).

Open and axial coding processes and coding categories were established from the transcribed interviews. Field notes, documents, and observations were also explored to discover connecting and supporting themes and sub-themes. The data were explored to determine support for central themes explored in volunteer management and social change and social justice theories, as well as the theory of planned behavior. LeCompte and Preissle (1993) highlighted the importance of returning to the original questions

proposed by the researcher when analyzing data and then developing coding categories to cover each topic or reoccurring theme.

Comparing themes found in field notes, transcribed interviews, observations, and documents provided triangulation, of research data. Patton (1990) explained that there are four types of triangulation and each was used in this study. Method triangulation was utilized by exploring data from a variety of sources including field notes, observations, transcribed interviews, and primary documents; theory triangulation was utilized by examining data through the lenses of volunteer management theory, social change and social justice theory, and the theory of planned behavior; data triangulation was achieved by involving data from four AmeriCorps programs. Lincoln and Guba (1985) explained the value of using "member checks" (p. 313), in which subjects are asked to corroborate findings. This occurred by providing subjects with copies of transcribed interviews and by following up with phone calls and emails to clarify the findings.Three broad themes emerged from the data analysis: a focus on results, the importance of communication, and establishing and maintaining the Corps community. The themes were explored through the lenses of volunteer management theory, social change and social justice theory, and the theory of planned behavior. Bogden and Biklen (1998) explained that data analysis is shaped by not only the researcher's perspective but also the "theoretical positions and dialogue about the subject in which the researcher has been involved" (p. 177). The emerging themes were interrelated and ideas intersected throughout the discussions; however, each theme was presented and explored separately.

Themes

Mind maps illustrating each of the themes and sub-themes were provided throughout the chapter, to enhance understanding of the proposed theme. Themes were viewed through the theoretical constructs of volunteer theory. Volunteer management theory, according to Volunteer Canada (2008), consists of planning, recruitment and selection, and support. Snarr (2003) explained that social change and social justice theory involve volunteers whose efforts reshape the basic fabric of our society, creating an environment where those "who have" provided support and encouragement to those "who have not". The theory of planned behavior, according to Ajzen (1985), illuminates the process by which individuals decide to become engaged in volunteer efforts, based on three determinants: attitudes, social pressure, and behavioral control or choice. Each of the aforementioned theories has impacted the various themes presented in this chapter.

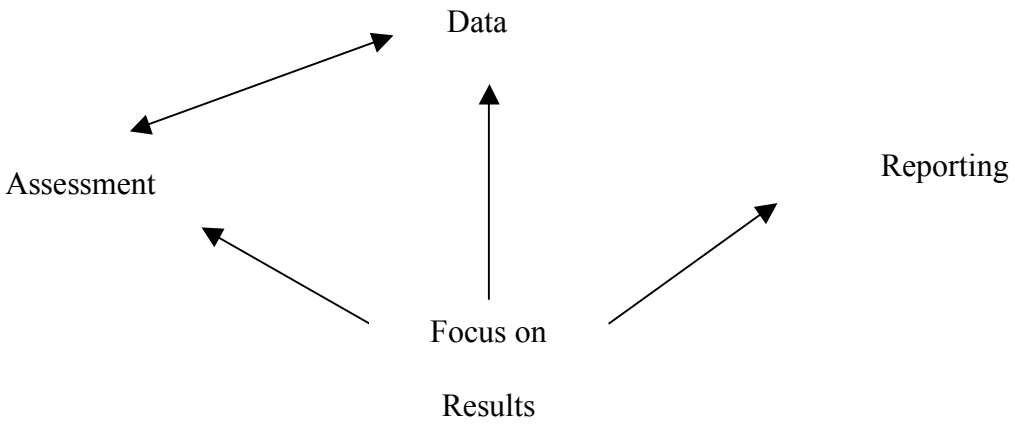

Figure 1. Theme one: Focus on results and sub-themes.

Focus on Results

Covey (1989) proposed the importance of "beginning with the end in mind" (p. 16). This philosophy is at the foundation of many of the decisions and actions adopted by AmeriCorps program directors. All four of the directors expounded on the importance of having clear goals and objectives. Frequent reference to performance measures, outputs and outcomes, and the success of AmeriCorps tutors echoed through all director interviews. Directors were asked to share their experience and opinions regarding their performance measures (goals) and the assessments that are used to measure progress. Mrs. Fonder explained the basis for performance measures in her program, stating:

> We have an output intermediate outcome and an end outcome in our performance measures as they relate to our individual one-on-one tutoring. We do specifically one-on-one tutoring for kids in K-3 and output is measured by how many kids and how many times that they receive tutoring and what we ask is that each member

> tutor no less than five kids and no more than ten for the entire year on an average of three times per week. (D1-5-3)

Mrs. Datlin detailed the multiple layers of performance measures that every program must have:

> We have outputs, intermediate outcomes, and end outcomes. Our outputs are the number of youth that are served by the programs that we support. Intermediate outcomes include improved school attendance and decreased disciplinary referrals. End outcome is to improve grades and reading levels of students. Our goal is to provide students with services that will improve their grade in the subject tutored a minimum of 5%. (D2-5-5)

Mrs. Flower simplified the primary outcomes that AmeriCorps tutors in her program must keep at the forefront of their minds at all times:

> Our performance measures as they relate to student achievement are that we are going to increase student grades by 10% or improve their reading by half a grade level. (D3-6-1)

Mrs. Couch explained that student reading levels measured by the STAR test, a reading comprehension assessment which provides individual student reading levels, and ratings on the LEARNS assessments, a teacher rating scale to evaluate student learning characteristics, are used to measure performance measures in her program.

Assessment: Discussions at quarterly director meetings regarding the assessments that AmeriCorps program directors are using are frequent and filled with emotion. While all of the directors work well together and enjoy sharing best practices as well as frustrations, there is little opportunity for extensive discussion of the daily matters that

directors must address, such as selection of assessments, reliability, validity, and other pressing issues related to assessment. Mrs. Fonder expressed a desire for a consistent assessment that would be used by all AmeriCorps programs throughout the country. She stated that this would allow us to compare "apples to apples" (FN-D1-42).

Mrs. Flower explained, "One of the biggest challenges we face is looking at how we measure the achievement of the students" (D3-6-5). An echo of frustration and sometimes exasperation was evident in directors' attempts to find a meaningful, consistent assessment tool that would address the needs of all grade levels, be respected by school district staff, and provide worthwhile information. Mrs. Fonder expressed the frustration that many program directors have experienced as they strive to connect assessments used by AmeriCorps tutors with district-wide assessments, "the school district kept changing their tests and we were trying to use the same assessments that the district used so that we could compare kids that received tutoring and kids that didn't" (D1-2-20). Mrs. Flower concurred, explaining, "As frustrating as it [assessment] is for us, we know that we are not alone in this. Measuring student achievement is a challenge for everyone" (D3-6-21).

Mrs. Flower described the challenges that both program directors and educators face:

> We use our district benchmarks, which are a constant source of frustration for me because we tutor K-12. So, the benchmarks are different by grade level. They vary even within kindergarten and those benchmarks change throughout the year because kids come in and the initial assessment is whether they know their alphabet, letters, and sounds and eventually you move on to giving them a DRA

> midway throughout the year so the assessment changes. So, it is a challenge. (D3-6-6)

According to Mrs. Fonder and Mrs. Couch, the Corporation for National and Community Service has tried to create tools to assist program directors in providing consistent measures. Mrs. Fonder explained,

> The Corporation for National and Community Service was concerned when they looked around the country and saw so many programs focused on education but all were using a different tool to measure their impact so they developed the LEARNS assessment tool. (D1-15-1)

Only two of the four directors currently use the LEARNS assessment. This tool allows AmeriCorps tutors to rate students' demonstration of reading skills and strategy use three times each year. The other two directors report that their school districts believe that the LEARNS assessment is too subjective.

The Corporation for National and Community Service has recognized that this is a challenge that many program directors have experienced and has responded by launching a new tool, the Performance Measure Builder, to assist directors in not only writing effective performance measures but in selecting tools that effectively measure those performance measures. Unfortunately, only the LEARNS assessments have been added to the Performance Measure Builder. (FN-D3-31)

Directors feel a great need to align their assessments with those used by school district staff. Mrs. Flower explained, "As the school district goes, so does our program" (D3-6-23). The tools that are used vary greatly in each program. Mrs. Fonder explained,

> In the last three years, the district has moved to using DIBELS, the Dynamic Indicator of Basic Early Literacy Skills, and that has worked really well for us. Most of our schools use DIBELS. And the district has been introducing it slowly throughout the schools. The district also agreed to have our members trained in giving the DIBELS test so in the schools where DIBELS isn't used our members can administer the test. (D1-5-11)

Continuing with similar experiences, Mrs. Datlin added:

> We use school report cards. We also utilize school reading assessments that are conducted by teachers. We obtain school disciplinary reports to gauge student behavior. We also conduct surveys with administration, staff, students, and parents to see if we have impacted a student's connection to school and their feelings of success and self-esteem. I feel our assessments are very effective. Of course, grades are very subjective but it is the measuring stick that schools use. I feel it is important for our program to utilize what is already out there. I think they are highly effective not only in the determination of whether or not a student has been impacted. School staff readily accepts grades. Another type of instrument, a survey for example, that we created would not be as valid to the teachers or to the parents that we need to demonstrate progress to. (D2-5-6)

Data. Outside of providing direct tutoring support, the collection of data is one of the primary responsibilities of AmeriCorps members. Members must utilize EnCorps, the online reporting system to track not only hours, but also progress and success stories.

> Consistent and regular documentation of services and reporting of those services as well as regular, ongoing, and consistent obtaining of outcome data are vital. We require our members to document services that are provided to students daily. They compile that into a weekly use report that is put into a monthly log that gets complied into a quarterly report, then a semester report, and then an annual report. They are required at a minimum of eight weeks to obtain the students' grades, attendance, and discipline information. Our staff aggregates the data and we can literally see at every eight weeks where we stand with each child. We can feedback that information to the tutor. Then they know which students need to be improved and which students are showing great progress and they can respond accordingly to that information. (D2-16-8)

Mrs. Couch explained that in her program multiple measures are used for assessing student achievement, each with a unique purpose.

> The performance measures are based on the LEARNS Literacy Assessment Profile [LAP], which in my opinion is a really soft tool. Members do an evaluation at the beginning, an evaluation in the middle, and an evaluation at the end of the year. The LAP reveals whether or not your student is making progress. It's good in one way because it gives you a lot of different areas that you can look at specifically. If a child scores low, you can look back and see that the child may know their letters, but may not know how to rhyme. Then you see the need to focus on rhyming. It's better than just administering a STAR Test that shows the students reading level was a 2.3 and is now a 2.5, because with the STAR we don't know where they are lacking. I use both tools but the one I actually report

> on is the LAP. I use the STAR because that is something really hard and concrete and that is what our administration understands where everything is based on reading levels. (D4-16-23)

Reporting: AmeriCorps directors are required to complete quarterly reports documenting progress in all performance measures. These reports are submitted to the Missouri Community Service Commission for review prior to being submitted to the Corporation for National and Community Service. Continued grant funding support is dependent on not only timely reporting, but also successfully meeting performance measures (FN-D4-29). According to Mrs. Datlin, members report not only student academic progress, but also a host of other information from perceptual surveys to attendance and discipline rates. "We also conduct surveys with administration, staff, students, and parents to see if we have impacted a student's connection to school and the student's feelings of success and self-esteem" (D2-5-9).

Members must have training in how to report data as well as use the data that is reported. Mrs. Flower explained the process of ongoing growth that AmeriCorps members experience: "This year we are really trying to look at our data and see how we're providing interventions effectively and where and who's doing that" (D3-2-15). Effective communication among and training of AmeriCorps directors, staff, and AmeriCorps members are necessities in ensuring that effective assessment, data collection, and reporting keep the focus on results.

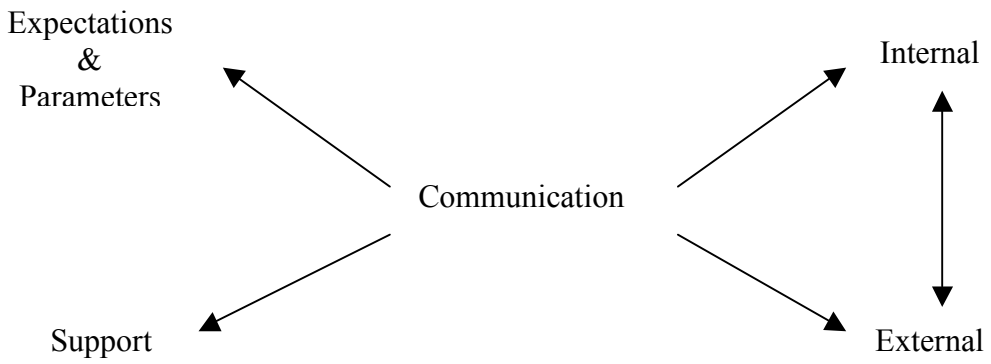

Figure 2. Theme two: Communication and sub-themes.

Communication

Wertheim (2008) explained that people spend over 75% of their time communicating. He emphasized the importance of effective communication, explaining, "communication is an essential component of organizational success whether it is at the interpersonal, intergroup, intragroup, organizational, or external levels" (¶ 1). AmeriCorps directors spend the bulk of their day communicating. They serve as the uniting force between members, site supervisors, mentor teachers, school district administration, university personnel, the public, the Missouri Community Service Commission personnel, and the Corporation for National and Community Service. Positive, effective, timely communication is the basis of strong relationships, according to Mrs. Couch (FN-D4-49). Mrs. Datlin concurred, explaining that "being upfront, addressing issues quickly, and having a plan to take care of things is all very important" (D3-18-9).

> Again, I think that the most important component of member management is ongoing communication with members, written communication as well as verbal communication. Our members are required to submit weekly service documentation to our office. I, as a program director, implemented a few years ago a policy where I send out a Wednesday Memo. So, once a week on Wednesdays I spend an hour typing up an email that goes out to every member in our program. This provides them with important information that they need about upcoming trainings and meetings that we are having. I also use this as a means to encourage them and recognize outstanding service and to give them warnings about things that I think they need to be warned about. This also creates the kind of network so that if one person has a problem in one location, I can use this email as a means to address it to the whole Corps and hopefully prevent them from having the same thing happen to them later in the future. (D2-18-3)

Expectations and Parameters: Establishing clear expectations and parameters at the beginning of the relationship is essential for both AmeriCorps members and the school district personnel with whom they serve, according to Mrs. Couch (D4-9-10). Mrs. Fonder defined the importance of clear expectations: "Take control. Be really clear with your agreements. Don't just have agreements with the district, but with each school, with each teacher" (D1-12-45). Mrs. Fonder further explained,

> It was difficult during the initial years of the program. But, we found teachers and principals that wanted us in there and we got clear that, if we weren't wanted, we didn't go there. There was one school that I remember that at the end of the school year I showed up to talk to the principal about the impact of my

> AmeriCorps members and she referred to them as the "white girls." They were the only white people in the school and I found it offensive that she didn't even know their names. I already had in my head that we weren't going back. We require teachers and principals to undergo some training with us so that they understand what we do and that they go through an interview process for us to select them and for us to stay there. We had asked a certain principal to participate in the program and she wanted to know who was going to pay her because this was during the summer and she wasn't coming if she wasn't paid and she said, "Can't you go off of your experience with me so far?" I said absolutely and we headed out of that school faster than fast. (D1-8-10)

Directors report that, not only is it important to clearly establish the type of relationships that members should expect from staff, but it is also important to establish the parameters for which students will receive service. Determining which students, which grade levels, and which subjects will be the focus of intervention is important. Mrs. Fonder expounded on the importance of narrowing focus, as she chronicled the history and metamorphosis of her program:

> We ran programs in 23 schools for a couple of years and realized that we were having a couple of problems. Number one, we were spread way too thin and we had to admit that we had to go where the need was the greatest. We were spread out K-5 and were tutoring in every subject area in every grade. We did this for another three or four years and the school district kept changing their tests. So finally in our fifth year we convinced our superintendent to allow us to select our own schools and what we did was we had an open competition so that schools

> could apply to be AmeriCorps sites. At that point, we knew what we were looking for in terms of leadership, in terms of permission to evaluate, and use their tools. We were able to bring that number down to 11 schools. Since that time we have even pulled it back further and last year and this year we are only in eight schools. We also hired an outside evaluator to come in and set up a whole evaluation plan. He spent two years with us and The Great City Schools did an assessment of the school district. We combined what our evaluators were telling us, and what the University was telling us, and what our comparative data was telling us, and also what The Great City Schools was telling the district, and we focused, focused, focused and got it down to the point where we only teach reading K-3. This has allowed us to show that we are making an impact. We found out that we needed at least three, no more than five, tutors per school. In essence, our history was very broad but is now very focused. (D1-2-31)

Support: The concept of support is a key focus in the relationship between directors, supervisors, mentor-teachers, and members. Program support between school district staff is a necessity, in order to have an exceptional program. Mrs. Flower explained, "There is an opportunity here with AmeriCorps, but what has to happen or be in place before you really are successful is you have to have the support of your superintendent and your principals for not just the program but for the process" (D3-16-5). Mrs. Couch described the importance of relationships and support among all members of the AmeriCorps team:

> Developing a good rapport with the teachers and administrators and getting a lot of positive feedback even if you have to set it up in the beginning helps the

> AmeriCorps members. I could go to my principal and say, "Hey, my members are needing a little pep talk" and he can come in and make you feel that you've accomplished a great thing. That encourages them to push themselves even more. The same thing is true with the teachers. I might ask if they have seen any progress with one of the students and they say "yes." Then, I would ask them if they see the tutor in the lunchroom or something could you give them an "atta girl" and share the progress we are seeing. That [recognition] is something that is very important. You've got to keep them motivated to do all that they are capable of doing. (D4-12-14)

According to Mrs. Flower, the support of administrators cannot be overstated: "I know for sure that, if our superintendent wouldn't have been 100% behind this and hadn't been our best cheerleader, we probably wouldn't have been successful" (D3-16-10). In addition to support for the program, support of the members is vital. Mrs. Fonder explained, "What our members do in these schools day in and day out are in some of the worst schools with some of the most difficult kids is a hard duty. We have to support them and celebrate their successes" (D1-16-14).

Internal: Communication between and among AmeriCorps members and the director is the foundation of a high-quality tutoring program. Mrs. Fonder commented, "It is really important to make sure that you are celebrating things and doing a lot of reflection" (D1-17-7). Mrs. Flower agreed, "I think that you have to make yourself available to them and stay on top of issues" (D3-18-2). All four of the program directors emphasized the importance of maintaining ongoing relationships among members, through regularly scheduled Corps meetings and regular communication between mentor

teachers, site supervisors, and members. Mrs. Datlin described the importance of team meetings and communication:

> They are not prepared for what they are going to encounter and it is very difficult for them to be able to handle the stress that comes along with working with students day to day. So, we have regular meetings without tutors sort of like a support group meeting, but also a time where they can share best practices with one another and can hear each other's woes and challenges and be encouraging to one another. We also have built into our program design that tutors have regular meetings with their site supervisor, which is typically their building principal, so that they can address issues that they are having with students, teachers, or parents and then the building principal is able to be helpful to that member. (D2-17-6)

External: AmeriCorps program directors discussed the importance of establishing and maintaining relationships outside of school district staff. These relationships serve to support the AmeriCorps program. Mrs. Fonder presented examples of external relationships; "We had a graduate intern from the university who spent the whole year evaluating what we did well and what we didn't do well. She came up with some recommendations" (D1-2-14). Mrs. Datlin communicated the importance of networking with directors from other programs as well as experts outside the school district to improve AmeriCorps programs:

> We steal every good idea that we can find. We have definitely borrowed a lot of what we do from other AmeriCorps programs. A lot of the trainings that we provide have been highly recommended by the local state university and the local community college's education department. Our central office administration is

> highly involved in the training and orientation that we provide to our members. A second AmeriCorps program has provided us survey instruments that we've been able to utilize as evaluation instruments in our program. (D2-15-5)

Directors also expressed the importance of working with community agencies, such as the University of Missouri Extension Center (FN-D3-28), and capitalizing on the resources that are available in the community that will support the students and members. Mrs. Datlin shared how her program marketed the impacts of the AmeriCorps program and demonstrated the many community agencies connected to the AmeriCorps program (FN-D2-27).

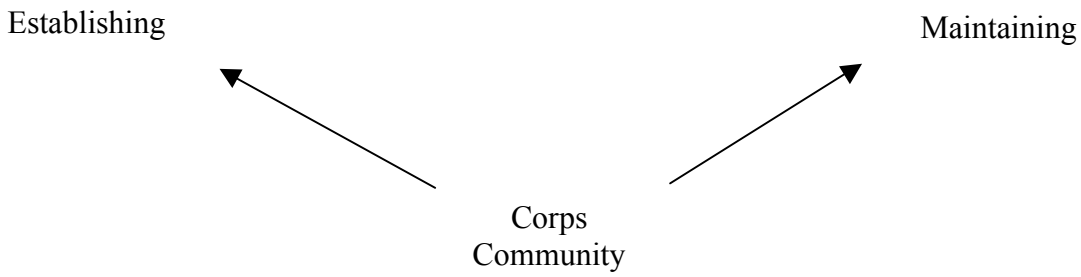

Figure 3. Theme three: Corps community and sub-themes.

Corps Community

Being an AmeriCorps member is something greater than simply tutoring students. It is serving as a member of a national organization with broad goals and thousands of members who are working together to change the state of our nation (FN-D3-49). Mrs. Flower explained, "Making people feel that they are a part of something bigger than their individual efforts is very important to our success" (D3-17-14). Mrs. Fonder concurred, "I think one of the most important best practices is to have a Corps community" (D1-12-1).

Establishing: Working together to establish a Corps community begins by creating a sense of identity as a Corps. Mrs. Fonder explained, "They see themselves as a Corps. They have different service sites but don't belong to those other places. They serve at a site, but belong to the AmeriCorps community" (D1-12-2).

> You need to work on having a strong Corps. You need to respect this primarily young citizenry. What they are going to be doing is giving up this year of their lives. You have to start out with this ultimate respect of your members. You want

> them to remember this year forever as one of the peak experiences. If you approach it this way, you are going to give them the type of professional development that's going to come out as making leaders, people who will lead with the ethic of service for the rest of their lives. Whether they will be teachers or active in their community you want to help them develop professionally so that they can they can be good at what they choose to do with their lives and to do it with this service ethic. (D1-14-2)

Mrs. Couch described the Corps community of her program:

> They need to have ownership and know that this is their program. That is important to them and makes them feel like "real teachers." Whether they are 18, 19, or 20 year olds who are excited that they aren't flipping burgers somewhere once they graduate from high school, or if they are stay-at-home moms or grandmas who come into the classroom and say this is really important, and so I think I'm doing something that is worthy of my life skills that I bring to it. Autonomy is real important and having the resources is also really important. AmeriCorps is a really good program, but I get really emotional about my AmeriCorps program and what I see my members doing and how much I love my members. (D4-12-6)

Mrs. Flower expressed the importance of screening in establishing a strong Corps, and explained the importance of screening members and communicating the commitment that members make when they join AmeriCorps:

> I would say one of the components that I'm coming to realize is very important in my third year is finding people who are not looking for a job, but are looking to

> make a difference in children's lives. It's hard to screen for that. The first year I had very few applicants that I didn't choose to be members and a few more the second year, but this year I had twice as many applicants as I did members. I think screening out people who say they've always wanted to work with kids to people who say I want to make a difference in kids' lives. That is really hard to quantify. AmeriCorps is not a job. It is a year-long commitment and I really stress that this is a commitment to children and if you aren't there they aren't going to have the support that they need. If you decide in the middle of the year that this isn't for you, I can't replace you. I think that is an important component to our AmeriCorps program. (D3-17-1)

Mrs. Fonder agreed with the importance of screening, explaining, "We try to get the right people on the bus and the wrong people off the bus. We make sure that everyone on the bus agrees to where we are going and how we are going to get there" (D1-13-4).

Maintaining: Once the AmeriCorps community has been established, program directors must work to maintain the Corps community. Assisting members in making adjustments to the new culture that they are working in is the first challenge that must be addressed. Some programs recruit members from across the United States, and members must acclimate to an entirely new and diverse community (FN-D1-14). Mrs. Fonder expounded on the culture changes accompanying such relocations:

> Members had a real cultural challenge just being in the city and often times being white in a black world. The second cultural challenge was that most of our members were college graduates that came out of good schools. They were very diverse in terms of their socioeconomic background. Still, most had a different

> school experience than the schools they were facing in our community. The district suffers dramatically in terms of violence. So, that was also very difficult for many of the members. (D1-4-9)

Other programs are made up of members of the local community, and their challenges in adapting to their new position are not nearly as great. Mrs. Datlin recalled,

> The most challenging cultural issues that we faced were that so few of our community members, in particular our AmeriCorps members, had an awareness of student needs. We have high levels of poverty and there is a low level of education among citizens of our community, which directly impacts tutoring capacity to be able to be helpful to their children. Our members were most alarmed at the low levels of learning that were occurring in our schools for a majority of our students. (D2-4-1)

Once members join an AmeriCorps tutoring program, they are immersed in the culture of school. The school culture feels much different working alongside teachers than AmeriCorps members might remember from their days as students. Program directors support members in traversing the landscape of the school culture. Mrs. Fonder described the efforts that she and other directors make to acclimate AmeriCorps tutors to the school environment:

> One of the first things that we do with our members is bring a couple of our school administrators and principals in to talk to our members. They try to let our members know what it will be like when they step foot in schools. For example, school doesn't start at 9:00 a.m. it starts at 9:03, and that they will be called Ms. so and so and all of those types of school cultural norms. (D1-4-4)

Directors emphasized the importance of providing training in order to help members develop the needed skills and make the cultural adjustments needed, in order to be successful tutors. Training is varied and includes learning how to respond to children (FN-D3-19), learning specific skills and strategies to support students' academic needs (FN-D4-22), and successful intervention and assessment strategies (FN-D1-4). Directors utilize both in-house teacher experts and experts from outside the district and from local colleges to assist with training. Mrs. Flower explained, "I think providing high-quality, intensive training is one of the most important things that we do" (D3-17-8). Mrs. Datlin described the experiences of AmeriCorps members in her program:

> We do a lot of tutor training, but it is not nearly enough. We utilize the most highly qualified teachers within our district to provide all tutor training prior to tutors being in-service within the buildings. Some of the examples of the training we do, we have a reading coach that comes in and does a presentation on reading strategies and prompts. We have a math specialist come in and do specialized math training on the grade level that the tutor is going to be providing services. We actually do a training on the MAP test explaining who is going to test for what and what type of content is going to be covered in that test, and also the way the questions are going to be formatted because that is a big issue for a lot of students especially those who aren't reading on grade level and being able to understand the importance of being able to answer all parts of a particular question. That really helps our tutors to be able to get the big picture of learning and that it is not just multiplication facts or sight words, but that it is critical thinking skills. I would also suggest that tutors really need some initiation or

orientation to the different types of behaviors that they might encounter in students. We do training on conflict resolution between kids. (D2-14-8)

Summary

In Chapter Four, data from field notes, documents, transcribed interviews, and observations were presented. Participants were described and school district and program demographics were reviewed. Volunteer management theory, the theory of planned behavior, and social change and social justice theories were used to provide greater insight into the data that were collected and analyzed, and the protocols and process of analysis which were presented.

The principal themes and sub-themes were detailed and mind maps were presented for each theme, to illustrate relationships of the data. The summary of findings, comparative analysis of the findings, limitations of the study, conclusions, recommendations for future research, applications for practice, and summary are presented in Chapter Five.

CHAPTER FIVE – SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

Introduction

This study examined the practices and experiences of AmeriCorps tutoring program directors and provided insight into and understanding of the organizational structure of AmeriCorps tutoring programs. According to Howell et al. (2008), the overwhelming majority of public citizens, 80%, believe that public schools are not functioning at an acceptable level, giving public schools across the nation a grade of C, D, or F. Howell et al. also reported that 69% of citizens believe that national standards and testing should take place in all schools and that educators should seek alternatives to traditional schools. The utilization of AmeriCorps tutoring programs provides a viable alternative that many educators do not realize exists. One of the study participants expressed, "AmeriCorps gives me and our school the opportunity to help hundreds of children be successful not just in school, but also in their lives" (D3-19-3).

Young (2007) reported that students who receive assistance from volunteer tutors show dramatic increases in their reading levels. Moss et al. (1999) explained that AmeriCorps tutoring programs provide an excellent return on investment and that students who receive academic support from AmeriCorps tutors find tremendous benefits from the interaction. Volunteer Canada (2008) illustrated the essential components of volunteer management theory, which provided the basic outline (planning, recruiting, selecting, and supporting) that AmeriCorps program directors use to organize their

programs. Garret (2005) expressed the impact that volunteers, such as AmeriCorps tutors, have on changing the balance between those "who have", and those "who have not" in his description of social change and social justice theory Snarr (2003) used the term "warriors for social change" (p. 122) to empasize the impact that committed, dedicated volunteers have on their surroundings. The theory of planned behavior, according to Azjen (1985), helped to identify those individuals willing to make the commitment needed to maintain ongoing volunteer involvement and tutoring support. The utilization of these theories helped to gain a deeper understanding during the data anlaysis process.

The population and sample were selected based on a minimum of two years of involvment as an AmeriCorps program director. Four of the five directors in the selected Midwest state met this criteria. All four directors were chosen as participants. The utilization of a multi-case study provided the researcher the opportunity to examine the practices and programs of the four directors through analysis of field notes, documents, observations, and transcribed interviews. The use of multiple data sets, continual and ongoing analysis, and three theoretical perspectives provided opportunities for triangulation of data and greater insight into the phenomena (Chenail, 1995).

Summary of the Findings

Observations, field notes, documentary evidence, and transcribed interviews were considered in the process of developing themes and sub-themes. The themes were viewed through the lenses of volunteer management theory, the theory of planned behavior, and social change and social justice theory. Three primary themes emerged from the study of the research data: focusing on results, communicating within and outside AmeriCorps programs, and establishing and sustaining the Corps community.

The following comprehensive questions were the basis of this study and focused on the impact of AmeriCorps tutoring programs on student educational progress, school culture, and volunteer participation:

1. What is the educational impact of AmeriCorps tutoring and how is educational progress measured?
2. How has the school culture impacted the AmeriCorps program?
3. In what ways has volunteer support changed as a result of AmeriCorps tutoring?
4. How can AmeriCorps tutoring programs improve or enhance the educational impact?
5. What are the similarities and differences in the AmeriCorps tutoring programs in Missouri?
6. What elements are essential in creating an effective AmeriCorps tutoring program?

Investigation of the questions was multifaceted and involved an analysis of the review of literature, followed by a summary of data from Chapter Four.

1. What is the educational impact of AmeriCorps tutoring and how is educational progress measured?

Evidence supports the positive impact of volunteer-based tutoring on student achievement. Morris et al. (1990) revealed that students who received volunteer tutoring support experienced marked improvements in reading skills, out-performing a comparison group by 30%. Cohen et al. (1982) provided 65 comparative studies of tutoring and discovered that the effects of one-on-one tutoring were significant. Not only did students' academic skills increase, but also student attitudes were more positive and

self-concepts were more favorable for students in classrooms with tutoring programs.

During interviews, participants explained that what they see on a daily basis supports research findings. Mrs. Flower summarized,

> We've seen students receiving tutoring being very successful on their achievement measure. All of our performance measurements are tied to academic achievement. I think where we see a greater impact is on other things that we track that we don't measure like attendance, referrals for discipline, and behavior. (D3-5-8)

Mrs. Fonder related,

> Last year we brought 84% of kids to grade level, which was pretty amazing since we have a rather large number of refugees here that are coming from a multitude of countries. Last year we were tutoring a lot of kids that were just learning English. We were teaching English as well as teaching reading. (D1-5-20)

2. How has the school culture impacted the AmeriCorps program?

Silver (1989) described the importance of providing volunteers with specific proactive training in the inner workings of the school culture, both the written and unwritten rules of interaction. Silver proposed that volunteer coordinators have a responsibility to work as a link between the school culture and the volunteer. Martin et al. (2004) explained that the values, language, rules of behavior, and etiquette shape both the visible and invisible culture that is unique to each school. The Resource Center (2008) explained the importance of preparing tutors for entering the school culture, by having them reflect on and examine their own beliefs, feelings, and experiences about school, prior to entering the school setting.

AmeriCorps program directors heeded the suggestions that were voiced in research by designing training for AmeriCorps tutors which provides up to three weeks of training prior to entering the school setting (FN-D3-30, FN-D4-26). Tutors have the opportunity to hear from school staff, ask questions, and prepare themselves for their adventure into school culture. Mrs. Fonder explained, "One of the first things that we do with our members is bring a couple of our school administrators and principals in to talk to our members and they try to let our members know what it will be like when they step foot in schools" (D1-7-1). Mrs. Datlin continued,

> We had to learn how to live in the school environment. A school environment is not going to change that much in response to an outside program coming in and we are an outside program coming in. These members are not employees of the school so there is a great deal of training that we have to provide to members. (D2-7-4)

3. In what ways has volunteer support changed as a result of AmeriCorps tutoring?

Volunteer involvement and civic engagement have increased across America, over the last decade. According to the Volunteering in America Report from the Corporation for National and Community Service (2007), nearly 36% of people in Missouri engaged in "civic life by volunteering, working with their neighbors, or attending public meetings" (p. 87). The same report explained that across the United States nearly 26.7% of those who volunteer do so through tutoring or mentoring. Hager and Brudeny (2004) argued that volunteer management is an area in which "organizations must invest in order to maximize volunteer potential" (p. 10).

AmeriCorps program directors reported mixed reviews as to whether or not the involvement of AmeriCorps tutors has led to an increase in volunteer engagement. However, a consistent theme among directors was the increased level of comfort and expectations that teachers have displayed regarding AmeriCorps tutors' and other volunteers' ability to positively impact educational outcomes.

Mrs. Couch described an increase in expectations and abilities of volunteers, as a result of the AmeriCorps tutoring program (FN-D4-47). Mrs. Fonder explained that the large urban district she works with has become more selective in the type of volunteer support permitted within the district and the district has used the AmeriCorps program as a model of the type of volunteering that they will allow (FN-D1-10). Mrs. Datlin reported the greatest impact on school district volunteering, explaining,

> Volunteer involvement has dramatically increased as a result of AmeriCorps tutoring. Every member in our program is required to recruit a minimum number of volunteers and they are strongly encouraged to bring volunteers in alongside and work with them. We have found that the number of people who are coming in to the school buildings who would not have a connection to that school building otherwise has dramatically increased. (D2-10-3)

4. How can AmeriCorps tutoring programs improve or enhance the educational impact?

In the field of literacy tutoring, a review of the available studies indicated that effective tutoring intervention programs required three critical components: adequate tutor training (Moss, et al., 2001; Pinnell & Fountas, 1997; Wasik, 1998), quality supervision of tutors (Morris, 1993), and well-planned tutoring sessions (Klenk & Kibby, 2000). Each intervention program component is crucial for the success of a tutoring

program. Fitzgerald (2001) agreed and recommended using structured lessons during tutoring.

AmeriCorps program directors' practices aligned with the research findings. Directors repeatedly discussed the importance and value of ongoing training. Directors expressed the importance of laying a foundation for learning and then specializing in specific strategies. Mrs. Fonder explained,

> You have to understand that some of these members were not teachers; they were art majors or history majors, so it was a slow process. You start with being broad and you get more and more specific. You train your members, you let them go into schools, and then they want more training and they understand more. (D1-14-3)

Program directors use a variety of local resources to provide training, including teacher leaders, college professors, and educators from the area Regional Professional Development Centers.

5. What are the similarities and differences in the AmeriCorps tutoring programs in Missouri?

Armbuster et al. (2001) suggested that tutoring programs adopt a "balanced and integrated approach" (p. 33), in order to support a wide range of student skills. AmeriCorps program directors work together to share best practice recommendations and support one another in this endeavor. Mrs. Datlin expounded on the level of collaborations stating, "We steal every good idea that we can find!" (D2-15-1). Every program director affectionately referred to the helpfulness and support of other program directors. Mrs. Flower summarized the level of cooperation and sharing that takes place:

> I shamelessly stole everything that [program name] AmeriCorps had. I was very fortunate to have a model that looked like what we wanted to be. I was also fortunate that [program name] had a director who was open to sharing her information" (D3-15-1).

A consistent desire for more time to share and work together was expressed by all four program directors.

6. What elements are essential in creating an effective AmeriCorps tutoring program?

Wasik and Slavin (1993) argued for intensive and ongoing training for tutors, explaining that students will experience greater levels of learning when this occurs. Jenkins and Jenkins (1985) reinforced the importance of training tutors in interpersonal skills and methods for interacting with students. Training was a consistent theme among program directors. Mrs. Flower expressed the importance of training stating, "I think providing high-quality, intensive training is one of the most important things that we do" (D3-17-8). Communication and selecting the right people for the AmeriCorps positions were also expressed as key elements for program success. Mrs. Datlin stated, "I think that the most important component of member management is ongoing communication with a member, written communication as well as verbal communication" (D2-18-1). "It's about getting the right people on the bus," explained Mrs. Fonder (D1-12-14).

Comparative Analysis

The AmeriCorps Tutoring Outcomes Study prepared by Abt Associates (Moss et al., 2001) and the Descriptive Study of AmeriCorps Literacy Programs: State and National Report prepared by Abt Associates (Moss et al., 1999) were used as the basis for comparative analysis of this study. Both studies were commissioned by the Corporation

for National and Community Service to gauge the effectiveness of AmeriCorps tutoring programs.

Moss et al. (1999) analyzed findings from 360 AmeriCorps tutoring programs and reported that specific literacy training was provided to members of almost all programs both before starting tutoring and ongoing throughout the tutoring process. A variety of sources were used for tutor training; including AmeriCorps program materials, school district staff, and outside experts furthermore, three-fourths of surveyed programs utilized formal evaluation to assess the effectiveness of literacy activities used within tutoring programs (Moss et al., 1999). Moss et al., (1999) found that tutors kept students engaged in a wide variety of reading skills practices, while skills were frequently coordinated with classroom reading practices and reading specialists were involved in the planning of activities in the most effective programs. Tutoring sessions were typically held at least twice a week for at least 1.5 hours each week, with a consistent relationship existing between tutor and tutee, and over half of the programs use structured, well-known instructional models, such as Reading Recovery or Success for All as the basis for tutoring programs (Moss et al., 1999).

Moss et al. (2001) continued to provide feedback to the Corporation by conducting a more in-depth, quantitative study of 68 state and national AmeriCorps programs. Moss et al. discovered that many programs utilized characterisitcs that are consistent with research on effective tutoring practices and that four practices were significantly related to gains in student reading achievement: first, training of tutors both prior to and during tutoring was evident (Moss et al., 2001), second, tutoring sessions occurred at least three times each week (Moss et al., 2001), third, program directors reported that programs were

moderately or fully implemented (Moss et al., 2001), and fourth, high-quality programs evaluated the effectivenss of tutoring activites. Moss et al. (2001) discovered that students who received AmeriCorps tutoring services improved their reading performance more than the typical child at their grade level; these results were consistent regardless of grade level, ethnicity, or gender.

The population for this study represented AmeriCorps program directors with two or more years' experience in one Midwest state. Two of the programs are AmeriCorps state programs and two are AmeriCorps national direct programs. The analysis of data provided support for components of both of the Abt studies. Unlike inthe 1999 study, program participants did not report utilization of a specific well-known instructional model, but reported using a variety of best practice strategies based on training and professional development, and aligned with building practices (Moss et al., 2001). Program participants reported the value of training both before and during the tutoring year. Directors also reported working alongside reading specialists to plan instructional implementation, and delivering tutoring to students more than three times per week, with an ongoing focus on evaluation. The Abt studies displayed the benefits of AmeriCorps tutoring programs in increasing student literacy achievement. Program directors reported growth levels that mirror the Abt results.

Limitations of the Study

The limitations for this sudy were determined by the geographical area and study design used by the researcher and include:

1. Participation was limited to AmeriCorps directors in the state of Missouri who direct an AmeriCorps program that is currently in operation.

2. It was assumed that AmeriCorps directors had a thorough understanding of interview questions and that directors were sincere and frank in their response to questions.
3. The researcher's involvement as an AmeriCorps program director may result in bias.

Conclusions

The practices of AmeriCorps program directors in a Midwest state were analyzed through the lenses of volunteer management theory, social change and social justice theory, and the theory of planned behavior. Three themes materialized, providing insight into practices of program directors leading to effective tutoring programs: focus on results, communication, and Corps community.

Theme One: Focus on Results

1. Maintaining an ongoing focus on results provides the impetus for quality AmeriCorps tutoring programs. The program directors shared a common concern with maintaining a consistent focus on the measures of program success. Directors reported training tutors to collect and report student assessment data on a regular basis. Directors struggled to find effective assessments that provided reliable, easily managed information and that guide instructional practice, demonstrate student growth, and align with school practices. A continual chord that echoed throughout this theme is the importance of organization and training. Mrs. Flower explained that the collection of data assisted tutors in determining the interventions that students need. Regular ongoing reporting systems were utilized to provide direction and maintain a focus on results during tutoring sessions.

Theme Two: Communication

2. Effective communication, both within the confines of AmeriCorps programs as well as with those outside the AmeriCorps community, was the foundation for a strong AmeriCorps program. Volunteer management theory explained that effective communication was needed, in order to support programs and obtain the level of commitment and support needed on the part of both volunteers and those they serve. AmeriCorps program directors continually referred to the multiple levels of communication in which they participated in order to promote, support, and define the scope of AmeriCorps programs.

Internal communication among members, directors, site supervisors, and teachers, based on clear expectations and parameters and woven through with consistent support, provided the basis for relationship building. Mrs. Fonder emphasized the value of defining the roles, parameters, and expectations of all individuals involved as well as the importance of consistency. Mrs. Datlin focused on systems and methods for maintaining effective communication and provided members and school staff with the foundation for a strong program. Mrs. Couch related the value of strong relationships and emphasized the role of celebration and recognition of member success and awareness of member needs, in ensuring that program strength is maximized.

AmeriCorps program directors discussed the value of external communication and the promotion of relationships outside the school district in order to enhance AmeriCorps tutoring programs. Mrs. Fonder described the value of outside evaluators and professional development experts, in providing comparative data and direction for directors and members, as well as the broader school district, audience, to use in

improving tutoring programs. All four of the program directors emphasized the value of working together, networking, and providing support to one another, as well as the importance of seeking support from state and national level AmeriCorps program personnel and utilizing available AmeriCorps program resources.

Theme Three: Corps Community

Establishing and maintaining the Corps community are central components of effective AmeriCorps tutoring programs. Being part of a national organization and working alongside thousands of Americans to improve the state of the nation provides AmeriCorps members with a sense of purpose and belonging far greater than any individual might experience alone. Mrs. Fonder described the value of establishing a strong Corps community and providing the tools and support that will help members mature into leaders for social change outside their year of AmeriCorps service. Mrs. Couch emphasized the value of members having a sense of ownership and commitment to the Corps.

Selection of individuals who have the commitment, disposition, and ability to develop the necessary skills to tutor children and work together for social change is an important role of program directors. Mrs. Fonder described this process as being sure to get the "right people on the bus" from the beginning. AmeriCorps program directors emphasized the importance of supporting members through ongoing professional development and assisting them in adapting to the culture of the community and the school.

Recommendations for Future Research

The Corporation for National and Community Service has commissioned independent studies to examine the effectiveness of AmeriCorps tutoring programs across the nation. Studies sponsored by Abt Associates (1999 and 2001) provided a comprehensive view of the specific tutoring practices and their effectiveness. The AmeriCorps Tutoring Outcomes Study prepared by Abt Associates (2001) and the Descriptive Study of AmeriCorps Literacy Programs: State and National Report prepared by Abt Associates (1999) were used as the basis for comparative analysis of this study (Moss et al., 1999; and Moss et al., 2001). Both studies were commissioned by the Corporation for National and Community Service to gauge the effectiveness of AmeriCorps tutoring programs. Moss et al. (1999) emphasized the value of literacy training for prospective tutors, the most effective structure for tutoring delivery, and the value of utilizing a nationally recognized reading program for delivery. Likewise, Moss et al., (2001) emphasized the value of training, the structure of tutoring sessions, and the importance of a fully implemented program with high-quality tutoring activites.

The findings of this study accentuate the importance of looking beyond what occurs during tutoring sessions to determining the support systems and structures that must be in place to provide the foundation for AmeriCorps tutoring programs. The themes of focusing on results, communication, and Corps community are more nebulous and challenging to measure than those measures explored in the aforementioned studies. A more thorough examination of the amorphous characteristics and their impact on program design is needed.

During the course of this study, the researcher was intrigued by several questions that could provide the basis for further study. First, what are the views of AmeriCorps program directors in other states in relation to the research questions? A more extensive and broadly based qualitative study could be used to provide research in this area. Secondly, what is the level of effectiveness of the support systems provided at the state and national level for AmeriCorps tutoring programs? A quantitative exploration of program directors' perceptions would provide valuable insight in this area. Combining the quantitive analysis with a more descriptive qualitative approach, to explore recommendations of extensions for needed state and national level support, would provide valuable information to those who have the resources and ability to impact programs. Lastly, what are the best practice recommendations in each of the three theme areas among AmeriCorps program directors across the nation? A qualitative analysis and compilation of these practices would be a benefit to directors nation-wide.

Implications for Practice

At a time when education budgets are shrinking, accountability is increasing, and student needs compound exponentially, educators must seek alternative methods for providing students with the support needed to obtain educational goals. Turning to programs outside the school's typical sphere of influence is an opportunity that should be seriously considered by school district administrators. The implications for this study suggests that AmeriCorps tutoring programs provide an effective source for responding to these critical needs.

Further research may provide a more in-depth and complete understanding of best practice recommendations in each of the three theme areas: focusing on results,

communication, and Corps communities. Compilation of these practices and distribution among AmeriCorps program directors would lead to stronger, more effective tutoring programs, which would in turn lead to increased student achievement.

Summary

The multi-case study provided a deeper understanding of the essential components of effective AmeriCorps tutoring programs through analysis of the experiences and beliefs of the program directors. Data were examined through the lenses of volunteer management theory, the theory of planned behavior, and social change and social justice theory. Three overall themes emerged: the value of focusing on results, the importance of communication, and influence of the Corps community.

The observations, interviews, field notes, and documentary evidence provided an abundance of data, which extended the researcher's understanding of the study. The AmeriCorps program directors provided open and honest discourse in response to the posed research questions. The personal experiences and insights provided by the program directors created a deeper understanding of the challenges and successes experienced in AmeriCorps programs.

Essential components of effective AmeriCorps programs were established as a result of this study. This information will provide a model to assist program directors in improving and enhancing AmeriCorps tutoring programs. An understanding of best practices and essential components will assist future and current program directors in designing their AmeriCorps tutoring programs.

Further study of the best practice recommendations in each of the three theme areas would expand the knowledge of effective practices in AmeriCorps tutoring programs, assist new directors in establishing programs, and provide resources for development by state and national AmeriCorps leadership that would provide further support and help to establish more predictable and consistent program results.

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APPENDIX A

Interview Questions

Interview Questions

Professional Experience

1. Please share with me your professional experience and experience as an AmeriCorps Program Director.

Program History

2. Please share with me the history of your AmeriCorps tutoring program.
3. How long has your program been in existence?
4. What cultural challenges did members of the program and school face during the first year of the AmeriCorps program?

Research Question 1: What is the educational impact of AmeriCorps tutoring and how is educational progress measured?

5. What are your performance measures?
6. What instruments are used to measure student academic performance?
7. What, in your opinion, is the effectiveness of these tools?
8. What are the results of AmeriCorps tutoring on student achievement?

Research Question 2: How has school culture impacted the AmeriCorps program in your school?

9. How did teachers and administrators respond to the placement of AmeriCorps tutors within their school during the initial year of the program?
10. In what ways have these responses changed throughout the implementation of the program?

Research Question 3: In what ways has volunteer support in your school changed as a result of AmeriCorps tutoring?

11. How did the AmeriCorps tutoring program impact the use of volunteers in your school district?
12. In your opinion, has the view of teachers and principals changed regarding the abilities of volunteers to impact instructional outcomes?

Research Question 4: How can AmeriCorps tutoring programs improve or enhance their educational impact?

13. What best practice recommendations would you make for other AmeriCorps tutoring programs?
14. What changes have you made over time to increase the effectiveness of your AmeriCorps program?
15. What professional development would you recommend for high-quality tutoring results?

Research Question 5: What are the similarities and differences in the AmeriCorps tutoring programs in Missouri?

16. What strategies and techniques have you borrowed from other programs?

17. What systems, techniques, and protocols do you believe most contribute to the success of your program?

Research Question 6: What elements are essential in creating an effective AmeriCorps tutoring programs?

18. What are the most important components of your AmeriCorps tutoring program?
19. What are the most important components of Member management and how does this contribute to an effective tutoring program?
20. Is there anything else that you would like to share?

APPENDIX B

Informed Consent

Letter of Informed Consent

Dear Participant,

This letter is an invitation to participate in a research study entitled "A Multi-Case Study of AmeriCorps Tutoring Programs." I am conducting a study as part of my doctoral requirements in Educational Administration at Lindenwood University. I have provided a summary of the study and what your involvement would entail should you decide to participate.

The call for national service as well as school accountability is frequently heard in both political and educational settings. AmeriCorps tutoring programs across the state are working to support the education of thousands of students. As opportunities for national service increase, a review of current programs and practices will provide direction for establishing new programs and improving existing programs.

Researcher: Kimberly E. Hawk, Lindenwood University, Doctoral Candidate (573-528-4467), khawk@waynesville.k12.mo.us.

Dissertation Supervisor: Terry Reid, Lindenwood University, 417-881-3009.

Purpose of the Study: The purpose of this study is to examine the educational and cultural impact of AmeriCorps tutoring programs in schools in a Midwest state and to provide insight in to the following:

1. What is the educational impact of AmeriCorps tutoring and how is educational progress measured?
2. How has school culture impacted the AmeriCorps program in your school?
3. Has volunteer support in your school changed as a result of AmeriCorps tutoring?
4. How can AmeriCorps tutoring programs improve or enhance their educational impact?
5. What are the similarities and differences in the AmeriCorps tutoring programs in Missouri?
6. What elements are essential in creating an effective AmeriCorps tutoring programs?

Procedures: If you agree to participate in this study, I will conduct a two-hour interview of open-ended, semi-structured questions and spend an additional two hours with you visiting program sites. I will ask for documents including performance measure results, handbooks, procedural manuals, school district report cards to allow for a more comprehensive view of your tutoring program. Although the interview questions have been predetermined, please note that the process will be informal and any additional insight or perceptions you would like to share will be welcomed. You may choose to answer any or all of the questions. With your permission, the interview will be audio taped to ensure an accurate transcription of your response. Following the interview, I will

send a copy of the transcript to you for review. Any additions or clarifications you request will be made immediately to the transcript. At any time, you may withdraw as a participant without any negative consequences.

Confidentiality: The audiotapes, transcriptions, field notes, and documents will be secured in a locked cabinet under the direct care of the researcher. All evidentiary documents will be securely maintained for three years following the completion of the study and then destroyed. The information from the interview, observations, and documents is considered confidential. Your name or any identifiable information will not appear in print; however, anonymous quotations will be used.

Risks and Benefits: There are no known risks associated with your participation in this study. The research data should provide insight into the effectiveness and impact of AmeriCorps tutoring programs. This information will offer direction and suggestion to new and existing AmeriCorps tutoring programs.

If it is your decision to participate in this study, please sign the attached consent form. Please retain a copy of this letter and your written consent for further reference.

Sincerely,

Kimberly E. Hawk
Doctoral Candidate
Lindenwood University

Informed Consent

I, _____, have read the Letter of Informed Consent and agree to participate in the study entitled, "A Multi-Case Study of AmeriCorps Tutoring Programs" that is being conducted by Kimberly E. Hawk.

I understand that:

- My responses will be used for the purpose of dissertation research and future publications.
- My participation is voluntary and may be withdrawn at any point in the process without negative consequence.
- My identity and that of my employing institution will be protected at all times throughout the process as well as in all reports of the research.

I have read the information above, and any questions I posed have been answered to my satisfaction. I voluntarily agree to participate in this study.

_____ _____

Signature of Participant Date

APPENDIX C

Forms

Interview Protocol Form

Participant:	Location:
Date:	From: To:
Notes:	

On-Site Observation Form

Participant:	Location:
Date:	From: To:
Notes:	

Document Review Form

Document:	Document #:
Date:	Received From:
Notes:	

APPENDIX D

Data Codes

List of Data Codes

D1	Director, Mrs. Fonder
D2	Director, Mrs. Datlin
D3	Director, Mrs. Flower
D4	Director, Mrs. Couch
FN	Field Notes
FN1	Director, Mrs. Fonder
FN2	Director, Mrs. Datlin
FN3	Director, Mrs. Flower
FN4	Director, Mrs. Couch
DOC	Program Documents
D1-2-24	Underlined section indicates the page number of the data
D1-2-24	Underlined section indicates the line number of the data

APPENDIX E

Documents

Program Documents

Documents collected included:

Mrs. Fonder

1. AmeriCorps Program Handbook
2. Performance Measures
3. School District Report Card (2007-2008)
4. Annual Performance Report (2007-2008)

Mrs. Datlin

5. AmeriCorps Program Handbook
6. Performance Measures
7. School District Report Card (2007-2008)
8. Annual Performance Report (2007-2008)

Mrs. Flower

9. AmeriCorps Program Handbook
10. Performance Measures
11. School District Report Card (2007-2008)
12. Annual Performance Report (2007-2008)

Mrs. Couch

13. AmeriCorps Program Handbook
14. Performance Measures
15. School District Report Card (2007-2008)
16. Annual Performance Report (2007-2008)

VITA

Kimberly Elaine Hawk was born on February 21, 1970, in Springfield, Missouri. After graduating from Bolivar High School, Mrs. Hawk enrolled in Missouri State University, where she received a Bachelor of Science degree in Elementary Education with a minor in Learning Disabilities in 1992. She continued her education at Missouri State University receiving a Master of Science degree in Reading in 1997, and a Specialist degree in Educational Administration in 2003. Mrs. Hawk received a Doctorate degree in Educational Leadership and Administration from Lindenwood University in 2009.

Mrs. Hawk has served as an educator in the state of Missouri for 15 years. Professional experiences include: Elementary Classroom Teacher, Remedial Reading Teacher, Team Teacher, and Elementary Principal. Mrs. Hawk currently serves as a Community Resource Coordinator in the Waynesville R-VI School District.

Mrs. Hawk participates in a variety of community organizations and activities. She and her husband, Steve, are the proud parents of David Hawk, age eleven, and Elaine Hawk, age six. Mrs. Hawk enjoys reading, gardening, and spending time with her family, surrounded by the beauty of nature and all of the treasures that it holds.