1997

What attributes to the success of educationally disadvantaged youth?

Sharon Ann Flores

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WHAT ATTRIBUTES TO THE SUCCESS OF EDUCATIONALLY DISADVANTAGED YOUTH?

A Project
Presented to the
Faculty of
California State University,
San Bernardino

In Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree
Master of Arts
in
Education

by
Sharon Ann Flores
June 1997
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Approved by:

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Second Reader

Date
6-12-97
ABSTRACT

Statement of Problem

The purpose of this project was to examine the variables that play a role in the academic success of Educational Disadvantaged Youth (EDY). Then to look at a sample of EDY to discover why one student can be academically successful when another cannot.

Procedure

To discover the variables beneficial to the academic success of EDY, journal articles, research reports and other relevant literature sources were explored. After the sample was surveyed and the variables were identified, a plan was designed to assist educators in planning an academically successful program for the EDY.
ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I would like to thank my husband and my children who have always supported my efforts in the advancement of my education.
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INTRODUCTION

In recent years, our nation has experienced societal changes that have caused a change in public education. The population of students has changed with respect to culture and ethnicity. Additionally there are other variables that are affecting the students, in the public school classroom. The other variables are a complicated combination of economic and social forces that has created more and more students who are at risk of failure, thus labeled at-risk. There is not a published definition of at-risk however, it seems to include students who are generally low achieving and not reaching their full academic potential. The following list contains possible characteristics of the at-risk student: 1) academic difficulties, 2) lack of structure, 3) inattentiveness, 4) distractibility, 5) short attention span, 6) low self-esteem, 7) health problems, 8) excessive absenteeism, 9) dependence, 10) discipline problems, 11) narrow range of interest, 12) lack of social skills, 13) inability to face pressure, 14) fear of failure, 15) lack of motivation (Lehr and Harris, 1992).

Research has indicated that may at-risk students are failing. However, there are those students who are at-risk and are succeeding. This study will investigate the question, why do some at-risk students succeed while others do not? This study will look at variables that play a role in the success of the at-risk student.
Considerable research has been done to assess the correlation between self-esteem and success of students, it is fair to say that self-esteem is related to success. However, little research has been done to assess the variables that are responsible for the attainment of self-esteem in some at-risk students and not others.

In an attempt to rectify this oversight, the following study sought to assess the variables responsible for the attainment of self-esteem and the success of that at-risk student. This study will address what is happening to help at-risk students, what is working to improve the achievement of at-risk students across our nation and finally what variable or variables are responsible for those at-risk students who succeed.

Participants in this study were from a Chapter 1 school, in a southern, central California school district. A Chapter 1 school receives extra money to help students who are testing below the fiftieth percentile. This school is in an inner city area and the students are generally from low socioeconomic back rounds. Many of the students are living in single parent families. Other students are in households with more than one family. Many of the students live in neighborhoods where drugs and crime are a problem. This particular school’s population includes ninety percent at-risk students. The participants in the study range in age from nine to twelve years and have been enrolled in the
school for at least three consecutive school years.

To determine the differences in success of at-risk students at this school, this study:

1. Investigated the variables related to success of some at-risk students and not others.
2. Compared achievement of the at-risk population to determine successful at-risk students and not successful at-risk students.
LITERATURE REVIEW

In 1983 "The Nation at Risk" set the tone for public discourse on education. Politicians began lobbying for educational reform and school districts came under great pressure to raise academic standards, lengthen the school day and implement state mandated curricula. The advocates of educational reform paid little attention to addressing the personal or emotional need of students since their major goal was to improve standardized test scores.

Since 1980 the United States has experienced a rapid increase in the number of students who are exhibiting behaviors commonly associated with being at-risk.

The state of Wisconsin has developed a definition: "Children at Risk" means dropouts, pupils who have been absent from school without acceptable excuses, pupils who are parents and pupils who have been adjudicated delinquents, who are one or more years behind their age group on the number of credits attained or in basic levels (Ough and Deltann, 1955).

Teachers increasingly find themselves in classroom environments that are not conducive to effective teaching or real learning. A large part of a teacher’s day is devoted to children who require more teacher student interaction. Students are more dependent and less attentive (Jackson, 1992).

In an educational report conducted by the College Board
of Western Interstate Commission for Higher Education, it was found that by the year 2000 almost one half on the students in American public schools will be members of minorities and minority students are very often those who are most at risk (Jackson, 1992). Many teachers have little or no experience with the educational needs of minority children (Lehr and Harris, 1992). Since teachers who work in schools with minorities often do not live in these communities, their knowledge about the lifestyle of the students tends to be limited.

Since most teachers are Caucasian and come from middle class backgrounds, they often fail to understand their students from different backgrounds. The minority child is often labeled as mentally handicapped, simply because they are unable to understand and follow directions. Minority students are often labeled as failures when their test scores are computed without consideration for language and cultural back rounds (Rubin and Borgers, 1991).

Success in school generally depends on reading and comprehending printed material. Curriculum often works for the mainstream student and fails the minority child because the minority child is also often a language minority child and most assessments require reading and comprehending the dominant language, which is English.

In the summer of 1965, one of the most explosive government reports revealed that one quarter of all black
students are born out of wedlock (Lehr and Harris, 1992). In 1990, it was reported that one quarter of all children born in America are born out of wedlock (Lehr and Harris, 1992). It has been estimated that seventy to ninety percent of all children born out of wedlock wind up on welfare at some point in their lives. Furthermore these children are much more likely to stay on welfare for longer periods of time. Once a child is born out of wedlock, there is a distinct pattern to the structure of the family they grow up in. Black mothers are more likely to raise their children in an extended female kinship family, while white mothers are more likely to get married, and then later be divorced (Lehr and Harris, 1992). Roughly seventy percent of all births born out of wedlock are to women who had their first child at as a teenager (Lehr and Harris, 1992). Most teenage mothers are neither emotionally nor financially equipped to deal with the demands of parenthood, usually in the absence of teenage fathers. The immediate consequences are likely to be reduced education, with limited opportunities to acquire job skills. As a result, many teenage mothers are living below the poverty level, usually resulting in long-term socioeconomic disadvantages for their children (Rubin, 1991).

Teen pregnancy is only one of the many influences that lead to poverty. One thing that can be concluded from literature is that poverty is one of the leading causes for
putting children at-risk. A child from poverty often comes
to school hungry, tired, unprepared and unable or unwilling
to stay on task (Anderson and Bowden, 1993).

Other factors that have or are occurring within the
students’ personal lives can cause them to be at risk.
These factors may be a combination of societal or
environmental pressures in which a student lives. As a
result of societal and environmental pressures the student
suffers from both low self-esteem and poor mental health.
Young people have become increasingly more alienated from
society as the United States becomes more mechanized,
transient, less structured and directive (Anderson and
Bowden, 1993). Children have lost their identity in the
community that does not contain extended families and
lifelong neighbors. The student is unable to deal with
emotions and feelings that cause the student to be
susceptible to at-risk problems. The following list
contains characteristics that have been identified as at-
risk traits. All of these traits do not need to be present
to be identified as at-risk: 1) academic difficulties, 2)
lack of structure, 3) inattentiveness, 4) distractibility,
5) short attention span, 6) low self-esteem, 7) health
problems, 8) excessive absenteeism, 9) dependence, 10)
discipline problems, 11) narrow range of interest, 12) lack
of social skills, 13) inability to face pressure, 14) fear
of failure, and 15) lack of motivation (Lehr and Harris,
When one or more of these traits are displayed by a student, the student then becomes a member of the at-risk population. It is at this point that most at-risk students fail in the public school system. Why then do some at-risk students achieve success?

Attribution theory, a cognitive theory of motivation that deals with causes of success and failure in achievement, helps to explain why some at-risk students succeed, while others fail. The theory states that once a person understands the relationship between achievement and effort, they can take charge of their own lives and be responsible for their own achievement (Lehr and Harris, 1992).

Business corporations are donating millions of dollars each year to support the education of at-risk students (Lehr and Harris, 1992). They often do this for their own best interest. Millions of entry-level workers are prevented from getting jobs and moving to better jobs because of lack of competency in reading, writing and speaking English. Businesses have been pouring billions of dollars a year into the education of entry-level employees. Businesses realize they could cut costs by participating in public education. Some businesses are focusing on a particular area while others are extending their funds over larger areas (Jackson, 1992).
Schools and communities have begun to take a new approach to the education of students. They have realized that it takes many kinds of people and many kinds of roles to educate a child. They are initiating the African proverb, "it takes a whole village to raise a child." They are trying to enlist the whole community in their efforts. This involves building a new mind set about the roles of families, communities, and schools.

Educators have learned what it takes to make a positive, permanent different in the lives of their children. The most essential elements are responsible parents and a healthy, nurturing home life (Moore, 1991). Thus, parents play a major role in the development of the child.

Psychologist Carl Roger, as quoted by Mitchell (1986), once made this observation:

I am beginning to feel that the key to the human being is the attitude with which his parents have regarded him. If the child is lucky enough to have parents who have felt proud of him, wanted him, wanted him just as he was, this child grows into adulthood with self-confidence and self-esteem. He goes forth in life feeling sure of himself, strong, able to lick what confronts him. If a child grows up in this unconditionally accepted atmosphere, he emerges strong and sure, and he can approach life and its vicissitudes
with courage and confidence.

Children need to form attachments in order to learn trust, develop confidence about themselves and acquire social responsibility. Parents need to model how to be patient, how to follow through and how to behave responsibly (Anderson, 1993).

Parents control a large percentage of a child’s waking hours. The attitude that the parents convey to the children about the importance of their education is extremely valuable to the success of these children. Thus, school programs that are dedicated to involving the parents directly or indirectly, in the total development of the child, are a critical link to the success of their own child (Owen, 1992).

Effective schools see the necessity of getting parents involved in the education of their children. Programs that target parent/teacher cooperation and focus on specific goals show the greatest learning effects (Lehr and Harris, 1992). This is not always an easy task, because often the parents of at-risk students distrust the school system based on their previous negative experiences (Lehr and Harris, 1992).

The key element then is the partnership between school and home. The school should support the parents, the parents should support the schools and there must be an understanding that it takes both for a positive educational
outcome for the child.

There is not such a thing as a model family, community involvement program. Every successful program needs to be rooted in its own distinct community. Community service projects and apprenticeships give at-risk students a chance to develop new interest and discover new talents. They see their own actions count for something.

The next section of the study will introduce the reader to programs that have been developed and are currently in use to help the achievement of at-risk students. The programs that follow have proven to be successful for the at-risk learner. The theories on which each of these programs have been developed were used to construct a survey of at-risk students. The results of the survey were used to locate the mission variable of successful verses unsuccessful at-risk students.

At Alisal Union Elementary School in Salinas, California, all the children in the Migrant Education Program are at-risk (Ramirez, 1993). These students face dangers of dropping out of school, falling academically behind and joining or becoming victims of gangs. An after school modeling program was added to an already existing after school day care program. In the program both male and female students were taught hygiene, dress and hair care to help improve their overall appearance. This program was designed to improve the self-esteem of the students, by
improving their physical appearance. The objective of the program was to help improve grades, class participation and behavior by building self-esteem. Many community members donated time and expertise. This program included 20 students over a three and one-half month period.

The results, determined by teacher observation, were an improvement in grades, class participation and behavior. Due to the positive changes of students in the modeling program, a music and art enrichment program was added to the after school program's curriculum. The success of each of these programs can be partly attributed to the direction of credentialed staff and the involvement of parents and other community members. The children gained a strong sense of self worth, which enabled them to take on leadership roles within their families, schools and communities.

Another program, the Comer Process: Moving from "I" to "We" is a researched based school improvement model in New Haven, Connecticut. This program is centered on the idea that if parents, teachers and staff share control of a school, they will convey a positive attitude to children, who will then be motivated to learn (Miller-Colbert, 1991).

The Comer Process works to reduce the alienation from school often felt by parents as well as students, especially in schools when the community is different racially, ethnically and socioeconomically than the school staff.

One variable that seems to have a great impact on
student achievement is the quality of teacher to pupil interaction. Another tool that seems to help the at-risk student is positivism. According to the study done by Latham, teachers were averaging thirty-four negative comments to students during a forty-five minute interval, four times greater than the number of positive interactions.

As a result of the above data, Latham conducted a four week summer teacher training program. While at the summer program, teachers were taught that a student’s behavior would be strengthened by attention and that it would be better to strengthen appropriate behavior rather than inappropriate. Initially, teachers were reluctant. They were sure that they needed to provide a firm hand, so that students would not get out of control. As the training progressed teachers began to be more flexible in their thinking. Teachers were trained to make more positive interactions, through the use of body language and verbal responses. Teachers were instructed to 1) maintain composure, 2) be brief, and 3) not to waste time. The results of the training was overwhelming. When school started in the fall, positive teacher/student interactions went up dramatically. From thirty-four per forty-five minute intervals to three hundred and thirty-four. At the completion of the school year, both teachers and aides were asked to take a self-esteem questionnaire. The results indicated that the training improved the self-esteem of the
staff. This improvement in positiveness and self-esteem benefited the students’ behavior. When teachers better understand, accept and like themselves, they have a much greater capacity to understand, accept and like students (Lehr and Harris, 1992).

Another program that has had positive results is the Power of Positive Students (POPS) Program. This particular program was begun in 1978, by Dr. William Mitchell. At the time he was the Superintendent of Sumter Schools, in South Carolina. His school system was going nowhere; none of the fifteen schools in his district were accredited by the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools. School misbehavior was a problem, suspensions were at a high number. There was a high absenteeism by both students and teachers. Lastly there was poor student performance of national tests.

What Dr. Mitchell realized was that he had grown up much the same as the youngsters of Sumter—poor, disadvantaged with a feeling of inferiority. What Dr. Mitchell came to understand was that these students were being crippled by their own negative self-images, these kids were sure that the good things in life were meant for others, for better people (Mitchell, 1986). What Dr. Mitchell decided was that he would look at the factors in his life that had made him the person he was that day. What he realized was that it was the teachers who taught him that
he was a person of worth and value, it was a teacher who believed in him and his potential (Mitchell, 1986).

Dr. Mitchell describes three elements as important to the success of an individual:

1. The development of a positive self-image as a child was essential for any eventual success as an adult.
2. The self-image development occurred largely as a result of the intervention of caring adults.
3. Those adults were usually a part of the school system.

Dr. Mitchell settled on a simple formula for building self-esteem at Sumter: conditioning, modeling and positive reinforcement.

Conditioning is distinguished from other forms of learning, because it can occur without voluntary participation. An individual learns something without an intent to learn at all. Dr. Mitchell used this technique to saturate the students with the message that the students at Sumter were people of worth and value. The message was everywhere—bulletin boards, school supplies, pep rallies as well as TV ads, billboards and milk cartons.

Modeling is an imitation of someone else’s behavior. This program needed adults both parents and teachers to model a feeling of self-worth. The goal at Sumter was to have so many adults modeling positive attitudes the students would learn them as naturally as they learned to walk.
The commitment at Sumter was to catch a student doing
the good thing and reward it, so that the behavior would
happen more frequently. The teacher would reinforce the
behavior with a smile, a nod or a pat on the back.

The teachers embraced the program from the beginning
and Dr. Mitchell had spent the time motivating the
motivators. Now it was time to encourage the students. The
students were inundated with positiveness, they could not
walk without bumping into it.

Parents were recruited to do their part. Parents were
attending positive parenting seminars. Parents were
encouraged to commit to seven principle building blocks for
positiveness.

1. Be encouraging and complimentary everyday.
2. Create a warm caring environment, where smiles
abound.
3. Have a listening ear and a felling heart.
4. If your child fails in one endeavor, help them to
understand there are other ways to be successful.
5. Treat each child as an individual.
6. Let your child know that although you dislike
behavior, you still approve of them as a person.
7. Ascertain your child’s needs for attention,
recognition and meet them (Mitchell, 1986).

The program was evaluated after two years. Result of
evaluation indicated positive results in student academic
and personal performance in the community as well as the school environment. Not just the students, but the adults were affected by this program.

A program of this magnitude implemented over one or two years will not make a lifelong effect. If the gains made are to be kept, there must be a continual effort to build the child’s sense of self-worth. If you have a short term program, you will also have a short term solution. This program has more effect on students in the early elementary years, as a student goes up in age and grade the difficulty of producing the change is more significant. It is much more difficult to reverse negative attitudinal habits than it is to build positive habits.

Mitchell (1986) believes that the principle of self-esteem and attitude training has worked in other schools that are different geographically and culturally. It is the principals not the teachers or the students that make the difference. This program is capable of happening anywhere, children can be taught success as well as they are taught reading and math. Every child needs the loving attention of significant adults. The molding of a child’s attitude is one area in which one person—one parent, one teacher, one neighbor who takes an interest in teaching a child that he is a person of value—can make a difference.

In addition to adults who make a difference, another program has proven that significant young people can also
make a difference for at-risk students. Young people can help each other in many ways as they play, share, communicate and cooperate. Research shows that students benefit from structured in-school helping relationships in which peers assume formal roles as tutors (Lehr and Harris, 1992). The tutor may either be the same age or a different age (cross age tutor). Students share the answers and the process for reaching the answer. Children identify better with peer helpers than with adult authority figures. In a peer tutor situation, students receive immediate non-threatening clarification.

Peer tutor programs also benefits the tutors who reinforces their own knowledge and skills, which helps to build self-confidence and self-esteem. Peer tutoring also benefits the teacher, who can spend more time targeting students who need individual attention. Teachers become facilitators and coordinators instead of the sole dispenser of knowledge.

Another program that has used the combination of parent involvement and early child education is the Even Start Family Literacy Program. This program was initiated in 1989 as a means of combining adult education with early childhood education. Research has demonstrated that exposure to preschool settings before first grade can help disadvantaged children acquire knowledge and develop social skills that school readiness entails (Zill and Wolpow, 1991).
Currently 26,000 families are being served by Even Start, in 500 programs nation wide (Goodling, 1994). To participate in this program one parent must commit to participating with one child. The Even Start Program is a three part program that provides parenting programs, adult literacy and adult education. This program was adapted from the Head Start Program with an increase on adult education. Children in the program gain double the expected rate of Preschool Inventories, which assess readiness skills. Also fifty percent do better than expected on the Peabody Picture Vocabulary Test (Goodling, 1994). As our nation strives to meet the National Educational Goals, it is critical to empower parents to be their child’s first teacher, to ensure that each child comes to school ready to learn (Goodling, 1994).

The final variable that has proven successful in helping at-risk students is a tool rather than a program. At-risk students need tools to help them learn basic skills and decision making processes. Technology offers such tools, however, goals need to be established and applied. Technology needs to be used as a tool to enhance curriculum. In order to get results from the use of computers, technology needs to drive curriculum, not the other way around (Cantrell, 1993). With proper planning, technology can be an effective tool for helping at-risk students learn skills they need to graduate and become successful.
(Cantrell, 1993). Technology engages the at-risk learner in the following ways:

1. Computers give immediate positive feedback.
2. Students apply problem-solving and higher order thinking skills.
3. Students may learn at their own pace.
4. Students become independent learners.
5. The computer diminishes the role of an authority figure and peer pressure.

One of the biggest challenges in education today is successfully reaching and helping at-risk students. By educating administrators, teachers and parents to use strategies that have proven to meet their special needs, educators will be able to meet the challenge.

Throughout this paper, programs that help at-risk students have been examined. This researcher has examined and discovered that there are many variables that play a positive role in the success of the at-risk student. Research has indicated that the school, teachers, staff and other children and the parents must be a team in the molding of students. In our changing society where, when and to whom a child is born cannot be changed but as a team a difference in the life of a child can be.

The sample school is a year round school with a preschool, and Kindergarten through sixth grades. The
school is centrally located in the middle of a large city. The students are mostly from low socioeconomic families. The majority of the students qualify for the free lunch and breakfast program which is based on a parent's earned income and the number of dependents in the household. There are about 1,200 students enrolled at the school with approximately 800 students on campus at all times, while the others are off track (on vacation). The school has a high percentage of bilingual students who are in bilingual classrooms who are part of a bilingual exchange program for forty-five minutes each day. At that time students are integrated with English only students. The school has a very high transiency rate which means students are constantly entering and leaving the school. The school has many programs that have been established form state funded grants, which were written by the staff of the sample school. Some of the programs offered are: Even Start (early education), Healthy Start (breakfast program), a Fine Arts after school program, SB65 Program (addresses the at-risk population by monitoring student attendance and progress in school), a homework club, a computer club, off-track peer helpers, community liaison (a person who works with the parents and teachers and makes home visits), an after school science program (Globe Trotters). Each month the school has a family learning night where one parent with one child can come to school and learn a new skill. Each of these classes
is taught by a teacher.

Even with all that is going on at this site, the children are still testing significantly below the state average.

The staff is always looking at ways to improve the quality of the students' education through teacher in-service and furthering education.

The next section describes the procedure used for determining what variables effect the academic success of the students.
METHODOLOGY

The literature suggests that there currently are programs in the community and at the schools that are making a difference for at-risk students. This study attempts to determine if there are any common variables that academically successful at-risk students possess that unsuccessful at-risk students don’t possess. A questionnaire, based on the literature, was developed to identify those variables that might determine the successes of an at-risk student. Once all the data was compiled, the two groups of at-risk students were compared to determine the results.

Subjects

A thirteen item questionnaire (see Appendix A) was given to sixty students. Each participant in this study was from the same elementary school, in a central, southern California school district. This school is in a low socioeconomic area.

Each student who participated was a third, fourth, fifth or sixth grader and had been in attendance at the school for at least three consecutive school years. All sixty students had been identified as at-risk students, by testing below the fifth percentile on California Achievement Test (CAT). Thirty of the students were in a state funded After School Program (IASP). The other thirty students were
not involved in the After School Program (NIASP). A student’s success was determined by teacher observation of student performance and by CAT scores taken in the previous school year.

To be accepted into the After School Program the child’s parent must come to the school to fill out an application form. The family must meet state requirements which include meeting the required level of earned income, being employed, being in school or active in the state’s Greater Avenues for Independence (GAIN) Program.

**Procedure**

First, it was determined which students would take part in the study, choosing thirty students from the After School Program who had been in attendance for three consecutive school years and then choosing thirty students not in the After School Program who had been in attendance for three consecutive school years. Being in attendance for three consecutive school years was important to this study because it would eliminate transiency as a variable in the lack of success of at-risk students.

Students were asked if they would like to participate in a survey for a college class, once they agreed they were given the questionnaire. To monitor the reading of the questionnaire, students were placed in small groups. The questions were read by the researcher. Students were given
the opportunity to ask for clarification of the questions.

A questionnaire was used as an instrument for collecting information from the subjects. The questionnaire lends itself to a quantitative study. An advantage of using a questionnaire was that it could be written for a specific purpose.

Assumptions

The questionnaire was meant to ascertain information about a student's everyday school and home life. From this data conclusions were drawn about how the student's academic achievement was affected by his/her personal choices and by the involvement of parents, teachers and community. Data from the questionnaires were then used to determine variables relating to the success or lack of success of at-risk students. The following assumptions were made.

1. Students who participate in the After School Program are more successful than those not in the After School Program.

2. There are interventions available to students both at home, at school and in the community. Each of these interventions can have a positive affect on the academic success of at-risk students in the school.
RESULTS

After tabulating the questionnaires of the sixty students the results are as follows:

The first three questions provide the demographics of the sample (see Appendix C). They confirm the requirements of grade and number of years of attendance.

Item four was designed to determine if there is a relationship to position in family and number of siblings to academic success. The findings suggest that successful students in both categories have siblings and are generally the oldest child in the family.

\[
\begin{array}{c|cc|cc}
\text{Question and Explanation} & \text{IASP} & & \text{NIASP} & \\
& \text{Successful} & \text{Not Successful} & \text{Successful} & \text{Not Successful} \\
4. # of siblings \text{ and position in family} & \text{B} & 15 & 6 & 15 & 9 \\
\text{S} & 15 & 5 & 13 & 6 \\
\text{Only} & 3 & 0 & 1 & 1 \\
\text{1st} & 10 & 2 & 7 & 3 \\
\text{N} & 6 & 2 & 8 & 2 \\
\text{Y} & 3 & 4 & 3 & 5 \\
\end{array}
\]

Item five results show that students who are academically successful both IASP and NIASP live in a household with two parents. Students who are less successful in school often live in single parent homes.

\[
\begin{array}{c|cc|cc}
\text{Question and Explanation} & \text{IASP} & & \text{NIASP} & \\
& \text{Successful} & \text{Not Successful} & \text{Successful} & \text{Not Successful} \\
5. Living w/both parents & \text{Y} & 16 & 4 & 15 & 8 \\
& \text{N} & 6 & 4 & 4 & 3 \\
\end{array}
\]
Item six suggests that successful students IASP spend more than one hour on homework each day. Students who are academically unsuccessful and those who are successful NIASP spend less than one hour on homework each day.

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<th>Question and Explanation</th>
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<th>NIASP</th>
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<tr>
<td>6. Time spent on homework</td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Less than 1 hr</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>More than 1 hr</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>9</td>
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</tbody>
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Item seven states that most students receive help with their homework. The findings suggest that there are no differences between successful or unsuccessful students who are IASP or NIASP for this factor.

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<th>Question and Explanation</th>
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<th>NIASP</th>
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<td>7. Parents help with homework</td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Y</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>5</td>
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</table>

Item eight results show that most students who are academically successful IASP or NIASP do not participate in the homework club. Only nineteen of the sixty students who were surveyed participate in the homework club.
According to the results of item nine, forty-six of the sixty students enjoy reading. The amount of time that students watch television varies and the time they spend watching television does not seem to affect their success in school.

Item ten results show that fifty-nine out of sixty students watch television. Most students watch television for less than one hour a day or for one to two hours.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question and Explanation</th>
<th>IASP</th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th>NIASP</th>
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<td>10. Watch T.V. and time spent watching</td>
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<td>7</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>11</td>
<td></td>
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<td>1</td>
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<td>0</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>Less 1 hr</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>3</td>
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<td>4</td>
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<td></td>
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Item eleven results show that students who are academically successful spend thirty minutes to an hour reading each day. Those students who are unsuccessful both IASP and NIASP spend less time reading.

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<th></th>
<th></th>
<th>NIASP</th>
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<td>5</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>30 min-1 hr</td>
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<td>3</td>
<td>12</td>
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</table>

Item twelve states that most students do not have computers in their homes.
### Item twelve

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<th>NIASP</th>
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<td>12. Computers in home</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>N</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Less than 1 hr</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1-2</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>3-4</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>More than 4 hr</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Item thirteen asked students if they participated in the school Computer Club. Fourteen of the students IASP who are successful participate in the Computer Club whereas as six of the students NIASP participate in the Computer Club.
CONCLUSION

After questioning sixty students and analyzing the data it is possible to draw some preliminary conclusions about what leads to the success of at-risk students. The results seem to negate the researcher's assumption that the After School Program is responsible for the success of the at-risk students. There are similarities between the successful students IASP and successful students NIASP which suggest that there are environmental factors that play a role in the success of a student. Both the research and literature and the results from this study lead to the conclusions that:

1. Children are more likely to be successful in school if they live with both parents.

2. Television is watched by all but one child in the study. Students who spend more time at home NIASP spend more time watching television.


After analyzing the data and coming to some conclusions, the ideas below can be used to increase the success of at-risk students.
1. Prepare a parent newsletter outlining the importance of parental involvement in student homework. The newsletter would include hints to parents about how they can help at home. A family learning night might also address parents helping children with homework.

2. The same newsletter might also have a section that would suggest alternatives to watching television. The school might sponsor a No Watching Television-A-Thon. Students would earn money for not watching television.

3. Get students involved in the Computer Club. Offer the club in the evening when parents could be involved. Open the computer lab at lunch for students who use the bus for transportation. Try to get students more time on computers during the regular school day.

4. Students need to be more involved in the homework club. An incentive program could be developed to encourage all students to do their homework at school where they can have some help.

The research has suggested that the success of the at-risk learner is dependent on the parents and the school. It is important that these two parts become a whole in the development of these students.
APPENDIX A

Student Survey

Please answer all questions as accurately as possible. Circle or write in your response.

1. How old are you?
   8   9   10   11

2. What grade are you in?
   3   4   5   6

3. When did you start going to Kingsley School?
   Kindergarten  First  Second  Third
   Fourth  Fifth  Sixth

4. Do you have any brothers? yes  no
   If yes, how many and their ages ________________

   Do you have any sisters? yes  no
   If yes, how many and their ages ________________

5. Do you live with both parents? yes  no

6. How much time do you spend on homework each day?
   less than one hour  more than one hour

7. Do your parents help you with your homework?
   yes  no  sometimes

8. Do you go to the Homework Club?
   yes  no  sometimes
9. Do you like to read? yes no

10. Do you watch T.V.? yes no
    If yes, how much time each day do you spend watching T.V.?
    Less than 1 hour  1-2 hours  3-4 hours
    5-6 hours  more than 6 hours

11. How much time do you spend reading each day?
    Less than 30 min. 30 min.-1 hr. More than 1 hr.

12. Do you have a computer in your home? yes no
    If yes, how often do you use it?
    Less than 1 hour 1-2 hours 3-4 hours
    more than 4 hours

13. Do you belong to the AM or PM Computer Club?
    yes no
    If yes, how often do you attend?
    Every day Twice a week More than twice a week
APPENDIX B

60 At Risk Students Attending Sample School for at least 3 consecutive school years 3rd, 4th, 5th, 6th graders

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question and Explanation</th>
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<th>Not Successful</th>
<th>Successful</th>
<th>Not Successful</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
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<td></td>
<td>30 At Risk (IASP)</td>
<td>30 At Risk (NIASP)</td>
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<td></td>
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<td>B</td>
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<td>S</td>
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<td>7. Parents help with homework</td>
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<td>5 0</td>
<td>S 12 7</td>
<td>13 10</td>
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<td>S 6 0</td>
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<td>16 11</td>
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APPENDIX C

At Risk After School Program Chart

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<th>At-Risk Not in After School Program</th>
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BIBLIOGRAPHY


