Electronic Theses and Dissertations

Theses, Dissertations, and Major Papers

12-7-2015

Leadership Experience for Academic Direction (LEAD): Perspectives from the Student Success Teachers

Dana Lina Pizzo
University of Windsor

Follow this and additional works at: https://scholar.uwindsor.ca/etd

Leadership Experience for Academic Direction (LEAD): Perspectives from the Student Success Teachers

By

Dana L. Pizzo

A Thesis
Submitted to the Faculty of Graduate Studies
Through the Faculty of Education
in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for
the Degree of Master of Education
at the University of Windsor

Windsor, Ontario, Canada
2015

Leadership Experience for Academic Direction (LEAD): Perspectives from the Student Success Teachers

by

Dana L. Pizzo

APPROVED BY:

_____
P. Boulos, External Reader
Philosophy Department, Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences

_____
F. Cherian, Internal Reader
Faculty of Education

_____
G. Salinitri, Advisor
Faculty of Education

November 19, 2015

AUTHOR'S DECLARATION OF ORIGINALITY

I hereby certify that I am the sole author of this thesis and that no part of this thesis has been published or submitted for publication.

I certify that, to the best of my knowledge, my thesis does not infringe upon anyone's copyright nor violate any proprietary rights and that any ideas, techniques, quotation, or any other material from the work of other people included in my thesis, published or otherwise, are fully acknowledged in accordance with the standard referencing practices. Furthermore, to the extent that I have included copyrighted material that surpasses the bounds of fair dealing within the meaning of the Canadian Copyright Act, I certify that I have obtained written permission from the copyright owner(s) to include such material(s) in my thesis and have included copies of such copyright clearances to my appendix.

I declare that this is a true copy of my thesis, including any final revisions, as approved by my thesis committee and the Graduate Studies office, and that this thesis has not been submitted for a higher degree to any other University or Institution.

ABSTRACT

In this case study design I explore the Student Success Teachers (SSTs) perspectives on the impact of a service-learning program, *LEAD* program has on their students, teacher candidates and themselves in their role. *LEAD* is presented as a proactive approach for 21st century learning as it promotes resiliency skills for our in-risk youth. I identify the challenges and benefits it presents to the SSTs, teacher candidates, and in-risk students within the two local school boards. Both former and current SSTs were interviewed on their experiences with implementing the *LEAD* program as part of their student success initiatives within their school.

Data was collected and analyzed both through pencil and paper and audio recordings. The results of this study indicated 4 main themes that were present amongst all interviews. The themes were: communication, selection process, group dynamics, and assessment and evaluation.

Key words: Mentoring, Service-Learning, Resilience and Risk, and Social Learning Theory.

DEDICATION

"Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed citizens can change the world. Indeed, it is the only thing that ever has." Margaret Mead

Most importantly, I dedicate this thesis to all the wonderful SSTs. May your passion, commitment and dedication to your students continue to inspire them to grow and develop to their optimal level and achieve academic success.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

TABLE OF CONTENTS

LIST OF APPENDICES

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

DYP: Discover Your Possibilities

GECDSB: Greater Essex County District School Board

LEAD: Leadership Experience for Academic Direction

POP: Power of Potential

SLP: Service-Learning Project

SS/L18: Student Success/ Learning to 18

SSTs: Student Success Teachers

WECDSB: Windsor Essex Catholic District School Board

YLCC: Youth Leadership Christian Camp

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

As a society we tend to stereotype adolescents as living in a stress free environment, but fail to recognize or acknowledge the emotional damages today's youth may face on a daily basis within the school setting, in the broader community, and in their home lives (Laszlo, Piko & Steger, 2011). Adolescents is a critical point in time when individuals start planning for their future. According to Erickson (1959 &1968), "during these years, tremendous energy is devoted to creating the adult self through envisioning and trying out the potential self (p.209)." As youth begin to establish their own identity, sense of belonging and acceptance, they often expose themselves to risky behaviours that may lead to negative and lasting consequences on their overall growth and development, both personally and academically (Laszlo, Piko & Steger, 2011; Rew &Horner, 2003). Behaviour, choices and actions that are made during early adolescent years can have an immediate impact on their life as they transition into adulthood, and may leave lasting consequences on their overall health and well-being (Aklin et al., 2011; Grant et al., 2011; Graves & Stevens-Watkins, 2011). Schonert-Reichl (2001) explains that being exposed to environments with multiple risk factors during early adolescents maybe more detrimental to an individual's health than being exposed to the same risk factors later in life.

Extensive research (Tilleczek & Leko, 2011) has shown that one of the most critical issues faced in our education system today is early school leavers. There is a growing concern about the number of students who are dropping out before graduation and the widening gap in achievement levels amongst the diverse student population at the

secondary level (Education Quality and Accountability Office, 2011). Students who are identified as in-risk are those who live in poverty, who are not exposed to stimulating and enriching environments, who suffer from disabilities, students who are from ethnic minorities, and students who are exposed to substance abuse early in life (Fergus & Zimmerman 2005; Boydell et al., 2005; Audas & Willms, 2001; Caledon Institue for Social Policy, 2006). In-risk youth are those young adolescents who are unlikely to successfully meet the Ontario graduation requirements, expose themselves to risky situations, and do not develop the necessary skills and knowledge to have a number of opportunities in work, leisure and relationships later in life (Tilleczek & Ferguson, 2007).

In 2003, the Ontario government introduced the Student Success/Learning to 18 Strategy (SS/L18). The overall goal of this initiative is to have SSTs work closely with grades 7 to 12 students to increase the number of Ontario students graduating from secondary school and to have more students actively engaged in their secondary school experience (MOE, 2003). Since the SS/L18 strategy was implemented within the secondary schools across Ontario, the MOE has reported that provincial graduation rates have been increasing gradually from 68% in 2003-2004 to 84% in 2014, which is 16 points higher than the 2004 graduation rate (MOE, 2015). With this increase, more than 163,000 students have met graduation requirements and more students are gaining the skills and knowledge they need to pursue post-secondary education or enter the work force (MOE, 2015). The Ministry of Education (2015) reinforces this by stating:

> Supporting students and achieving excellence is a key goal of Ontario's renewed vision for education. Innovative approaches like cooperative education and specialized skill training, as well as stronger partnerships among teachers,

principals, parents and communities, are helping to develop graduates who are personally successful, economically productive and actively engaged citizens (p.1).

According to the Canadian Council of Learning (2008), there are a number of consequences, both personally and socially, for students who decide to leave school early and drop out prior to meeting the secondary school graduation requirements. Students who drop out of secondary school can expect to have an income loss of more than $100,000 in their life, compared to students who pursue post-secondary education. A student's health cost and need for social assistance is known to be around $12,000 per year (Ontario Ministry of Education, 2013). Today's adolescents need to understand the importance of remaining in school to complete their secondary school diploma. When students leave at an early age, they are not only impacting their overall quality of life personally but also affecting their family and their entire community.

Research on resiliency indicates that the environment in which our adolescent population are exposed to play a critical role on their development (Armstrong et al., 2005; Eccles & Gootman, 2002). According to these researchers (Armstrong et al., 2005; Eccles & Gootman, 2002), these environments must be altered to meet the needs of each individual and to build resilient adolescents. There is evidence that more programs need to be implemented in secondary schools to promote student success and keep adolescents in school until the age of 18. With the implementation of the student success programs, more than 25 000 additional students graduate with a secondary school diploma (MOE, 2013). According to Foster, Lambert Abbott-Shim, McCarty & Franze (2005), it is important to educate parents and guardians on the importance of creating a positive

learning environment where they can grow and develop. As educators it is our responsibility to create a learning environment that allows students to achieve academic success and increase resiliency so everyone can achieve their secondary school diploma.

Purpose of the Study

Eight years have been invested in the *LEAD* program at the University of Windsor's Faculty of Education in partnership with both local schools boards, the Windsor Essex Catholic District School Board (WECDSB) and the Greater Essex County District School Board (GECDSB), and the Faculty of Human Kinetics. The program was designed to increase resiliency in our in-risk youth helping them to achieve academic success throughout their secondary school years. There is a need to evaluate the program from our Student Success Teachers (SSTs) perspectives to determine if it is meeting the needs as one of their initiatives for student success.

Research Questions

This study interprets and explores SSTs perspectives of the *LEAD* program, and how effective teacher candidates are at implementing the *LEAD* program within secondary schools as an initiative for student success. In addition, it provides SSTs with a voice in improving the program for future years through the challenges and successes they experienced.

The research questions for this study include the following: (1) How does the SSTs involvement in the *LEAD* program vary across each board? (2) Does the *LEAD* program benefit in-risk students who are part of student success programs? (3) What suggestions/feedback do SSTs have from their experience with the *LEAD* program?

CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

Student Success/Learning to 18 Strategy and Programs

One of the main goals for the Student Success Strategy is to transform secondary schools to match their students' academic strengths, personal interests and career goals (MOE, 2013). The Ontario government is committed to providing all the necessary support, resources, tools and guidance for all students, especially the ones who are in-risk, and provide more learning opportunities to meet the diverse needs of the 21st century (MOE, 2013).

The Student Success/Learning to 18 (SS/L18) Strategy is a province-wide strategy that was created to ensure that every secondary student is provided with the necessary tools and resources needed to meet the graduation requirements and pursue their post-secondary goals (Canadian Council on Leaning, 2008). The Canadian Council on Learning explains that post-secondary goals can include a wide variety of pathways that include apprenticeship programs, college, university, or the workplace. As part of the SS/L18 strategy (Canadian Council on Learning, 2008), the Ontario Ministry of Education has implemented a support system:

> to encourage the development of innovative and flexible educational opportunities that reflect regional, social, and cultural differences affecting students' learning experiences and outcomes, and to foster positive student engagement with education in a manner that respects their individual needs and circumstances (p.5).

Five key goals have been identified during the process of implementing the SS/L18 strategy and they are: 1) increase the graduation rates and decrease the drop out rates across the province; 2) support all students academic goals; 3) provide students with innovative learning opportunities that meets the diverse student population; 4) build on each students strengths; and 5) provide students with an individualized transition plan as they enter secondary school (Canadian Council on Learning, 2008).

Every secondary school in Windsor and Essex County has an SST who is responsible for implementing the Ontario's Ministry program that includes transition plans from elementary to secondary school, credit recovery, learning skills, cooperative education and any other initiative that the school is implementing as part of their student success program (Holloway & Salinitri, 2010). According to King (2005),

> The Student Success/ Learning to 18 strategy is motivated by a belief that every student deserves a good outcome from his or her education, that the outcome should be the best fit possible for each student's potential, willingness and capacity for future learning, and that all students should have a core common knowledge, skills and values. The strategy is not only about "closing the gap" between youth who complete high school and those who do not; it s also about "raising the bar" for all secondary school students (p.2).

SSTs play a critical role for in-risk youth within their schools. While implementing the SS/L18 strategy, they must provide their students with innovative and flexible educational opportunities that allow them to be actively engaged in their high school experience to match their strengths, interest and career goals by meeting the graduation requirements (King, 2005). Since the implementation of the SS/L18 strategy,

there have been five academic related benefits from this strategy that are easily

observable in secondary schools across Ontario (Canadian Council on Learning, 2008)

a) Smoother transitions by individual students between the elementary levels (27%);

b) Smoother transitions by individual students from secondary school to post-
secondary education and/ or work (39%);

c) Reported improvements in the test results at the school level (11%);

d) Reported improvements in graduation rates at the secondary level (83%);

e) Reported decrease in drop-out rates at the school level (p.28)

A number of schools have developed their own unique orientation program that

welcomes new students and brings awareness to their student success program to promote

academic success for a diverse school community. Some schools have Student Success

Camps, on-going mentoring and/or leadership programs to help in-risk students get a

head start as they transition into secondary schools (Canadian Council on Learning,

2008). A notable change associated with SS/L18 strategy (Canadian Council on

Learning, 2008) is,

> That some of these programs provide leadership opportunities to struggling
>
> students, opportunities that would only have been available to successful students
>
> in the past. Many of these programs have an explicit focus on communication,
>
> problem- solving and conflict resolution and are thought to build students'
>
> interpersonal skills, self-advocacy skills and confidence (p. 27).

In 2005, the Ministry of Education started initiating programs in secondary

schools to implement and create programs that allows all students to achieve their full

academic potential (MOE, 2005). The Student Success and Learning to 18 initiatives

identified six areas to reach all students achievement levels and they are: credit recovery, alternative education, student success in grades nine and ten, program pathways to apprenticeship and workplace, college connections and success for targeted groups of students. According to the Ministry of Education (2005),

> Programs such as these have had an impact in reducing the drop out rate, keeping young students in school, increasing graduation rates, and encouraging youth who have recently left school to return and complete their diploma requirements. The teams involved in the project have developed a variety of tools and resources to support the efforts of teachers and administrators across the province in developing or refining similar programs in their own schools. These supports include "how-to" guides for developing and implementing for students, teachers, and parents; and various multimedia resources and web links **(**p.1**)**

LEAD teacher candidates work alongside the SST to help with credit recovery during their practicums. Credit recovery programs help students earn the credits they have previously failed by repeating the necessary course work. Students also learn about a number of different learning strategies that can be transferred into other classes. Credit recovery programs focus on improving skills, target specific expectations that the student failed, include behavioural and social support programs, create independent learning opportunities to fit the students needs, and individualized accommodations and modifications to allow them to succeed (MOE, 2005).

What is *LEAD*?

The *LEAD* program is a field experience service-learning course that teacher candidates have the option to enroll in during their pre-service year at the University of

Windsor's Faculty of Education. This program is offered to both our Junior/Intermediate (qualified to teach grades 4 to 10) and Intermediate/Senior (qualified to teach grades 7 to 10) level teacher candidates. They work in collaboration with the local public and catholic school boards through the student success program (Salinitri & Essery, 2014). The course is structured around the theoretical framework of social learning theory and self-efficacy (Bandura, 1977), theory of risk and resiliency (Crocker, 2000), and theories of in-school mentoring (Holloway & Salinitri, 2010). The success of this program is based on implementing the above theories as teacher candidates collaborate with the school's SST to promote a leadership program for in-risk youth (Salinitri & Essery, 2014). As teacher candidates begin to facilitate the *LEAD* program within the local elementary and secondary schools, they begin to explore different teaching and assessment strategies, mentoring skills, participate in professional development workshops and promote leadership skills as they begin to work alongside students who are identified as in-risk (Cornu, 2005).

Teacher candidates who are participating in the *LEAD* course at the Faculty of Education have a different experience than their fellow peers. These teacher candidates are assigned to an SST in each of the participating schools at the beginning of September and they collaborate with one another to build a leadership program that meets the demands of the school community (Salinitri & Essery, 2014). Darling-Hammond, Newton, and Wei's (2010) research at Stanford advocates that teachers should be placed in schools that are yearlong in duration and candidates are mentored and coached by committed teachers that have experience with working in diverse teaching environments. When teacher candidates are placed with an SST for the whole school year, they have the

opportunity to establish a positive connection with the students and provide them with the necessary tools and resources to achieve academic success.

Additionally, the teacher candidates are requested to have all their practicum experiences at the same elementary or secondary school. During each of their practicums, teacher candidates are responsible for splitting their time teaching in their disciplines and working with the SST on various projects that are being initiated in their school (Salinitri & Essery, 2014). This allows the teacher candidate and SST to implement a service learning project that promotes character education and student well-being (MOE, 2013) and allows teacher candidates to create a positive learning experience for in-risk youth based on social learning and self-efficacy (Bandura, 1977), risk and resiliency (Crocker, 2000), and in-school mentoring (Holloway & Salinitri, 2010).

Course Description

The *LEAD* course is designed to introduce pre-service candidates in the Junior/ Intermediate and Intermediate/Senior division to the Ministry of Education Student Success Initiatives at the elementary and secondary level. During their practicums, candidates will become part of the Student Success Team in participating schools to develop a foundation for mentoring and understanding the pathways to success for elementary and secondary students designated 'in-risk.' The *LEAD* course provides teacher candidates with opportunities to work directly with vulnerable youth within a service-learning framework (Pfaff & Sirianni, 2014-2015).

By the end of the program, teacher candidates are expected to: (1) possess the knowledge necessary to assist in the implementation of Ministry of Education curriculum expectations and Ministry of Education and district school board policies and guidelines

related to Student Success; (2) create learning environments conducive to the three domains of learning: students, interpersonal and career development; (3) develop, use, accommodate and modify expectations, instructional strategies and assessment practices based on the developmental or special needs of all students; recognize and be sensitive to the diverse experiences and backgrounds of students in-risk; (4) work collaboratively with in-school personnel, parents, and the community; (5) access resources and build networks for on-going learning; and (6) demonstrate an openness to innovation and change; inquire into practices through reflection, active engagement, and collaboration (Pfaff & Sirianni, 2014-2015).

The Place of *LEAD* in the Secondary Curriculum

LEAD fits across the secondary curriculum areas, the Student Success Portfolio and Guidance and Career education. It plays a central role in the secondary school by preparing students for a complex and changing world. In particular, it addresses many of the important questions that students face at this time in their lives: How can they better manage their time, resources, and dealings with other people to improve their chances for success in school and the world beyond? What useful knowledge, skills, and habits do they already have, and which can they improve to achieve success in school and in life (Pfaff & Sirianni, 2014)?

The secondary school Guidance and Career Education Curriculum builds on the work begun in the elementary program in three interconnected areas of student development, interpersonal development, and career development. As the ministry document, *Guidance and Education (2006)*, indicates a person's development in these areas is an ongoing process that continues from Kindergarten to Grade 12, and

11

throughout life. In secondary programs, students acquire knowledge and skills that help them become responsible and contributing members of families, peer groups, communities, and workplaces. At the same time, these programs help students turn learning into a lifelong enterprise, and enable them to plan and prepare for futures that include meaningful, productive roles in work, personal life, and the community (Pfaff & Sirianni, 2014).

During the course, teacher candidates will acquire an understanding of the theoretical constructs of the mentoring process related to both research and practice; learn how to write a critical reflection; facilitate positive experiences in the outdoors for participants and leaders/mentors; engage in the mentoring relationship; facilitate the development of positive risk in collaboration and cooperation among students in-risk; taking skills for students; facilitate the development of a positive attitude toward nature and the environment; develop methods for using community volunteer hours while contributing to the environment and community; facilitate school activities that demonstrate leadership (Pfaff & Sirianni, 2014-2015).

History of Resiliency

As a society we tend to idealize childhood as a stress free developmental stage, while neglecting the emotional damages a child may face on a daily basis outside of the school community. A number of researchers indicate that in order to facilitate a healthy development, adolescents need to overcome the harmful and negative effects of being exposed to risk factors, the ability to cope with traumatic and life threatening experiences, and avoiding negative outcomes linked to risks (Fergus & Zimmerman, 2005). Today's adolescents need to be able to adapt to the ever-changing life challenges,

and if these challenges are not met they will not be able to reach their optimal potential. The ability for adolescents to adapt to stressors in the environment and achieve success is known as resilience. Resilience can be defined as, " the process of coping with adversity, change, or opportunity in a manner that results in the identification, fortification, and enrichment of resilient qualities or protective factors" (Richardson, 2002, p.308). In other words, an individual who is resilient has the ability to cope successfully with these environmental stressors, traumatic experiences and achieve success (Crocker, 2000).

Resilience

Despite circumstances such as low socioeconomic status, illness, stress, social, emotional and physical challenges some adolescents are able to adapt to these environments and continue to be successful learners (Canadian Council of Learner, 2008). These adolescents are known to be resilient. In simple terms, a resilient child is one who has the ability to overcome the effects of risky behaviours and successfully cope with the challenging situations and achieve success (Luthar, Cicchetti & Becker, 2000; Masten & Powell, 2003)

A key requirement for a child to be resilient is the presence of risk and protective factors that can impact a child with positive outcomes or reduce the harmful effects of a negative outcome (Fergus and Zimmerman, 2005). Resilience focuses on a child's ability to adapt to the environment and develop a healthy lifestyle despite the risk of exposure to adverse situations (Fergus and Zimmerman, 2005). When students successfully overcome these risky and adverse situations, they can increase their confidence and self-esteem when they are faced with similar situations (Short & Russell-Mayhew, 2009). Protective factors in the environment can help adolescents avoid the harmful effects of the

environment and achieve success. These factors can either be assets or resources

(Beauvais & Oetting, 1999). According to Beauvais & Oetting (1999):

> Assets are the positive factors that reside within the individual, such as
>
> competence, coping skills, and self-efficacy. Resources are also positive factors
>
> that help youth overcome risk, but they are external to the individual. Resources
>
> include parental support, adult mentoring, or community organizations that
>
> promote positive youth development (p. 399).

According to Fergus and Zimmerman (2005),

> Resilience is sometimes confused with positive adjustment, coping, or
>
> competence. Although each of these constructs is related to resilience, they are
>
> also distinct. Positive adjustment refers to an outcome of resilience. When youth
>
> overcome a risky situation (e.g., the transition to middle school) as evidence by
>
> healthy development (e.g., academic achievement) they have adjusted to their
>
> context. In this case, positive adjustment is a resilient outcome, but the process of
>
> overcoming the risk is resilience (p.401).

Having a solid foundation on resiliency can help policy makers, teachers,

administrators and parents develop programs and bring awareness to these in-risk youth

on how to overcome adversity and succeed (Canadian Council on Learning, 2008).

Risk

Risk should be viewed along a continuum, as it is "multidimensional, interactive,

multileveled and systematic" (Crocker, 2000, p.9). According to Romer (2003), risk is a

collection of factors, including behaviours that can predict poor mental and physical

health outcomes. Risk factors are hazards or threats that increase an individual's

vulnerability to be exposed to negative developmental or health outcomes (Wang, Hsu,

Lin, Cheng, & Lee, 2010). Kirby & Fraser (1997) identified a number of genetics, behavioural, sociocultural, and environmental factors that are prominent in in-risk youth.

It is important to understand that risk factors fluctuates between individuals and depending on their stages of development may leave more consequences than others (Schonert-Reich, 2000). Schools play an important role for students in developing resiliency skills to overcome these risks. When a school environment is welcoming, stimulating and accepting it can help students overcome their challenging obstacles; if the opposite occurs, it can increase the number of risk factors a student has. These risk factors will eventually lead the child to be considered in-risk.

In-Risk Youth. Individuals who lack the resiliency skills to overcome certain obstacles are defined as being in-risk, in other words, "they are vulnerable to a set of characteristics or circumstances, which predispose[s] an individual to manifest problems in adaptation" (Crocker, 2000, p.7). These characters or circumstances are referred to as risk factors. There are two types of risk factors, environmental and biological. Examples of an environmental risk factor are poverty and substance abuse, while a biological risk factor can be genetics.

Risk Factors Associated with Early School Leaving

In order for programs to be effective in preventing early school leavers, programs must be comprehensive and flexible to meet the needs of a diverse population (Rumerber, 2001). The majority of successful programs are individualized to fit the needs of each student by incorporating all dimensions of health such as social and emotional support, physical activities and academic support. Effective strategies that have been shown to

help reduce the chances of early school dropout can be broken down into four categories based on individual needs (Schargel & Smink, 2001):

1. Early prevention programs include: parent training and family involvement, school readiness and early childhood education, literacy and numeracy strategies.

2. Basic core strategies include: mentoring, tutoring, outdoor education, and after school programs.

3. Making the most of out instruction include: professional development, workshops, incorporating technology, facilitating lessons that brings awareness to multiple intelligences found within a diverse classroom, and active participation from students in the learning process.

4. Making the most of the wider community: Community collaboration, apprenticeship programs to prepare for the workforce, conflict resolutions and management strategies (p.14).

The Canadian Council on Learning (2008) identified four main costs to an individual for dropping out of high school prior to meeting the ministry's graduation requirements (MOE, 2013). The four main areas are: labor and employment, social assistance, crime, and health. A student who drops out of secondary school can expect an income loss of more than $100,000 in their lifetime. If a student drops out of secondary school, the average public cost of providing social assistance is estimated at over $4,000. The overall impact of the quality of life drastically declines and they enjoy fewer years with a reasonable quality of life. With morbidity and mortality, there is an estimated cost of $8,000 for each student who drops out. Lastly, students who drop out prior to receiving

their secondary school diploma are overly represented in the prison population (MOE, 2013).

According to Ferguson and Power (2014), in order for programs to be more effective, teachers must be able to recognize each individuals strengths and capabilities but, also place emphasis on the needs of each student to help them build resiliency skills and achieve success in schools.

Service-Learning Projects

The definition of Service-Learning Projects (SLPs) varies across educational institutions, both at the college and university levels (Furco, 1996); however, there seems to be similarities in the philosophy across each institution on how they are implementing their SLPs and the purpose is to provide their students with a form of "experiential learning" in which theory is put into practice (Butin, 2007; Chupp & Joseph, 2010). The National and Community Service Act of 1990 defines service learning as a method

> (1) under which students learn and develop through active participation in
> thoughtfully organized service experiences that meet actual community needs and
> that are coordinated in collaboration with the school and community; (2) that is
> integrated into the students' academic curriculum or provides structured time for a
> student to think, talk, or write about what the student did and saw during the
> actual service activity; (3) that provides students with opportunities to use newly
> acquired skills and knowledge in real-life situations in their own communities;
> and (4) that enhances what is taught in school by extending student learning
> beyond the classroom and into the community and helps to foster the development
> of a sense of caring of others (National and Community Service Act, 1990, p.72).

Many schools have implemented SLPs to promote active democratic citizenship and to help resolve societal problems. Service-learning has become very popular throughout educational institutes (McCarthy, 2003). The underlying goal in a SLP is that "the more informed the teacher candidate is about the education issues, the more effective that teacher can be within their own classroom" (Vickers et al., 2004, p.130). In order to facilitate a SLP, a teacher must understand the importance of the three interrelated factors (Vickers et al., 2004):

1. To promote service-learning as a powerful pedagogical tool for the development of effective teachers in diverse educational settings.

2. To promote understanding of the significant social-cultural, political and economic issues influencing students' learning and to develop skills and strategies to address these issues

3. To develop and maintain university- community partnerships that have benefits for all involved- the University, students, teachers, schools and the community. (p.130).

Service- learning projects have been known to bring awareness to the diverse classroom environment (Battistoni, 1995 & Rama et al., 2000), allow students to be actively engaged in the learning process, and promote forms of social and civic development (Markus et al., 1993; Federickson, 2000 & Rochelle et al., 2000), and/or link the universities with their local school boards and school communities (Garder, 1997; Hollander & Saltmarsh, 2000; Benson et al., 2000; & Everbeck & Kahn, 2001). When students participate and implement SLPs they are able to make the connection between classroom experience and community involvement (McCarthy, 2003).

Every *LEAD* teacher candidate is responsible to develop leadership activities and school initiatives that promote positive thinking, active participation and service to the community among the in-risk youth within their school. The service-learning project is broken down into four components (See Appendix H) and each *LEAD* teacher candidate must facilitate at least one SLP throughout their practicums in order to receive credit for the course.

The two main SLPs that participating LEAD secondary schools take part in are Power of Potential Youth Conference and Challenge Cup. Power of Potential (POP) has been running for eight consecutive years, by the University of Windsor's Faculty of Education *LEAD* class at the Dorothy and Leonard Neal Education Building. This conference will provide a series of workshops, information booths and knowledgeable speakers designed to educate our local high schools about various pathways to a successful future. The goal of POP is to provide the best opportunities for successful futures to our high school students, by partnering with local agencies that work with youth. Challenge Cup, also in its eighth consecutive year, is an intra and interpersonal leadership development event organized by the University of Windsor's *LEAD* class that is held at the St. Dennis Center. The Challenge Cup event is a year-end celebration consolidating *LEAD's* ongoing emphasis on fostering leadership and character development. The day is hosted at Alumni Stadium, and attracts a group of students, teachers and support staff from each high school across our local boards. The day is focused on building teamwork, community and leadership skills, all essential for 21st century learning.

In-School Mentoring

Social Cognitive theory (Bandura, 1977) explains that individuals choose to confine to others who they perceive as similar to themselves, therefore adult mentors can be an important asset to influence a healthy growth and development (Grant et al., 2010). Hanmond (2011) explains that it is crucial for adult mentors to design and implement a mentoring program with in-risk youth to increase their resiliency skills and coping mechanisms.

Mentors are responsible to support, guide, and shape the lives of young adolescents as they experience challenging situations throughout their life. Research has shown that individuals who have a mentor, and/or a role model to look up to, are more likely to engage in positive health behaviours as compared to someone who did not have a mentor growing up (Grant et al., 2011). Martinez (2013) stated:

> Some might think it simplistic, but if a student connects with just one adult, and believes that adult cares about them, they are more likely to return the next day, and the next. We must take the time to realize the importance of the belief that humans matter to each other, and especially to the students (p.13).

Research has been shown that students with high levels of self-esteem develop protective factors that help protect them from engaging in risky behaviours (Fergus & Zimmerman, 2005). High self-esteem is associated with high levels of academic achievement, involvement in physical activity, high levels of coping skills and the ability to be resilient to peer pressure (Ferguson & Power, 2014). On the opposite end of the spectrum, students with low levels of self-esteem tend to use illegal substances, consume alcohol, engage in sexual activity at an early age, and have poor peer relationships (Fergus & Zimmerman, 2005). Schools play an important role in increasing self-esteem

in their students. When students develop these high levels of self-esteem they increase their chances of connecting with peers, teachers, and the school community, which are important factors that impact academic success (Fergus & Zimmerman, 2005). Since students spend a large portion of their days in schools, programs need to be in place to provide students with the necessary tools to achieve academic success. School-based mentoring programs are incorporated into many in-risk students' daily routines to reduce the engagement of risky behaviours (O'Donnell, Michalak, Ames, 1997).

Many youth are in-risk for failure in school due to the various factors such as school, family, peer relationships and community characteristics. To provide more support for in-risk youth, school-based mentoring programs have become increasingly popular to help keep students on the right direction towards success. When in-risk students are supported and enrolled in a mentoring program year round many benefits start to emerge and the student starts to develop to their optimal level. According to Barrera & Bonds (2005), mentoring programs have shown to increase levels of school engagement, school attitude and attendance, and be intrinsically motivated to be active participants in the learning process. Mentoring programs have the ability to increase social support from adults by providing individuals with the necessary tools to increase their overall social- emotional health (DuBois, Neville, Parra & Pugh-Lilly, 2002), this has also shown to reduce the chances of encountering behavioural problems in the future (Wheeler, Keller & DuBois, 2010). Thus, implementing a mentoring program with in-risk youth may help foster resilience in adolescents by providing the necessary resources and tools to allow these students to excel in academics, motivate them to remain in school

for the duration of their secondary school years, and transfer these leadership skills out into their community (Komosa-Hawkins, 2012).

Mentoring in-risk students makes them feel individually empowered and helps motivate them to achieve academic success. In Holloway and Salinitri's (2010) study in-risk students showed a significant improvement in classroom attendance and active engagement in their education. There is a direct relationship between socioeconomic status (SES), emotional and academic success with students across Canada, and how classroom teachers play a critical role in affecting academic achievement when pursing post-secondary education (Willms, 2003).

Student Success Teachers as Mentors

When teacher candidates are under the guidance of experienced teachers, who work with a diverse range of students, they will gain the necessary experience and tools to better prepare them for their teaching journey. New teachers who have this structured guidance and mentorship during their early professional years are more likely to increase efficacy as they encounter obstacles, have more motivation to collaborate with their colleagues, and increase their likelihood of remaining in the teaching profession and decrease their chances of burnout (Lipton and Wellman, 2003). According to Lipton and Wellman (2003), "Learning-focused mentoring relationships make a significant emotional and intellectual difference in the induction experience for new teachers, as well as in their continuing professional practice (p.1)." Daloz (1999) suggests that a mentor should be able to incorporate three important aspects of effective mentoring and they are: offering support, creating challenge, and facilitating a professional vision. Lipton and Wellman expanded on Daloz (1999) strategies by stating:

These functions can operate independently in specific situation, but in greater

context of the relationship they must be connected. Balancing these three

elements energizes growth and learning. Support alone will provide comfort but

may encourage complacency. Challenge without support may increase anxiety

and fear of failure. Support and challenge without a vision may leave us

wandering on a journey looking only at the ground beneath us but not the road

ahead (p.1).

Student Success Teachers work closely alongside teacher candidates for the whole

year during their four placements to give them the experience that exposes them to a

variety of diverse students who have very different experiences then the rest of their

peers. Teacher candidates who complete their pre-service year in the *LEAD* class are

better prepared to work with students who are classified as in-risk than the rest of their

peers (Holloway & Salinitri, 2010).

Social Cognitive Theory

Beyond education, the school community provides an environment that is not

only enriching and stimulating, but one that allows students to develop the necessary

social skills that can be transferred inside and outside of the classroom. Social Cognitive

Theory (Bandura, 1977) takes into account the interaction between academic

achievement, social engagement, social disengagement, actively participating and staying

engaged in the learning process based on personal, environmental and behavioural factors

all interconnect on what drives students to be motivated to achieve academic success.

Holt, et al. (2008) provide the following example:

A student who begins to attend class more regularly (behaviour) may receive positive feedback from his or her teacher (environment), which may, in turn, enhance their student's confidence (personal) that he or she can complete the required work. As a result, the student may maintain his or her pattern of improved attendance. Conversely, a student who lacks motivation or a sense of efficacy (personal) may avoid attending class (behaviour), which in turn, may alienate him or her from supportive adults in the school (environment) (p.299).

When dealing with *personal variables*, such as, but not limited to: academic and personal self-efficacy, perceived self-confidence, proper decision making skills, sense of belonging in schools and amongst peer groups, have been shown to be important factors in regards to self regulated learning and an important factor in academic success.

Behavioural variables in academic achievement and student success include, but not limited to: good classroom attendance, being on time, ready and prepared for class, and participating in classroom discussions.

Environmental variables that can affect academic success are: socioeconomic status, parental involvement in the learning process, and support from the school team when needed (Bandura, 1977; Holt et al., 2008).

Social Cognitive Theory suggests that an intervention in a students' educational environment could influence their academic success, given the impact that personal, behavioural and environmental factors have on an individuals success (Holt et al., 2008). The *LEAD* program can be thought of as an intervention because it targets the environmental factors a student is placed in (support/ mentoring), behavioural (risk

exposure/ resilience skills), and personal (acceptance) as Bandura makes reference to in his theory.

Thus, relationships between teacher and student can develop anywhere within the school community, and it can have a significant effect on the student's success in the secondary school years, especially student's are identified as in-risk.

Self- Efficacy

Individuals' beliefs about themselves play an important role in their behavior, in particular their academic performance as they progress through higher levels of education. The concept of self-efficacy is grounded in Bandura's (1997) theoretic as " beliefs in one's capabilities to organize and execute the courses of action required to manage protective situation" (p.2). It is important to note that self-efficacy not only affects expectations of successes and failures, but also motivates students and teachers to set personal goals to achieve, especially within a classroom and academic mindset. Teachers' self-efficacy beliefs are more important in terms of decisions within the classroom, how to plan and organize class material, execute expectations for students to adhere and comply to throughout the year and motivate students to strive for high levels of academic achievement based on their learning styles.

Teacher self-efficacy

Students who experience more supportive relationships with teachers are related to have greater academic achievement, higher levels of student engagement, less problem behavior, and more positive peer relations (Birch & Ladd, 1997). Not only is positive relation between perceived teacher support and academic performance related but perceived teacher support may be more beneficial for low performing students, especially

for students who are at risk for academic failure (Mercer, Nellis, Martinez & Kirk, 2011). Teacher self-efficacy theory predicts that teachers with high sense of self-efficacy work harder, and don't give up on difficult situations when students are struggling. This is because teachers believe in not only themselves but also the academic abilities of their students and continue to hold high expectations for them (Woolfolk, 1998).

Student self- efficacy

A student's self-efficacy represents the relationship between one's confidence and motivation to successfully be able to accomplish academic tasks based on how they perceive their level of competence and attitudes towards these tasks (Lorsbach & Jinks, 1999). Students who report to have high self-efficacy tend to approach difficult tasks and activities without hesitation (Pajares, 1996). On the opposite end of the spectrum, students who tend to have low academic self-efficacy tend to give up easily on the learning process without challenging themselves to higher order thinking. Students who perceive to have low self-efficacy tend to suffer in their overall academic careers such as reduced grade point average, lower test scores, higher enrollment in applied level courses and don't take on challenging problems (Pajares, 1996).

The Role of Schools

Just as teachers are responsible for creating a positive and nurturing environment, administrators can provide opportunities for the whole school community to be resilient adults in the world. Schools play a critical role in developing resiliency skills for in-risk students by creating environments that are engaging, positive, and supportive to improve their academic success. The amount of support within a school is a strong indicator on how positive the outcomes can be for in-risk youth (Bernard, 1993). Research shows that

26

schools are filled with opportunities that help promote resilient students (Werner, 2013).

These opportunities include caring, positive relationships, role models, mentoring

programs (Theron &Englebrecht, 2012), structured environments (Theron & Engelbrecht,

2012); and allows students to explore other avenues on academic success based on their

levels of achievement.When students are provided with a nurturing and stimulating

environment, they are better able to focus on learning and to use the lessons that they

were taught to overcome adversity and the challenges they face on a daily basis

(Martinez, 2013). Therefore in order for the school environment to assist is a positive

learning environment and to increase students resiliency skills, a change in how the

schools structures their programs must be made in order to meet the needs of a diverse

group of students. "Youth who feel supported and cared for by parents, teachers, and

peers report feeling more efficacious in making healthy, informed decisions and

displaying features of resiliency to potential life stressors" (p.16). There is less

information in the research that has a goal with helping students develop the positive

social skills needed to connect with others, as well as building on individual motivation

to achieve and set goals (Hughes, 2006).

The school community can convey support to students by listening to their needs

and demonstrate kindness, compassion and respect (Higgins, 1994; Meier, 1995). When

schools create high expectations and positive learning environments, they can structure

student behaviour by challenging them to achieve high levels of academic success

(Delpit, 1996). With a strength-based approach, teachers allow students to explore their

imagination and creativity as they become responsible students and actively participate in

all aspects of the school community (Kohn, 1993).

A partnership has been developed between the Faculty of Education, the Faculty of Human Kinetics, the Windsor- Essex Catholic District School Board and the Greater Essex Catholic District School Board to create a positive and structured learning environment in our secondary schools across Windsor- Essex County that would promote resiliency skills for our in-risk youth. The *LEAD* program is implemented as part of a student success initiative and works alongside in-risk students from grade 9-12. The purpose of this research is to explore the SSTs perspectives on how the program is being implemented with the pre-service teacher candidates and to determine if the program is meeting the program objectives.

CHAPTER III

METHODOLOGY

Rationale of the Study

The rationale for this study is to explore the perspectives of our local SSTs on implementing the *LEAD* program alongside teacher candidates as one of their initiatives for student success. In addition, this research explores ways on how the *LEAD* program can be strengthened when being facilitated by professors at the Faculty of Education to better prepare teacher candidates for the diverse student population they will be educating at the secondary level.

Research Design

Qualitative Case Study. To study the impact of the *LEAD* program, the researcher will explore the lived experiences of our secondary school SSTs throughout Windsor Essex County as they implement the *LEAD* program as one of their student success initiatives. A qualitative research design served to be the most beneficial approach for this study. Case study research is an approach that is qualitative in nature, where researchers focus on a unit of study known as a founded system; it is an investigation of a phenomenon that occurs within a specific context (Gay, Mills, & Airasian, 2011). This study is a multiple case study because the researcher will be conducting interviews with a number of SSTs, all which are located at different secondary schools across Windsor Essex County. In this case, the specific context of this study is the perspectives of the SSTs on the *LEAD* program. This study differs from an action research study because the researcher is not trying to find a solution to a given problem, but to further understand teachers' perspectives based on descriptive and

explanatory factors from their experiences as an SSTs working alongside the *LEAD*

program and teacher candidates (Gay et al., 2011). This study helps strengthen the

University of Windsor's Faculty of Education *LEAD* pre-service program as it

incorporates the voices of the SSTs while they reflect and share their experiences from

previous years.

Research Procedure/ Participants

Prior to conducting the interviews, ethical approval from the University of

Windsor's Research Ethics Board (REB) was required in order to proceed with this study.

A research notification email (Appendix B) was sent out to the GECDSB and the

WECDSB REB, and an email was then sent to all principals and SSTs to see who was

interested in taking part in this study (Appendix C). This email explained the purpose of

my research and included a copy of the Research Consent Form (Appendix D), Letter of

Information (Appendix E), and the Audio Consent Form (Appendix F) and each

individual was required to have the consent and audio consent signed in order to proceed

to the interview phase. Participants were selected on a volunteer basis and whoever

responded to the email expressing interest was able to coordinate a convenient time for

the interview. A total of 18 emails were sent to the GECDSB SSTs and eight emails were

sent out to the WECDSB SSTs. All these secondary schools were contacted because they

are currently implementing the *LEAD* program.

This study adopts the purposive sampling method, which is based on deliberately

selecting a sample population that the researcher believes represents a selected population

and who is able to provide insightful knowledge and wisdom based on their experiences

as an SST while implementing the *LEAD* program as part of their school's initiatives for

student success (Gay et al., 2011). The subjects in this study consist of four SSTs: two SSTs from the GECDSB and two SSTs from the WECDSB. These SSTs have been classroom teachers for a number of years, but their years of experience as being SSTs differed across each subject. These SSTs were all implementing the *LEAD* program to promote resiliency skills to their in-risk youth in grades 9-12. In-risk criteria include some or all of the following: poor academic performance, a history of emotional and/or social problems, poor school attendance, engaging in risky behaviours, substance abuse, and a member of a low SES family.

The overall risk and group vulnerability was determined to be low, given that these participants were all adults, were the schools' SST, and took part in this research study on a voluntary basis to share their knowledge and experiences with the *LEAD* program. All participants were aware that they had the right to withdraw from the study anytime prior to analyzing the data. The participants were aware of the right to withdraw from the initial interview that was sent in the consent form and prior to the interviews.

Data Collection

Data was collected through structured interviews with SSTs who had volunteered to take part in this research study to discuss their experiences while implementing the *LEAD* program alongside teacher candidates. Questions remained consistent throughout the interview process (Appendix G). Interviews were conducted at the University of Windsor's Faulty of Education or at a convenient location for the SST. The interviews took approximately 30-40 minutes to complete. Audio recordings were used throughout the interview process to ensure accuracy of the data collection was complete. The

interviews were conducted in April over a two- week period after the secondary school day was complete.

The overall risk and group vulnerability was low for this study, given that all participants were adults and decided to participate. Participant withdraw was explained in the information letter, consent form, prior to the interview process and once the interview was complete.

The researcher was responsible for all aspects of the data collection, including the research invitation email that was sent out to the superintendents of both school boards, the principals, and the SSTs, distribution and collection of consent forms, and scheduling a convenient time for the interviews. It is the researcher's responsibility to store all the data collected in a safe location in my house.

Thematic Analysis

Thematic Analysis is a valuable tool in research to critically analyze various aspects of the research topic that assists the researcher to identify and analyze recurring themes (Braun & Clarke, 2006). There are a number of advantages for the researcher when using thematic analysis to interpret the results. Some of the advantages, include (Appendix A), but not limited to: flexibility, summarize key points, highlight similarities and differences (Braun & Clarke, 2006). According to Braun and Clarke (2006), there are 5 phases to a thematic analysis and they are: i) transcription; ii) coding; iii) analysis; iv) overall; v) written reports. Here, the researcher summarized the process of thematic analysis used with the interviews that were conducted with each SST.

i) *Transcription.* Once the researcher completed all the interviews with the participants, the researcher had to transcribe the data. To ensure the transcription was

detailed, audio recordings were used throughout the interview process to ensure all experiences were recorded. This would allow the researcher to have access to all the authentic information, experiences and suggestions that were shared amongst all SSTs to enhance the *LEAD* program for future years. Audio recordings were very beneficial as the researcher was able to look for common themes and trends throughout the interviews.

ii) Coding. It was very important that during this stage the researcher critically analyzed the data and paid close attention to all the details in from the interviews. After reviewing the interviews, the researcher was able to identify four themes that were constantly emerging from my data: i) Communication ii) Selection Process iii) Group Dynamics and iv) Assessment and Evaluation. To organize the data, the researcher colour coded the themes that emerged and this also gave the researcher a better visual representation of the data.

iii) Analysis. Highlighting the major themes allowed the researcher to visually see the recurring themes and the connections that each of my participants made. Even though some themes overlapped between interviews, using this method of analysis allowed me to make connections with each arising theme that was present in the interviews.

iv) Overall. All of my thematic analysis was done in stages. All findings and interpretations from my interviews were recorded and organized so the researcher can interpret the results. Thematic analysis and triangulation was used when exploring the interviews between each SST.

v) Written Reports. As outlined in this section, the researcher explained the process of conducting thematic analysis. Furthermore, the language and concepts used in

this report are consistent with my theoretical framework that includes theories of risk and resiliency, in-school mentoring and social learning theory.

Primary Data Analysis

During the data analysis phase of my research, the researcher attempted to enter into an interpretative relationship with all data in hopes to gain insight into the content that the participants put forth. The researcher paid close attention to the detail and repetition of themes that were present in the audiotapes and transcripts. Participants in this study were all female and participated on a voluntary basis. All participants were SSTs, from both the WECDSB and GECDSB, and currently implementing the *LEAD* program as part of their student success initiative. Of the 18 GCEDSB and eight WECDSB SSTs, four SSTs participated in this research study. Pseudonyms will be used in this research study to maintain both participant confidentiality and anonymity as the researcher shares with you their responses to the research questions. The researcher assigned each participate with a pseudonym prior to the participants answering the research questions and were told that their pseudonym would be used throughout the study.

Participant A: Sara

Sara has been an SST at her current school for four years and has been implementing the *LEAD* program for four years. This year Sara's *LEAD* teacher candidate was pulled from the program in December. Sara highlights on a number of SLP that have been implemented in her school over the years, but praises the creativity of last year's SLP. This SLP was a cross panel activity where her *LEAD* teacher candidates and students went into a grade five Math Class and taught various differentiated styles of

math and learning. These students also had a before and after study to see if various methods improved student learning.

Participant B: Vanessa

Vanessa was a former SST at her current school for five year and had implemented the *LEAD* program for five years. This year Vanessa is back in the classroom but is mentoring the new SST on her roles and responsibilities based on her previous experiences with the program.

Participant C: Laura

Laura has been an SST at her current school for seven and a half years and has implemented the *LEAD* program for seven and a half years. Laura's *LEAD* program has implemented a number of SLPs over the years to help enhance her program and build resilient students.

Participant D: Jillian

Jillian has been an SST at her current school for five years and has implemented the *LEAD* program for the past two years. It has been very difficult placing *LEAD* teacher candidates in some county schools because of teachable subjects and transportation issues.

Ethical Considerations

The University of Windsor Research Ethics Review Board (REB) reviewed this study to ensure that it is ethical, respectful, and that it focuses on the content that it is intended for. After approval was obtained from the REB and the two local school boards, the researcher able to contact my principals and SSTs to inform them about the present study, and if they agreed to take part in this study, they had to sign an informed consent

and audio consent form before any other steps can be accomplished. Once consent was given, participants were then explained that they had the right to withdraw prior to the data analysis without any consequences. The researcher also disclosed their position as a researcher, informed the participants that this study is completely voluntary, and that all board policies will be adhered to for the duration of the study. All interview data will be locked in a secure place to ensure participant confidentiality. These results may offer suggestions on how to improve the effectiveness of the *LEAD* program at their school based on all the SSTs experiences and success stories from implementing the *LEAD* program at the secondary level, and how our facilitators at the Faculty of Education can prepare our pre-service teachers to meet the diverse needs of 21st century education that allows all students to succeed.

CHAPTER IV

DATA ANALYSIS

Introduction

The purpose of this study was to explore the SSTs perspectives and experiences with implementing the *LEAD* program alongside teacher candidates. To accomplish this task, a thematic analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2006) approach was chosen to analyze the methodology and interpret all the responses that were collected.

The thematic analysis approach allows the researcher to critically analyze various aspects of the research topic and assists with identifying and analyzing reoccurring themes (Braun & Clarke, 2006). The researcher applied the thematic analysis approach by analyzing the transcripts, summarizing key points and highlighting similarities and differences (Braun & Clarke, 2006). Throughout the investigation, the researcher was able to establish common themes and identify thematic groups, which are revealed through the 5 phases of thematic analysis: i) transcripts; ii) coding; iii) analysis; iv) overall; and v) written reports (Braun & Clarke, 2006).

The following themes were drawn from the interviews guided by the questions and roles as prescribed by the *LEAD* program: 1) Communication, 2) Selection Process, 3) Group Dynamics and 4) Assessment and Evaluation.

Communication

In order for programs to be effective a high level of satisfaction must exist amongst all the participants involved with initiating the program (Halawah, 2000). It is important that the Faculty of Education's coordinators and the SSTs communicate with one another and have a role in the decision making process that can further enhance the

program based on previous experience. When there is strong communication between the faculty and SSTs, teacher candidates will be able to benefit more from the program as they become better prepared to meet the diverse needs in the classroom. This was confirmed by Laura as she stated,

> Over the past seven years I noticed a drastic improvement on how the program is being facilitated by teacher candidates and the Faculty of Education. SSTs now have direct communication with the professors and the faculty if there are any issues, concerns or clarifications on expectations while teacher candidates are in their practicums.

Villa (1992) explains that effective leadership from administration promotes an instructional environment that values and reinforces learning to meet a diverse group of students. According to the SSTs when they have the support from their administration they effectively deliver the *LEAD* program to their in-risk youth. It is important that the SSTs, professors and teacher candidates continue to set goals, timelines and procedures that can enhance that schools' student success program and allow all students to achieve academic success and personal growth.

For communication to occur amongst the SSTs and professors, a sharing of meaning must exist from both the sender and the reader (Catt, Miller and Schallenkamp, 2007). Laura suggested that a "meeting should take place throughout the year with the faculty and SSTs to evaluate the delivery of the *LEAD* program and provide recommendations." All the SSTs agreed that having frequent meetings would allow SSTs to be aware when students were coming for placement, how long the placement was and how teaching expectations changed throughout the practicums. Laura further supports the

importance of communication by having the faculty and SSTs stay in contact with previous teacher candidates that successfully completed in the *LEAD* program. She stated:

> It would be nice to have the successful teacher candidate from the *LEAD* program to mentor the new teacher candidates in September. This will allow the former *LEAD* teacher candidate to share their successes and their stories/ ideas on how they can initiate the program for the upcoming year. It would also be nice to have *LEAD* teacher candidates scheduled to attend another high school throughout the year on Fridays (for example). More exposure to other schools and other SST work would provide them with more tools. The overall goal is that when the teacher candidates returns to their main placement, they bring fresh ideas to the SST and new supports.

Each SST indicated that the *LEAD* program has benefited the in-risk students within their schools'. Sara further reinforced this by stating:

> My *LEAD* teacher candidates were extremely helpful and fabulous when it came to helping the students learn. Not only did they do a phenomenal job teaching one-on-one, they were exceptional in motivating the students during our DYP events. They build a solid rapport with the kids and they were well respected by staff and students alike. The *LEAD* program has helped our Student Success room and be leaders in our DYP activities

Vanessa also had a similar response to Sara's answer by stating:

> Having a young person, full of enthusiasm for teaching and learning has been the most beneficial to all students, especially those in-risk. Having the year long

placement allows serious bonds to develop and the constant check ins during DYP

activities and while working in the SST room [and even in their classes in some

cases] keeps those connections going and allows trust to develop.

Developing a trusting relationship between the faculty and the SSTs can further enhance

the program by sharing both positive and negative experiences when it comes time to

evaluate the program. The SSTs all agreed that it would be beneficial to meet a couple

times throughout the year, beginning, middle and end, to discuss the progress for their

teacher candidates and to see if they are meeting the *LEAD* course expectations

throughout their practicums. According to Catt, Miller and Schallenkamp (2007) in order

for effective communication to occur, there needs to be a sharing of meaning between

both parties.

Jillian further supported this by stating:

> Clearer expectations need to be established between the Faculty of Education,
>
> SSTs, the boards, and participating associate teachers as there was some
>
> confusion at times on teaching responsibilities of teacher candidates.

Laura has been with the program for a number of years and she stated:

> This year is the first year where direct communication did happen from the
>
> faculty and the SST and it made a difference for smoother transitions between
>
> practicums.

Laura supported Catt, Miller and Schallenkamp (2007) by stating:

> Communication between the Faculty and SSTs [up until this year for the
>
> GECDSB] has been on an individual basis. While the Faculty initially sent out-
>
> group emails to the SSTs about teaching times, assessment and the foundations of

LEAD, all other communication with the SSTs were done on a case-by-case

circumstance.

Communication is essential between the Faculty and to the participating schools, but

some SSTs thought they were receiving far too many emails during busy times.

Jillian supported this but stating:

> At times I noticed I was receiving multiple emails from multiple people within the
>
> Faculty [front desk, field placement, instructors, etc.] so a streaming of
>
> communication might be beneficial to both parties. For example, communication
>
> can be delivered through the Faculty and Student Success coordinator with both
>
> the WECDSB and GECDSB.

When teams communicate with one another they have the opportunity to fix any issues

that are interfering with the success of reaching the overall goal, and gives them the

opportunity to share their experiences that can strengthen the program for future years.

Selection Process

At the beginning of each academic school year, students who have been accepted

in the Faculty of Education are required to attend a mandatory orientation that introduces

pre-service teachers to various programs that are offered and their expectations

throughout the professional program. Teacher candidates who are enrolled in the junior/

intermediate and senior/ intermediate courses have the option to take the *LEAD* program.

While the *LEAD* program has a fixed number of spots available (approximately 40-50)

instructors are generally able to accept everyone into the course. Potential teacher

candidates have to complete the *LEAD* candidate profile as a method of entry into the

program, however this was more of a formality as everyone was generally accepted into the program. Jillian was not in favor of this selection process as she stated:

> This method brings frustration to not only myself but their other associate teacher as well. I feel that some of my *LEAD* candidates should not have been able to remain in the program because of their poor teacher evaluations in their teachable areas.

This concern led the professors at the Faculty to change the assessment procedures that were introduced during the 2014-2015 year. There is now a probationary period for SSTs and *LEAD* candidates. According to the new guidelines, *LEAD* candidates are assessed on the new *LEAD* specific evaluation form (APPENDIX I), which is more in line with what SSTs expect out of their *LEAD* teachers. This allows the SSTs to have a probationary period during their first two practicums; candidates are now in the *LEAD* program on a probationary basis and the SSTs are able to turn down their *LEAD* candidates after a formative and summative evaluation.

According to Salinitri and Holloway (2010), SSTs mentor *LEAD* teacher candidates who are assigned to the locally developed, learning skills and credit recovery classes throughout their practicums. Unlike the traditional field experience model, *LEAD* teacher candidates are required to do all of their placements in the same secondary school to foster long-term, mentor-based relation with their in-risk students as they are supervised . Wiggins, Follo, and Eberly (2007) reinforces the benefits of having pre-service teachers enrolled in an intensive and long-term field placement in diverse school settings that will help improve the attitudes of pre-service teachers as they improve their teaching craft.

Jillian further reinforced this by stating:

> Most of my *LEAD* teacher candidates come in with previous experience in
> working with a diverse population, but most importantly they all come in with a
> growth mindset that allows them to learn and grow everyday into positive role
> models for these in-risk students as they work alongside them throughout the
> course of the year.

When teacher candidates apply the theoretical framework of risk and resiliency, social learning theory and in-school mentoring and collaborate with the school team, they have the resources to develop a leadership program that promotes resilient youth as well as building efficacy to work with a diverse setting. This allows the SSTs to have a probationary period during their first two practicums; candidates are now in the *LEAD* program on a probationary basis and the SSTs are able to turn down their *LEAD* candidates after a formative and summative evaluation.

Sara explains how selection process is a critical component to the success of implementing the *LEAD* program with in-risk youth,

> If a *LEAD* teacher candidate does not have any experience, knowledge or does not
> care about students who struggle the most, they will not be a good candidate for
> the *LEAD* program. If teacher candidates are unwilling to teach locally developed
> and applied classes, they would not really fare well with in-risk youth. Working
> with in-risk youth requires an open mind, creative lesson plans, respect, flexibility
> and most important compassion.

Vanessa had a similar response to the selection process as Sara that could help strengthen the *LEAD* program, both at the Faculty of Education and during their practicum experience.

> Select *LEAD* teacher candidates who are creative and ambitious, who are willing to go beyond the expectations of the Faculty of Educations and give more. Most importantly they should be self-starters. Quality of the candidate is more important than quantity in the program. Perhaps a more selective screening, application, and interview process would help.

Moreover, "one of the most formative experiences on pre-service teachers is anticipatory socialization for teaching during the 12 to 15 years they spend as pupils in the classrooms' (Hatton, 1998, p.7). Federick, Cave, and Perencevich (2010) views this experience as 'apprenticeship of observation' and this experience can have a direct correlation on how pre-service teachers view their own classroom teaching practices and philosophies. Laura and Jillian had similar responses for future considerations when selecting *LEAD* teacher candidates. They stated:

> A future consideration that might be beneficial to the program and to the pre-service teachers is to have teacher candidates shadow their SST to witness firsthand how they work with their in-risk youth. Teacher candidates can then modify their teaching styles from the experiences they gained by modeling their SST. This will then give the SSTs the ability to get to know their teacher candidates and interview them to see if the *LEAD* program is right for them.

Group Dynamics

There are 18 secondary schools from the GECDSB and eight secondary schools from the WECDSB who are involved with the *LEAD* program. The number of teacher candidates who are placed at each school depend on two factors. First, if the teacher candidate is part of the catholic school system then they have the option to complete their practicums in the catholic schools. Second, SSTs volunteer to take part in the *LEAD* program and request how many teacher candidates they are willing to take on.

There is no specific number of *LEAD* candidates per school. A lot of *LEAD* placements are based upon having associate teachers and teachable subjects for each candidate. Ideally, the Faculty would like to place two *LEAD* candidates per school. Vanessa supported this number by stating:

> I would enjoy working with two *LEAD* candidates throughout the year because it would allow me to give them the attention they need to develop into future educators. I would be able to meet with them more frequently and provide them with the necessary feedback that I gathered throughout their placements. This would also allow *LEAD* candidates to collaborate with their partners, especially when they are implementing their Service-Learning Projects.

There are various combinations of candidates at each school typically ranging from one to four depending upon the size of the student population or the location of the school. Sara, Laura, Vanessa and Jillian all understand the placing teacher candidates can be a very difficult task. They stated:

> The number of *LEAD* candidates fluctuates between schools because of a number of factors. Some schools do not even have *LEAD* candidates due to constraints,

location, teachable subjects or the SST just does not want any *LEAD* candidates for that year.

A common theme amongst SSTs was sharing *LEAD* students between schools because it is difficult to find associate teachers to take teacher candidates depending on the disciplines. Sara emphasizes the importance of spreading out the teacher candidates between teachables,

> There seem to be a lot of Science *LEAD* teacher candidates so spread out the subject disciplines throughout all of the schools. Some of the schools offer French Immersion so try to place the language students there. All schools have Specialist High Skills Majors in various areas. Try to match up teachables with these majors at each high school. Example, (another school) has a Science specialist high skills major program but we had an abundance of science *LEAD* teacher candidates.

Vanessa and Sara both found it very beneficial to limit the number of *LEAD* teacher candidates at their schools to two. Vanessa stated,

> The years I had one or two *LEAD* teacher candidates were the most successful. The year I had five assigned to me was a disaster and they had a negative attitude that resulted in unproductive works.

Laura found it very difficult to provide constructive and immediate feedback on a regular basis for all the candidates when there are more than four *LEAD* teacher candidates. Jillian believes that the number of teacher candidates assigned to each school should be based on the size and needs of the school, but each SST should have at least one teacher candidate.

Very few associate teachers volunteer to host teacher candidates at the high school level, especially in math and sciences. This presented a huge problem and resulted in teacher candidates having to move schools throughout their placements. Sara confirmed this by stating:

> Some of my teacher candidates had to move schools halfway through due to lack of teachable subject associate teachers. This was very discouraging to my teacher candidates because they were so eager to make a difference and cultivate relationships within their original host school.

Assessment and Evaluation

Evaluation is a key component of ensuring the success and effectiveness of implementing the *LEAD* program as part of their practicum requirements during their pre-service year. The evaluation process is an ongoing process for the SSTs as they formally and informally assess their teacher candidates as they progress through their practicums. Successful teachers (SSTs) engage, facilitate, model and mentor practices to understand the process, challenges and identify necessary changes (Gurr, Drysdale & Mulford, 2007).

All SSTs in this study implemented informal and formal evaluation strategies to monitor their teacher candidate(s) progress throughout the year. Laura further reinforced this by stating:

> I communicate with their other associate teacher on how my teacher candidate(s) are progressing. Together we both monitor to see if the teacher candidate(s) are creating environments that are engaging and inclusive; make their learning goals and success criteria visible in the classroom; have their lesson plans done a week

in advance; create weekly timelines on what topics will be covered that week; and make sure that teacher candidate(s) are available to meet with struggling students. If these criteria are not met, we can quickly intervene and see what needs to be done to move forward.

Sara applied an informal evaluation approach with her team of *LEAD* teacher candidates throughout their four practicums. Sara supported the benefits of informal assessment by stating:

At the end of each week I would come together with my teacher candidates and discuss what's going well, what challenges they are facing with working alongside in-risk youth, how they are transitioning from their teachable subjects to the student success room, areas of improvement, and how they can continue to create a welcoming and excepting environment for our identified students in the student success department.

During the 2014-2015 academic year, the Faculty of Education and professors decided to move forward and create an assessment and evaluation tool that involved both formal and informal assessment to see if the teacher candidates were meeting the program goals. Informal assessments are ongoing, daily, written and oral comments. Informal assessments allow teacher candidates to reflect on their strengths and weaknesses as they become critically reflective teachers that will enhance their professional growth and development. Formal assessments are done at the end of each practicum and associate teachers are required to assess their teacher candidates ability to meet the professionals expectations, how teacher candidates are adopting to the diverse

classroom environments and how teacher candidates are facilitating the *LEAD* program with in-risk youth.

The *LEAD* Program Handbook (2014) states:

Assessing and evaluating performance in practice teaching is one of the most important and difficult tasks faced by the associate teacher. Teacher candidates often find this process stressful but usually recognize it as one of the most useful parts of their field experience, provided that is well formulated and constructive and includes clear guidance for growth (Pfaff & Sirianni, 2014, p.28).

As a result, each participant in this study provided both informal and formal evaluation and mentoring to their teacher candidates. Causey, Thomas and Armento (2000), suggest that extensive exposure to a diverse school setting- along with opportunities for teacher candidates to critically reflect and self-analyze- are vital components for pre-service teachers to improve how they facilitate class instruction and maintain a positive learning environment. According to Jillian:

Informal assessment provides the associate teachers, teacher candidates, advisors and professors on the areas of strengths and weaknesses of the teacher candidates. It also helps the teacher candidates to critically reflect and modify their teaching styles as they strengthen their teaching craft for years to come. Using this knowledge, associate teachers, advisors and professors are able to provide the necessary guidance, tools and resources to help them develop into a confident teachers as they progress throughout their practicums.

There is a distinct difference between the two assessment strategies, but each is effective in their own way. Informal evaluation allow SSTs the opportunity to collaborate and

work directly alongside their teacher candidates as they engage with the students, and to get involved with the *LEAD* program and model the desired vision (Rogus, 1983). Formal evaluation allows the associate teacher to assess how their teacher candidate is facilitating the *LEAD* program and mentoring in-risk students within their school. Vanessa notes the importance of introducing informal and formal assessment to the *LEAD* teacher candidates throughout their practicums. She stated:

> One of the best ways to assess and give feedback is through informal and formal assessment. Positive and constructive feedback allows teacher candidates to understand their strengths and weaknesses.

Vanessa also noted assessment of the *LEAD* program can be an excellent way to see if program goals are being met. She stated:

> At the end of each academic year, SSTs should all evaluate the *LEAD* program as a whole on how teacher candidates are facilitating the program within their school. This is a good time for SSTs to provide feedback on what can be improved and implemented at the faculty to better prepare the teacher candidates to work with a diverse student population within secondary schools.

> Aside from the assessment and evaluation of the teacher candidates, the four participants had similar responses about assessing the program as a whole. Specifically, Sara stated,

> I find it very challenging to find associate teachers for their teacher candidates because of all the time they miss. This makes it challenging for their teaching experience, their associate teacher needs to maintain consistency for the students

in the class. They also feel that scheduling these events for their projects at times other than during placement would be the solution.

Laura further supported Sara's response by stating,

> Now that the program is two years, perhaps a focus of the two year *LEAD* program should focus on supporting grade nine in their transitioning year and following up on them in grade ten. Teacher candidates should not be removed during their placements. This makes it very inconsistent for the associate teacher and the classroom they support.

> By focusing on the themes of communication, selection process, group dynamics, and assessment and evaluation, the *LEAD* program should experience greater success in reaching the goals of the Student Success initiative and teacher development.

CHAPTER V

DISICUSION, LIMITATIONS & CONCLUSION

Thematic analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2006) was used to investigate the SSTs perspectives on implementing the *LEAD* program alongside teacher candidates. While analyzing their responses, the researcher moved from a descriptive to an interpretative researcher in order to better understand and critically analyze the data. This allowed the researcher to construct common themes based on the experiences of the participants and the challenges and benefits from implementing the *LEAD* program with teacher candidates and working alongside the University of Windsor's Faculty of Education. The themes are: Communication, Selection Process, Group Dynamics and Assessment and Evaluation. These themes were recurring in the SSTs interviews and provided meaningful information from the perspectives of the SSTs on how to strengthen the program for future years.

In the following section, the researcher will highlight my interpretation of the key findings by addressing the research questions:

1) How does the SSTs involvement in the *LEAD* program vary across each board?

2) Does the *LEAD* program benefit in-risk students who are part of student success programs?

 3) What suggestions/ feedback do SSTs have from their experience with the *LEAD* program?

SSTs Perspectives on Implementing the *LEAD* Program

The implementation of the *LEAD* program as part of school board, GECDSB and WECDSB, initiative for student success has helped build resilient adolescents and

extended the obligations of the SSTs. The SSTs interviewed recognized that their responsibilities have expanded with the addition of implementing the *LEAD* program and having teacher candidates' work alongside them for half of the day in the student success department. The SSTs gained an understanding of their roles and responsibilities from the use of the SS/L18 strategy, personal experiences, collaborating with SSTs from other schools and by engaging with a number of creative and talented teacher candidates throughout the years. The SSTs discussed their experiences with implementing the *LEAD* program in great detail during the interview. While reflecting on their position, the SSTs all perceived themselves as leaders, mentors and advocators.

The SSTs were all self-identified as leaders who are supportive, sensitive and who inspire their students to achieve academic success based on the ministry's expectations. No matter how busy SSTs are, they always put their students needs first and are always available to provide guidance and assistance to keep their students actively engaged in their education. The researcher classified these SSTs as transformational leaders based on their information they shared in the interviews. Transformational leaders inspire others to take initiative and adapt their philosophy's to meet the program's goal (Beurgre, Acar & Braun, 2006). All four participants displayed this type of leadership role because they collaborate with other SSTs to enhance their student success program and promote colleague and student motivation, all while meeting the needs of a diverse school community (Eyal & Roth, 2011).

Even though each SST has been with the *LEAD* program for a number of years, they have developed a growth mindset by acknowledging every experience as a learning process (Dweck, 2008). By bringing awareness to the experience and evaluating the

LEAD program's goals, the SSTs can build a deeper understanding of the program and bridge the gap between the University of Windsor's Faculty of Education and the school system, which can positively affect how the *LEAD* program is being implemented within our local secondary schools throughout Windsor- Essex County (Perry & Stewart, 2005).

The SSTs understanding of the SS/L18 initiative influences the degree of implementation of success (Canadian Council on Leaning, 2008). All the SSTs interviewed described a basic understanding of the *LEAD* program. Their experience and understanding of the program was based on the number of years they have been implementing this initiative within their school. They were able to compare and contrast how their teacher candidates engaged with the program and how they created an environment that provided guidance and mentoring for all, while building resilient adolescents.

With their wealth of knowledge gathered from ministry resources, professional development and personal experiences, the SSTs shared their insight on the challenges and benefits of implementing the *LEAD* program within their schools. This also provided SSTs with a deeper insight into how they can transfer the information they gathered from this research back into their schools to strengthen their student success program. The number one theme that was present in each interview was communication. Communication is an essential component of a successful program because it provides expectations for the members involved (Turk et al., 2002). SSTs kept the university team informed on teacher candidates' performance by filling out an evaluation of each teacher candidate during each of their practicums. This was used as a method of assessment to

help teacher candidates enhance their curriculum understanding and instructional practices when being part of the student success team.

Research Question 1

How does the SSTs involvement in the LEAD program vary across each board?

Sara and Vanessa facilitate the *LEAD* program differently than Laura and Jillian. One of the local school boards refers to *LEAD* as *Discovering Your Possibilities (DYP)*. The purpose of the *DYP* program is to provide various opportunities to assist young people in developing leadership, teamwork and resiliency skills that ultimately affect their academic success. Each year the SSTs meet prior to the school year to plan their events to promote teamwork and build resilient adolescents. These events include: Ropes Courses, Therapeutic Ridding Excursions, Christmas Community Service Project, Pathways to Success, Power of Potential (POP), Curling, Challenge Cup, Youth Leadership Christian Camp (YLCC) Overnight Experience and DYP Graduation. Each school participates in the exact same events throughout the year to keep consistency throughout the program. Program modifications and differences occur at the school level depending on what initiatives are needed to meet their students needs.

Laura and Jillian *LEAD* program varies from school to school. It is up to the SST and teacher candidates to develop a leadership program that is unique to their school and a program that promotes resiliency and leadership skills for their school. Each *LEAD* school participates in the POP and Challenge Cup event, but other than that the school is in charge of building their *LEAD* program based on the theoretical framework of in school mentoring, social learning theory, resiliency and service learning. Throughout my experience with working with the *LEAD* program in both boards, the WECDSB

55

definitely has a wonderful philosophy on how each school implements the *LEAD*

program and maintains consistency across the board. Each school can then tailor their

program a bit differently based on the students enrolled in the program and the various

initiatives that are being implemented within their school.

Research Question 2

Does the LEAD program benefit in-risk students who are part of student success

programs?

It can be concluded that the short-term impact of the *LEAD* program is perceived

as being very effective when being implemented as one of the SSTs initiatives for student

success. Short-term impact was described in the primary data and has shown that having

a young person, full of enthusiasm for teaching and learning has been most beneficial to

all students, especially those in-risk. Having a yearlong placement at the same school

allows stronger bonds to develop and allows the teacher candidate to see firsthand how a

student can progress throughout the school year. When teacher candidates are placed at a

school yearlong they are able to mentor these students by building a strong rapport and

trusting relationships. According to Laura, "the *LEAD* program has been very beneficial

to her student success program. The successful *LEAD* candidates develop positive and

lasting relationships with in-risk students. The in-risk students see consistency and view

this support as 'real'." Not only did these SSTs praise *LEAD* teacher candidates for doing

a phenomenal job teaching one-on-one, they were exceptional in motivating all students

during their *LEAD/ DYP* events.

Research Question 3

What suggestions/ feedback do SSTs have from their experience with the LEAD program?

Suggestions included, but were not limited to: better selection process; Tribes Training; completing more than one class on Exceptional Learning; year round mentoring sessions between SST and Faculty of Education; communication; more hands on experience that allows teacher candidates to make connections between theory and practice. Working with in-risk youth requires teacher candidates to have an open mind, be creative in their lesson plans, and most importantly have compassion for working with in-risk youth. Compassion amongst candidates varied, thus the process of selection should be reevaluated. All four SSTs agreed that most of their experiences have been very positive and have resulted in excellent support to the students and themselves. Teacher candidates have been respectful and accommodating to students, supported classroom teachers with a positive and engaging attitude, and have come to the *LEAD* program eager to help their in-risk student population within their schools.

Limitations

There are various limitations that are present in this study. Four SSTs, two from WECDSB and two from GECDSB, provided data for this research study. Further, the SSTs were recruited on a voluntary basis. Those who did volunteer with this study had a number of experiences with implementing the *LEAD* program compared to SSTs who could have possibly contributed to the research but were only in the SST role for their first time. As a researcher, and someone who is so passionate about the *LEAD* program, I bring a personal bias to the analysis. It is extremely difficult to evaluate the program's effectiveness when there are very few participants willing to take part in this study.

Recommendations

Based on the SSTs perspectives and literature review, the researcher suggest SSTs, instructors, and researchers to consider the following recommendations.

Build a Relationship of Trust

Each SST stressed the importance of communication between the SST and the Faculty of Education, yet there was no mention of building a trusting relationship. Communication is an essential component to a successful program and building block for relationships, but the effectiveness is not the same if SSTs and instructors do not have trust in each other's expertise, knowledge and ability to implement a successful program within their school (Turk et al., 2002). When trust is in place, a foundation for success and positive relationships can start to revolve (Kutsyuruba, Walker & Noona, 2010). In order to build trust, SSTs, instructors and teacher candidates need to move away from stressing a surface relationship and focus on laying the groundwork for a deepening understanding of the program and trusted partnership between the two school boards and secondary schools within Windsor- Essex County.

Define Roles and Responsibilities

It is the Faculty of Education responsibility to clearly define what the roles and responsibilities are for each SST during the current school year, so that the SSTs can effectively adapt to the change and to give their teacher candidates the best possible experience (Goodsen, 2000). To gain a clearer understanding of program goals, the SSTs in the program should be part of the planning process based on their experiences with implementing the program. The planning part can include both theory and practice based. SSTs can help develop the necessary theories and frameworks that should be covered

during instructional time at the Faculty of Education that way these students are equipped with the necessary resources during their practicums to meet the needs of a diverse school community.

Formal Assessment

This is the first year that SSTs are required to complete a formal assessment on how their teacher candidates are strengthening their instructional practices throughout their placements (See Appendix I). SSTs and the Faculty of Education can collaborate with one another to develop an assessment strategy that is unique to the student success portion of the teacher candidates' practicums. This strategy can assess the quality of the teacher candidate and to determine if they meet the expectations of the program.

Suggestions for Future Research

The ability to conduct focus groups with SSTs from both boards would have been beneficial in gathering data on how each SST implements the *LEAD* program, and how they can strengthen their program for future years based on the experiences that would have been shared. *LEAD* is meant for the in-risk students within secondary schools, so it would have also been nice to have a focus group with both the SSTs and the students on their experiences with the program. As well, research can be conducted at the elementary level to see how these in-risk students are transitioning into secondary schools and if *LEAD* is beneficial to their secondary school experience.

REFERENCE

Aklin, W., Brex, R., Connell, C., Cook, E., Vanderploeg, J. (2011). Risk and protective factors associated with patterns of antisocial behaviour among nometropolitan adolescents. *Aggressive Behaviour, 37,* 98-106.

Armstrong, M. I., Birnie-Lefcovitch, S., & Ungar, M. T. (2005). Pathways between social support, family well being, quality of parenting, and child resilience: What we know. *Journal of child and family studies*, *14*(2), 269-281.

Audas, R., & Willms, J.D. (2001). Engagement and dropping out of school: a life course perspectives. Québec, Canada

Bandura, A. (1977). Social learning theory.

Barrera, M., & Bonds, D.D. (2005). Mentoring relationships and social support. Handbook of Youth Mentoring. (Eds). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Battistoni, R.M. (1995). Service leaning, diversity and the liberal arts curriculum. *Liberal Education, 81,* 30-35.

Beauvais, F., & Oetting, E.R. (1999). Drug use, resilience, and the myth of the golden child. *Resilience and Development: Positive Life Adaptations*. 101-180.

Benard, B. (1993). Fostering resiliency in kids. *Educational Leadership*. 44-48.

Benson, L., Harkavy, I., & Puckett, J. (2000). An implementation revolution as a strategy for fulfilling the democratic promise of university-community partnerships: penn-west Philadelphia as an experiment in progress. *Nonprofit and Voluntary Sector Quarterly*, *29*, 24-45.

Beurgre, C.D., Acar, W., & Braun, W. (2006). Transformational leadership in

organizations: an environment- induced model. *International Journal of*

Manpower, 27(1), 55-62.

Birch, S.H., & Ladd, G.W. (1997). The teacher-child relationship and children's early

school adjustment. *Journal of School Psychology*, *35*, 61-79.

Bonnie Benard. (1993). Fostering Resiliency in Kids. *Educational Leadership*, *44-48*.

Boydell, K., Cote, D., Edney, D., Ferguson, B., Rummens, J., & Tilleczek, K. (2005).

Early School Leavers: Understanding the lived Reality of Student Disengagement

from Secondary School: Final Report. Toronto, ON: Author.

Braun, V., & Clarke, V. (2006). Using thematic analysis in psychology. *Qualitative*

Research in Psychology, 3(2), 77-101. ISSN 1478-0887.

Butin, D.W. (2007). Justice- learning: service-learning as justice-oriented education.

Equity and Excellence in Education, 40(2), 177-183.

Caledon Institute of Social Policy. (2006). More Than a Name Change: The Universal

Child Care Benefit. Ottawa, Ontario.

Canadian Council on Learning. (2008). Evaluation of the Ontario ministry of education's

student success/ learning to 18 strategy. Final Report.

Catt, S., Miller, D., & Schallenkamp, K. (2007). You are the key: Communicate for

learning effectiveness. *Education*, *127*(*3*), 369.

Causey, V. E., Thomas, C. D., & Armento, B. J. (2000). Cultural diversity is basically a

foreign term to me: The challenges of diversity for preservice teacher education.

Teaching and Teacher Education, *16(1)*, 33-45.

Chupp, M.G., & Joseph, M.L. (2010). Getting the most out of service learning:

    maximizing student, university and community impact. *Journal of Community*

    Practice, 18(2-3), 190-212.

Crocker, R. (2000). Pan-Canadian Education Research Agenda. Symposium report:

    Children and youth at-risk. *Statistics Canada: Canadian Education Statistics*

    Council, 1-165.

Cornu, R.L. (2005) Peer mentoring: engaging pre-service teachers in mentoring one

    another. *Mentoring & Tutoring: Partnership in Learning, 13(3), 315-336.*

Daloz, L.A. (1999). *Mentor: guiding the journey of adult learners.* San Francisco:

    Jossey- Bass.

Darling-Hammond, L., Newton, X., & Wei, R.C. (2010). Evaluating teacher education

    outcomes: a study of the Stanford teacher education programme. *Journal of*

    Education for Teaching, 36(4), 369-388.

Delpit, L. (1996). The politics of teaching literate discourse. *City kids*, *City teachers:*

    Reports from the front row. New York: New Press.

Deweck, C.S. (2008). *Mindset: The New Psychology of Success.*

DuBois, D.L., Holloway, B.E., Valentine, J.C., & Cooper, H. (2000a). Effectiveness of

    mentoring programs for youth: A meta-analytic review. *American Journal of*

    Community Psychology, *30(2),* 157-197.

DuBois, D.L., Neville, H.A., Parra, G.R., & Pugh-Lilly, A.O. (2002). Mentoring

    relationships for youth: investigation of a process-oriented model. *Journal of*

    Community Psychology, *30(4)*. 367-388.

Eccles, J., & Gootman, J.A. (2002). Community programs to promote youth

    development. *Institute of Medicine.* Washington. DC.

Education Quality and Accountability Office (2011). Highlights of the provincial results:

    Ontario secondary school literacy test, 2010-2011 english language students.

    Retrieved November 5, 2011:

    http://www.eqao.com/pdf_e/11/OSSLT_highlights_2011.pdf.

Erickson, E.H. (1959). Identity and the life cycle. *Psychological Issues, 1,* 18-164.

Erickson, E.H. (1968). *Identity, youth, and crisis.* New York: W.W. Norton.

Evenbeck, S., & Kahn, S. (2001). Enhancing learning assessment and accountability

    through communities of practice. *Change, 33,* 24-33.

Eyal, O., & Roth, G. (2011). Principals' leadership and teachers' motivation. *Journal of*

    Educational Administration, *49(3),* 256-275.

Fergus, S., Zimmerman, M. (2005). Adolescent resilience: A framework for

    understanding healthy development in the face of risk. *Annual Review of Public*

    Health, 26, 399-419.

Ferguson, B., & Power, K. (2014). Broader measures of success: physical and mental

    health in schools. *In Measuring What Matters. People for Education.* Toronto.

Foster, M.A., Lambert, R., Abbott-Shim, M., McCarty., & Franze, S. (2005). A model of

    home learning environment and social risk factors in relation to children's

    emergent literacy and social outcomes. *Early Childhood Research Quarterly, 20*

    (1), 13-36.

Frederick, R., Cave, A., & Perencevich, K. (2010). Teacher candidates' transformative

      thinking on issues of social justice. *Teaching and Teacher Education, 26(2),* 315-

      322.

Fredericksen, P. (2000). Does service-learning make a different in student performance?

      The Journal of Experiential Education, 23, 64-74.

Furco, A. (1996). Service-learning: a balanced approach to experiential education.

      Expanding Boundaries: Serving and Learning, 1, 1-6

Gardner,B. (1997). The controversy over service learning. *NEA Today, 16, 17*-18.

Gay, L.R., Mills, G.E., & Airasian, P.W. (2011). *Educational Research*. *Complete for

      Analysis and Application* (10th ed). Pearson Education.

Goodsen, S.H. (2000). School conditions affecting implementation of the primary

      program in Kentucky. *Education Forum, 64(2),* 165-174.

Grant, D., Kravitz-Wirtz, N., Durosky, S., Mistry, R., Yancey, A. (2011). Role modeling,

      risk, and resilience in California adolescents. *Journal of Adolescent Health, 48,*

      36-43.

Graves, S., Stevens-Watkins, D. (2011). Risk and protective factors among African

      American adolescent males that predict adult involvement in the criminal justice

      system: Evidence from a national sample. *Journal of Ethnicity in Criminal

      Justice, 9,* 136-151.

Gurr, D., Drysdale, L., & Mulford, B. (2007). Instructional leadership in three Australian

      schools. *International Studies in Educational Administration, 35(3),* 20-29.

Halawah, I. (2000). The relationship between effective communication of high school

      principal and school climate. *Education, 126(2),* 334-377.

Hammond, W. (2011). Proceedings from SSLI 2011:*Resiliency Based Student Success Work Community and Education Working Together.* London, ON.

Hatton, E. (1998). Social and cultural influences on teaching. In. E. Hatton (Ed.), *Understanding teaching: Curriculum and the social context of schooling.* Sydney: Harcourt Brace.

Higgins, G. (1994). Resilient adults: overcoming a cruel past. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

Hollander, J.E., & Saltmarsh, J. (2000). The engaged university. *Academe, 8,* 29-32.

Holloway, S., & Salinitri, G. (2010). Investigating teacher candidates' mentoring of students at risk of academic failure: A Canadian experiential field model: *Mentoring & Tutoring Partnership in Learning, 18(4),* 383-403.

Holt, L. J., Bry, B.H., & Johnson, V.L. (2008). Enhancing school engagement in at-risk, urban minority adolescents through a school based adult mentoring intervention. *Child & Family Benhaviour Therapy, 30(4),* 297-318.

Hughes, M. (2006). Creating "turning points" in the lives of youth residing in high-risk communities: Participation and response to school-based mentoring and impact on academic success.

King, A. (2005). *Double cohort study: Phase 4 report.* Toronto: Ontario Ministry of Education.

Kirby, L.D. & Fraser, M.W. (1997). *Risk and Resilience in Childhood,* in M. Fraser (ed.) Risk and Resilience in Childhood: An Ecological Perspective, 10-33. Washington, DC: NASW Press.

Kohn, A. (1993). Choices for children: why and how to let students decide. *Phi Delat Kappan, 75(1),* 8-16.

Komosa- Hawkins, K. (2012). The impact of school based mentoring on adolescents social-emotional health. *Mentoring & Tutoring: Partnership in Learning, 20(3),* 393-408.

Kutsyuruba, B., Walker, K., & Noonan, B. (2010). The ecology of trust in principalship. *EAF Journal, 21(1),* 23-I.

Laszlo, B., Piko, B., Steger, M. (2011). *Meaning in life: Is it a protective factor for adolescents' psychological health.* International Society of Behavioural Medicine, *18,* 44-51.

Lipton, L., & Wellman, B. (2003). *Mentoring Matters: A practical guide to learning-focused relationships* (2nd ed). United States of America.

Lorsbach, A. W., & Jinks, J.L. (1999). Self-efficacy theory and learning environment research. *Learning Environments Research,* 2, 157-167.

Luthar, S.S., Cicchetti, D., & Becker, B. (2000). Reseach on resilience: Response to commentaries. *Child Development, 71(3),* 573-575.

Markus, G.B., Howard, J.P.F., & King, D.C. (1993). Integrating community service and classroom instruction enhances learning: results from an experiment. *Education and Policy Analysis, 15,* 410-419.

Masten, A.S., & Powell, J.L. (2003). A resilience framework for research, policy, and practice. *Resilience and Vulnerability: Adaptation in the Context of Childhood Adversities.* New York

Martinez, R.A. (2013). Healthy schools: the power of resiliency. *Leadership.* 12-14.

McCarthy, F.E. (2003). Service-learning as community engagement: exploring service-learning options within the practicum. *Asia- Pacific Journal of Teacher Education, 32(2*), 130-141.

Meier, D. (1995). The powerful of their ideas: lessons for America from a small school in Harlem. Boston: Beacon Press.

Mercer, S.H., Nellis, L.H., Martinez, R.S., & Kirk, M. (2011). Supporting the students most in need: Academic self-efficacy and perceived teacher support in relation to within- year academic growth. *Journal of School Psychology,* 49, 323-338.

National and Community Service Act. (1999). *National and Community Service Act of 1990.* Retrieved from http://nationalservice.gov/pdf/cncs_statue.pdf

O'Donnell, J., Michalak, E.A., & Ames. E.A. (1997). Inner-city youths helping children: after- school programs to promote bonding and reduce risk. *Journal of Social Workers, 19(4). 231-241.*

Ontario Ministry of Education. (2003). Building pathways to success: The report of the program pathways for students at risk work group. Retrieved March 31, 2015 from the Ontario Ministry of Education website: https://www.edu.gov.on.ca/eng/document/reports/pathways.pdf

Ontario Ministry of Education. (2005). Strategies for student success: Programs strategies, and resources to help students succeed in grades 7-12. Retrieved April 12, 2015 from the Ontario Ministry of Education website: https://www.edu.gov.on.ca/eng/studentsuccess/learning/files/strategies.pdf

Ontario Ministry of Education. (2009). The student success strategy. Retrieved April 5,

    2015 from the Ontario Ministry of Education website:

    http://www.edu.gov.on.ca/eng/teachers/studentsuccess/strategy.html

Ontario Ministry of Education. (2013). Getting results: Ontario's graduation rate.

    Retrieved April 5, 2015 from the Ontario Ministry of Education website:

    http://www.edu.gov.on.ca/eng/gettingresultsgrad.html

Ontario Ministry of Education. (2015). More Ontario students graduating high school

    than ever before: Ontario publishing board-by-board rates to help more students

    succeed. Retrieved April 10. 2015 from the Ontario Ministry of Education

    website:

    http://news.ontario.ca/opo/en/2015/04/more-ontario-students-graduating- high-

    school-than-ever-before.html

Pajares, F. (1996). Self-efficacy beliefs in academic settings. *Review of Educational*

    Research, 66, 543-578.

Pfaff, J. & Sirianni, K. (2014-2015). Leadership Experience for Academic Direction

    (LEAD). *Course Syllabus.* University of Windsor.

Perry, B., & Stewart, T. (2005). Insights into effective partnership in interdisciplinary

    team teaching. *System: An International Journal of Educational Technology and*

    Applied Linguistics, 33(4), 563-573.

Rama, D.V., Ravenscroft, S., Wolcott, S., & Zlotkowski, E. (2000). Guidelines for

    educators and researchers. *Issues in Accounting Education, 15,* 657-692.

Rew. L., & Horner. S.D. (2003). Youth resilience framework for reducing health risk

    behaviors in adolescents. *Journal of Pediatric Nursing, 18(6).* 379-388.

Rogus, J.F. (1983). Building an effective staff development program. A principal's

    checklist. *NASSP Bulletin, 67(461),* 8-16.

 Romer, D. (ed.) (2003). Reducing adolescent risk: Toward an integrated approach.

    Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Richard.J., & Vininh. A. (2004). Aboriginal off-reserve education: time for action. *C.D.*

    Howe Institute Commentary. 198. 1-29.

Richardson, G.E. (2002). The metatheory of resilience and resiliency. *Journal of Clinical*

    Psychology, 58(3), 307-321.

Roschelle, A., Turpin, R., & Elias, R. (2000). Who learns from service-learning? *The*

    American Behavioral Scientist, 43, 839-847.

Rumberger, R.W. (2001). Why students drop out and what can be done. Retrieved from:

    http://www.civilrightsproject.harvard.edu/research/dropouts/rumberger.pdf.

Saleebey, D. (1996). The strengths perspective in social work practice: Extensions and

    cautions. *Social work, 41(3),* 296-305.

Salinitri, G. & Essery, R. (2014). Leadership experience for academic directions

    (L.E.A.D.): A teacher education program for student success. *Pathways: The*

    Ontario Journal of Outdoor Education, 26.

Scales, P. (2005). *Developmental assets and the middle school counsellor.* Professional

    School Counselling, *9(2),* 104-111.

Schargel, F.P. & Smink, J. (2001). Strategies to help solve our school dropout problem.

    Larchment, NY: Eye on Education.

Schonert-Reichl, K. (2000). Children and youth at risk: Some conceptual considerations. In *PECERA Symposium report: Children and youth at risk. Canadian Education Statistics Council*. 9-10.

Short, J.L., & Russell-Mayhew, S. (2009). What counselors need to know about resiliency in adolescents. *International Journal for the Advancement of Counselling, 31(4),* 213-227.

Theron, L.C., & Engelbrecht. P. (2012). Caring teachers: teacher-youth transactions to promote resilience. *The Social Ecology of Resilience.* 265-280.

Tilleczek, K., & Ferguson, B. (2007). Transitions and pathways from elementary to secondary school: A review of selected literature. *Ontario Ministry of Education,* 1-46.

Tilleczek, K., & Lewko, J.H. (2011). Factors influencing the pursuits of health and science career pathways for Canadian adolescents in transition from work to school. *Journal of Youth Studies, 4(4),* 415-428.

Turk, R.L., Wolff, K., Waterburg, C., & Zumalt, J. (2002). What principals should know about building and maintaining teams. *EAF Journal, 21(1),* 23-I

Vickers, M., Harris, C., & McCarthy, F. (2004). University- community engagement: exploring service learning options within the practicums. *Asia-Pacific Journal of Teacher Education, 32(2),* 130-141.

Villa, R.A. (1992). Restructuring for caring and effective education: An administrative guide to creating heterogeneous schools. Baltimore.

Wang, R.H., Hsu, H.Y., Lin, S.Y., Cheng, C.P., & Lee, S.L. (2010). Risk behaviours among early adolescents: Risk and protective factors. *Journal of advanced nursing, 66(2)*, 313-323.

Werner, E. E. (2013). What can we learn about resilience from large-scale longitudinal studies?. In *Handbook of resilience in children* (pp. 87-102). Springer US.

Wheeler, M.E., Keller, T.E., & DuBois, D.L. (2010). Review of three recent randomized trials of school based mentoring: Making sense of mixed findings. *Society for Research in Child Development Social Policy Report, 24(3)*, 3-27.

Wiggins, R.A., Follo, E.J., & Eberly, M.B. (2007). The impact of a field immersion program on pre-service teachers' attitudes toward teaching in culturally diverse classrooms. *Teaching and Teacher Education, 23(5)*, 653-663.

Willms, J. D. (2003). Literacy proficiency of youth: Evidence of converging socioeconomic gradients. *International Journal of Educational Research*, *39*(3), 247-252.

Woolfolk, A. (1998). *Educational psychology* (7th ed.) USA: Allyn-Bacon.

APPENDIX A

Advantages of Thematic Data Analysis

Table 3: Advantages of Thematic Analysis

Flexibility.
Relatively easy and quick method to learn, and do.
Accessible to researchers with little or no experience of qualitative research.
Results are generally accessible to educated general public.
Useful method for working within participatory research paradigm, with participants as collaborators.
Can usefully summarise key features of a large body of data, and/or offer a 'thick description' of the data set.
Can highlight similarities *and* differences across the data set.
Can generate unanticipated insights.
Allows for social as well as psychological interpretations of data.
Can be useful for producing qualitative analyses suited to informing policy development.

APPENDIX B

LETTER OF INFORMATION TO THE SUPERINTENDENTS

Good Afternoon Dr. Clara Howett,

On behalf of myself, Dana Pizzo, as well as the University of Windsor Faculty of Education, I would like to thank your schools for previously hosting teacher candidates as they work closely alongside the Student Success Teachers to implement the *LEAD* program to promote resiliency skills and academic success for your students.

LEAD is the focus of my thesis, *Student Success Teachers (SSTs) Perspectives on Implementing the LEAD Program with Teacher Candidates*. I am now moving forward into the data portion of my research, and I am inviting your current and/or former SSTs to volunteer to partake in my research. To do so, interviews will be emailed directly to each SSTs and they can respond at a convenient time for them. The purpose of these interviews is to explore the SSTs perspectives on the *LEAD* program, as well as exploring their personal experiences with the program and how it can be further improved for future years. At any point throughout this research process, all participants have the right to withdraw, without any consequences. I have included a copy of my REB, Letter of Information and the Interview Questions for your records. I will also forward you my REB Clearance letter that I received that allows me to proceed with this research.

Thank you once again for your cooperation with the *LEAD* program and if you have any questions, please don't hesitate to ask.

Yours in education,
Dana Pizzo

B.H.K Honours, B.Ed., OCT,
M.Ed Candidate
Faculty of Education
University of Windsor

APPENDIX B

LETTER OF INFORMATION TO THE SUPERINTENDENTS

Good Afternoon Mr. Mike Segin,

On behalf of myself, Dana Pizzo, as well as the University of Windsor Faculty of Education, I would like to thank your schools for previously hosting teacher candidates as they work closely alongside the Student Success Teachers to implement the *LEAD/ DYP* program to promote resiliency skills and academic success for your students.

LEAD is the focus of my thesis, *Student Success Teachers (SST) Perspectives on Implementing the LEAD Program with Teacher Candidates*. I am now moving forward into the data portion of my research, and I am inviting your current and/or former SSTs to volunteer to partake in my research. To do so, interviews will be emailed directly to each SSTs and they can respond at a convenient time for them. The purpose of these interviews is to explore the SSTs perspectives on the *LEAD* program, as well as exploring their personal experiences with the program and how it can be further improved for future years. At any point throughout this research process, all participants have the right to withdraw, without any consequences. I have included a copy of my REB, Letter of Information and the Interview Questions for your records. I will also forward you my REB Clearance letter that I received that allows me to proceed with this research.

Thank you once again for your cooperation with the *LEAD* program and if you have any questions, please don't hesitate to ask.

Yours in education,
Dana Pizzo

B.H.K Honours, B.Ed., OCT,
M.Ed Candidate
Faculty of Education
University of Windsor

APPENDIX C

University of Windsor

LETTER TO ALL PRINCIPALS AND SSTs

Good Afternoon Principals and Student Success Teachers,

On behalf of myself, Dana Pizzo, as well as the University of Windsor Faculty of Education, I would like to thank your schools for previously hosting teacher candidates as they work closely alongside the Student Success Teachers to implement the *LEAD* program to promote resiliency skills and academic success for your students.

As you may know, *LEAD* is the focus of my thesis, *Student Success Teachers (SST) Perspectives on Implementing the LEAD Program with Teacher Candidates.* I am now moving forward into the data portion of my research, and I am inviting you and/or former SST to partake in my research. To do so, I would like to conduct structured interviews with the selected participants that volunteer to take part in this study. Interviews will be emailed directly to each SST and they can respond at a convenient time for them. The purpose of these interviews is to explore the SSTs perspectives on the *LEAD* program, as well as exploring their personal experiences with the program and how it can be further improved for future years. At any point throughout this research process, all participants have the right to withdraw, without any consequences. I have included the consent form for your consideration. In order for participants to participate in this study, the consent form needs to be read and signed.

This research project was approved by the Research Ethics Board, University of Windsor. If research subject have any questions or concerns about their rights or treatments as subjects, they may contact the Chair of the Research Ethics Board at (519)-253-3000 ext. 3948 or by email: ethics@uwindsor.ca. All information received from respondents will be held in strict confidence. Please note that this study is completely voluntary.

If you are interested in contributing to this research study, please respond to the sample questions for student success interview by Tuesday April 21st, 2015.

Thank you once again for your cooperation with the *LEAD* program and supporting this research endeavor.

Yours in education,
Dana Pizzo

B.H.K Honours, B.Ed., OCT,
M.Ed Candidate
Faculty of Education
University of Windsor

APPENDIX D

<div align="center">

CONSENT TO PARTICIPATE IN RESEARCH

</div>

Title of Study:
Leadership Experience for Academic Direction (LEAD): Perspectives from the Student Success Teachers

You are asked to participate in a research study conducted by **Dana Pizzo**, from the **Faculty of Education** at the University of Windsor under the supervision of **Dr. Salinitri**. The results of this study will help improve the *LEAD* program at the Faculty of Education and Academic Development as our facilitators and teacher candidates work closely alongside SSTs within our local secondary schools.

If you have any questions or concerns about the research, please feel to contact:

Dana Pizzo   *Dr. Geri Salinitri*
                                 519-253-3000 ext. 3961
                                 sgeri@uwindsor.ca

PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

  Eight years have been invested into the *LEAD* program at the University of Windsor's Faculty of Education and Academic Development in partnership with both our local school boards, Windsor Essex Catholic District School Board (WECDSB) and Greater Essex County District School Board (GECDSB), implementing a program to increase resiliency in our in-risk youth and help provide them with the skills they need to achieve academic success throughout their secondary school experience.

  The purpose of this study is to explore the perspectives of our local SSTs on implementing the *LEAD* program alongside teacher candidates as one of their initiatives for student success.

PROCEDURES

 If you volunteer to participate in this study, you will be asked to participate in a structured interview process that involves predetermined questions made by the researcher, Dana Pizzo. Each interview will be emailed to the SSTs. Each SST will offer a different perspective to the topic, thereby strengthening the understanding of what it means to achieve student success with in-risk youth throughout their school community.

 Individuals have the ability to withdraw from the research at any point without consequences. If participants do decide to withdraw, their data will be removed from the study.

POTENTIAL RISKS AND DISCOMFORTS

There is no intention on the part of the investigators to include any psychological or social risks to the participants, given that all interviews are conducted on a voluntary basis. To minimize the risk, the session will begin with informal conversations regarding their role in the *LEAD* program as part of their Student Success program. If participants feel as though they are at-risk, they have the ability to withdraw at any point from the study and their contributions to the study will be removed.

POTENTIAL BENEFITS TO PARTICIPANTS AND/OR TO SOCIETY

The goal of this research is to share experiences and provide feedback on the challenges and benefits of implementing the *LEAD* program alongside teacher candidates from the Faculty of Education and Academic Development. This study will expand on current practices of SSTs, professors, and teacher candidates on ways to improve the educational experiences for in-risk youth in secondary schools, and provide suggestions to strengthen the *LEAD* program that is being facilitated to teacher candidates during their pre-service year.

COMPENSATION FOR PARTICIPATION

Participants will not receive any form of compensation for participating in this study.

CONFIDENTIALITY

Any information that is obtained in connection with this study and that can be identified with you will remain confidential and will be disclosed only with your permission. Confidentiality may not be kept throughout the whole research because SSTs do know each other and may communicate with one another when implementing the *LEAD* program as part of their school's initiatives for student success.

To ensure confidentiality, the school that you belong to will only be available to the lead researcher (Dana Pizzo) and Dr. Geri Salinitri.

PARTICIPATION AND WITHDRAWAL

This study is completely voluntary for all participants. The investigator may withdraw you from this research if circumstances arise which warrant doing so. Any participants interested in participating all have the right to withdraw at any point prior to the anonymization of the data. At that point, all data contribution will remain in the study. There will be no consequences if participants decide to withdraw from the study.

FEEDBACK OF THE RESULTS OF THIS STUDY TO THE PARTICIPANTS

Participants will be emailed with a short but informative summary of the findings that was shared amongst the SSTs participating in this research.

Web address: _____

Date when results are available: _____

SUBSEQUENT USE OF DATA

These data may be used in subsequent studies, in publications and in presentations.

RIGHTS OF RESEARCH PARTICIPANTS

If you have questions regarding your rights as a research participant, contact: Research Ethics Coordinator, University of Windsor, Windsor, Ontario, N9B 3P4; Telephone: 519-253-3000, ext. 3948; e-mail: ethics@uwindsor.ca

SIGNATURE OF RESEARCH PARTICIPANT/LEGAL REPRESENTATIVE

I understand the information provided for the study **Student Success Teachers Perspectives on the *LEAD* program** as described herein. My questions have been answered to my satisfaction, and I agree to participate in this study. I have been given a copy of this form. I understand this is completely voluntary and I have the right to withdraw at any point, without consequences. I understand confidentiality will be respected throughout this research and that the audiotape will be for professional use only. I have been given a copy of this form.

_____

Name of Participant

_____   _____

Signature of Participant   Date

SIGNATURE OF INVESTIGATOR

These are the terms under which I will conduct research.

_____   _____

Signature of Investigator   Date

University of Windsor

LETTER OF INFORMATION FOR CONSENT TO PARTICIPATE IN RESEARCH

Title of Study:

Leadership Experience for Academic Direction (LEAD): Perspectives from the Student Success Teachers.

You are asked to participate in a research study conducted by **Dana Pizzo**, from the **Faculty of Education** at the University of Windsor under the supervision of **Dr. Salinitri**. The results of this study will help improve the LEAD program at the Faculty of Education and Academic Development as our facilitators and teacher candidates work closely alongside SSTs within our local secondary schools.

If you have any questions or concerns about the research, please feel to contact:

Dana Pizzo　　　　　　　*Dr. Geri Salinitri*
　　　　　　　　　　　　　519-253-3000 ext. 3961
　　　　　　　　　　　　　sgeri@uwindsor.ca

PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

　　Eight years have been invested into the *LEAD* program at the University of Windsor's Faculty of Education and Academic Development in partnership with both our local school boards, Windsor Essex Catholic District School Board (WECDSB) and Greater Essex County District School Board (GECDSB), implementing a program to increase resiliency in our in-risk youth and help provide them with the skills they need to achieve academic success throughout their secondary school experience.

　　The purpose of this study is to explore the perspectives of our local SSTs on implementing the *LEAD* program alongside teacher candidates as one of their initiatives for student success.

PROCEDURES

　　If you volunteer to participate in this study, you will be asked to participate in a structured interview process that involves predetermined questions made by the researcher, Dana Pizzo. Each interview will be emailed out to the SSTs. Each SST will offer a different perspective to the topic, thereby strengthening the understanding of what it means to achieve student success with in-risk youth throughout their school community.

　　Individuals have the ability to withdraw from the research at any point without consequences. If participants do decide to withdraw, their data will be removed from the study.

POTENTIAL RISKS AND DISCOMFORTS

　　There is no intention on the part of the investigators to include any psychological or social risks to the participants, given that all interviews are conducted on a voluntary basis. To minimize the risk, the session will begin with informal conversations regarding

their role in the *LEAD* program as part of their Student Success program. If participants feel as though they are at-risk, they have the ability to withdraw at any point from the study and their contributions to the study will be removed.

POTENTIAL BENEFITS TO PARTICIPANTS AND/OR TO SOCIETY

The goal of this research is to share experiences and provide feedback on the challenges and benefits of implementing the *LEAD* program alongside teacher candidates from the Faculty of Education and Academic Development. This study will expand on current practices of SSTs, professors, and teacher candidates on ways to improve the educational experiences for in-risk youth in secondary schools, and provide suggestions to strengthen the *LEAD* program that is being facilitated to teacher candidates during their pre-service year.

COMPENSATION FOR PARTICIPATION

Participants will not receive any form of compensation for participating in this study.

CONFIDENTIALITY

Any information that is obtained in connection with this study and that can be identified with you will remain confidential and will be disclosed only with your permission. Confidentiality may not be kept throughout the whole research because SSTs do know each other and may communicate with one another when implementing the *LEAD* program as part of their school's initiatives for student success.

To ensure confidentiality, the school that you belong to will only be available to the lead researcher (Dana Pizzo) and Dr. Geri Salinitri.

PARTICIPATION AND WITHDRAWAL

This study is completely voluntary for all participants. The investigator may withdraw you from this research if circumstances arise which warrant doing so. Any participants interested in participating all have the right to withdraw at any point prior to the anonymization of the data. At that point, all data contribution will remain in the study. There will be no consequences if participants decide to withdraw from the study.

FEEDBACK OF THE RESULTS OF THIS STUDY TO THE PARTICIPANTS

Participants will be emailed with a short but informative summary of the findings that was shared amongst the SSTs participating in this research.

Web address: _____

Date when results are available: _____

SUBSEQUENT USE OF DATA

These data may be used in subsequent studies, in publications and in presentations.

RIGHTS OF RESEARCH PARTICIPANTS

If you have questions regarding your rights as a research participant, contact: Research Ethics Coordinator, University of Windsor, Windsor, Ontario, N9B 3P4; Telephone: 519-253-3000, ext. 3948; e-mail: ethics@uwindsor.ca

SIGNATURE OF INVESTIGATOR

These are the terms under which I will conduct research.

_____   _____
Signature of Investigator   Date

APPENDIX F

University
of Windsor

CONSENT FOR AUDIO TAPING

Research Subject Name:

Leadership Experience for Academic Direction *(LEAD)*: Perspectives
from the Student Success Teachers

I consent to be audio recorded during the interview process to
ensure data is accurate during the transcription phase.

I understand these are voluntary procedures and that I am free to
withdraw at any time by requesting that the taping be stopped. I also
understand that my name will not be revealed to anyone and that taping
will be kept confidential. Tapes are filed by number only and store in a
locked cabinet.

The destruction of the audiotapes will be completed after
transcription and verification.

I understand that confidentiality will be respected and that the
audiotape will be for professional use only.

_____
(Signature of Participant)

APPENDIX G

University of Windsor

Sample Questions for Student Success Interview

I am here to interview you about your perceptions of the *LEAD* program, as well as your own experiences on the challenges and benefits with implementing the program alongside teacher candidates. This course is designed to introduce pre-service candidates in the intermediate senior division to Ministry of Education Student Success initiatives. During their practicum, candidates will become part of the Student Success Team in participating schools to develop a foundation for mentoring and an understanding of pathways to success for secondary students designated 'in risk'. The *LEAD* course will provide teacher candidates with opportunities to work directly with vulnerable youth within a service-learning framework.

Background Information
1. Your name *(First)*_____*(Last)*_____
2. Your school name
3. Are you a current or former SST?
4. Number of years you have been a SST.
5. Number of years you have worked with the *LEAD* program.
6. List the different service learning projects your *LEAD* teacher candidates implemented this year.

1. Explain your understanding of the *LEAD* program?

2. Please outline your involvement in the *LEAD* program over the year.

3. After implementing this program, what do you think could be done to improve the effectiveness of the *LEAD* program as part of your student success initiative?

4. Has the *LEAD* program benefited you in-risk students? Please explain.

5. Explain your experiences with working alongside *LEAD* teacher candidates?

6. How many *LEAD* teacher candidates should be placed per SST? Explain your reasoning.

7. Have you noticed or recognized any changes in the way students accept responsibility, as well as deal with consequences, for their actions after participating in the *LEAD* program? Please explain.

8. Have you noticed or recognized any changes in regards to how students cope with stress, pressure or challenging situations after participating in the *LEAD* program? Please explain.

9. Have you noticed or recognized any changes in attitude and outlook from students who participated in the *LEAD* program?

10. What suggestions can you give to enhance the *LEAD* program, both at the faculty and during placement?

11. Is there anything we can do at the faculty to have our teacher candidates better prepared to work with in-risk youth?

80-207 LEAD The Service-Learning Project
Assignment Value: 45% of course grade

Description: Many schools have implemented Service-Learning to promote active democratic citizenship and help resolve societal problems. Service-Learning connects community service to the curriculum, meets a community need, is collaborative in design, and includes four essential elements:

- Planning
- Service Implementation
- Structured reflection
- Recognition of accomplishments

Objectives: To develop follow-up leadership activities and school initiatives that promote positive thinking and service to the community among the youth in-risk and an in-class presentation (video).

Expectations: To design, implement and evaluate a service-learning project that involves teacher-candidates, Student Success Teams, and in-risk students. The Service-Learning Project is broken up into four components:

1) Project Proposal (5%) Due date: November 13th (Week 6) Each Service Learning Project group must submit a proposal to be reviewed prior to the commencement of the initiative within the schools. Each proposal should include the following information:

- Name of project/ initiative
- Proposed date/ timeline of project
- Rational (What is the project/ initiative? Why is it important?)
- One hard copy submission of the project proposal is due per group.

2) Video Presentation (10%)

Each Service-Learning Project group must create and submit a short (3-5 minute) video presentation, which will sell their school initiative. The video creation will be similar to a Public Service Announcement in that it will serve to promote an idea (these videos will be used to promote the *LEAD* program as well). Feel free to use images and/or video from the event itself (if applicable)

3) Project Binder (10%)

Due date: March 12th (Week 15)Your binder submission should include (but is not limited to) the following elements:

- Rationale (what is the project for and why is this initiative important?
- Detailed instructions on how to properly organize and run the project (be sure to
- Include your target audience)
- Informational handout (flyer, brochure, etc.)
- Promotional poster
- Any supporting resources (PowerPoint, books, websites, video, etc.)

Self and Peer Assessments (each person should submit one self assessment and a peer assessment for each group member)**These will be handed in individually by each person. The assessment forms can be found on CLEW in the Resources section under Class Assignments. One hard copy submission of the project binder is due per group.

 4) Fundraising for SLP *(LEAD)* **(10%)** An important aspect of teaching is coming up with innovative ways of fundraising for class trips, projects and outings. While *LEAD* does garner financial support from the Public and Catholic school boards, the financial constraints faced by all stakeholders within education require for additional fundraising to occur. *LEAD* candidates will be required to plan a fundraiser to support the *LEAD* program.

APPENDIX I

University of Windsor
Faculty of Education
and Academic Development

**LEAD Teacher Candidate Summative Report -
Probationary**

TEACHER CANDIDATE:_____

(Last Name)   (First Name)

SST: _____   **SCHOOL**: _____

Performance Expectations	Success Criteria	Development Needed	Meets Expectation
Initiative	• Demonstrates a willingness to take on new tasks and challenges • Successfully completes most tasks independently but asks for additional support, as appropriate, when faced with unfamiliar tasks or situations • Contributes new ideas; is a self-starter; looks for ways to add value to the learning environment • Plans ahead for upcoming problems or opportunities and takes appropriate action; recognizes and acts upon opportunities.		
Critical Thinking / Problem Solving	• Considers the school's priorities and initiatives when making decisions and is willing to look at alternative issues when necessary • Acknowledges when one doesn't know something and takes steps to find out • Identifies problems and recommended solutions to others rather than just identifying or describing the problem itself • Demonstrates willingness to change ideas or perceptions based on new information or contrary evidence		
Connecting to Students	• Models and promotes the joy of learning for all educational pathways • Effectively prompts and motivates students to improve student learning • Demonstrates a positive and professional rapport with students • Promotes polite, genuine and respectful student interactions		
Collegial / Collaborative	• Puts in extra effort when needed to help others • Proactively shares relevant or useful information regarding student learning and keeps other team members up to date. • Co-operates to meet team goals even at expense of personal preferences • Accepts constructive feedback in a positive manner with a willingness to learn • Considers others' input and expertise; is willing to learn from others		
School Specific Expectations	**Co-Constructed Success Criteria**	**Development Needed**	**Meets Expectation**

University of Windsor
Faculty of Education and Academic Development

LEAD Teacher Candidate Summative Report - Probationary

OVERALL ASSESSMENT:

Areas of Strength:	Provide suggestions for improvement:

Overall Performance Assessment: If a LEAD teacher candidate is experiencing serious difficulties in the placement and is at risk of receiving a "Borderline" or "Unsatisfactory" Summative report, consultation with the Faculty of Education and Academic Development is required.

_____
Signature(s) of Student Success Teacher(s) or Principal submitting this report   Date

_____
Signature of LEAD teacher candidate   Date
(Indicates receipt of the report, not necessarily agreement with its content)

APPENDIX J

University of Windsor

'Leadership Experience for Academic Direction'
LEAD Candidate Profile 2015-16

Name: _____   *Email:* _____

School Board (Circle one):   GECDSB   WEDCSB   *Student #:* _____

Male/Female/Other: _____   *Division (J/I or I/S)* _____

Teachable #1: _____   *#2:* _____

Residential Location (City or County or No Preference):
_____

General availability for extra-curricular/LEAD involvement:

1. Do you have experience with the L.E.A.D. program (ex. HK mentorship) or other similar programs?
   ☐ No
   ☐ Yes
      If yes, please explain:

2. What experience (outside academics) have contributed to your desire to work as part of the LEAD Program?

3. Why do you believe you are a good candidate for the LEAD Program?

5. Name 2-3 **specific** goals/outcomes (and explain) that you would like to obtain from the LEAD Program.

Signature: _____   Date: _____

VITA AUCTORIS

NAME:	Dana L. Pizzo
PLACE OF BIRTH:	Windsor, ON
YEAR OF BIRTH:	1989
EDUCATION:	**B.A. Honours Kinesiology, 2011**
	University of Windsor, Windsor, ON

B.A. Honours Kinesiology, 2011
University of Windsor, Windsor, ON

B.A. Psychology, 2012
University of Windsor, Windsor, ON

B.Ed Intermediate/ Senior, 2013
University of Windsor, Windsor, ON

M.Ed with Thesis, Educational Administration, 2016
University of Windsor, Windsor, ON