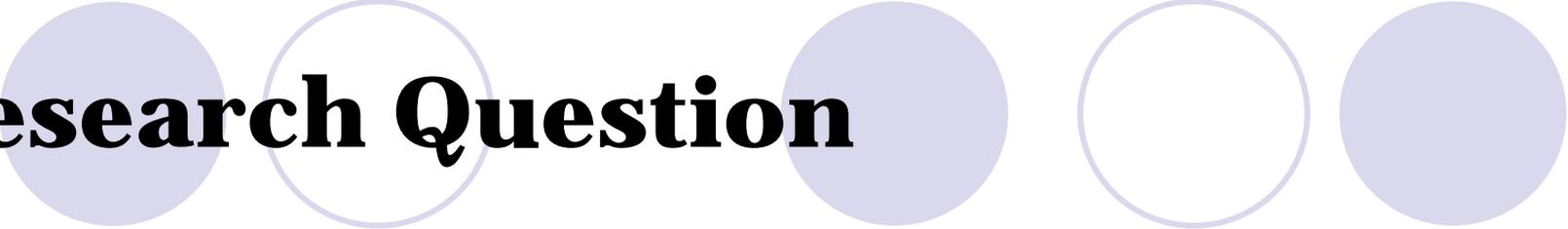


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What Has Become of the Graduates of the Trinity College Saturday Academy?

Courtney Doyle
Senior Research Project



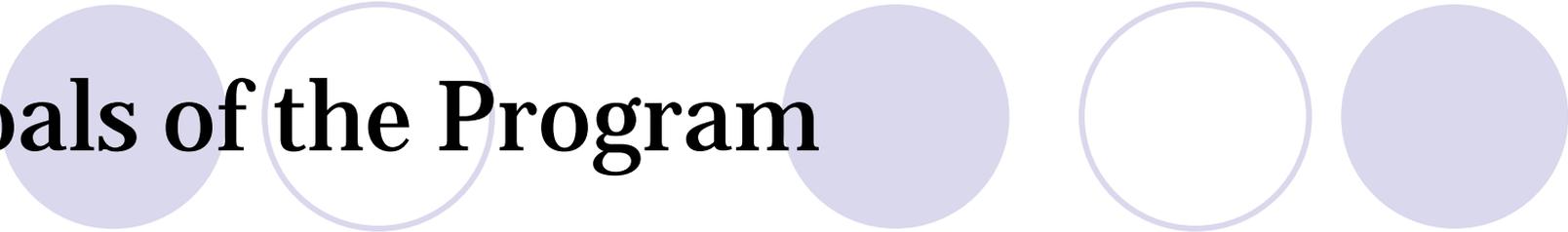
Research Question

- **What educational and career paths have graduates of the Trinity College Saturday Academy followed and how do both parents and graduates perceive the long-term benefits on their lives?**

Background of the Saturday Academy

- Nationally recognized educational enrichment program for 7th and 8th grade students and parents.
- Created in 1984 by Aetna as means to counteract problems facing Hartford's educational system, i.e. high dropout rates.
- Used to have 6 other locations but all phased out by 1997.
- Academic Subjects addressed: math, communication skills, computers, and science.
- Also participate in workshops, field trips, Diversity Day, Career/Education Fair
- Large parental component
- 1997 – Trinity College, CT Dept. of Higher Ed. and GEAR UP.

Goals of the Program



- Provide education enrichment opportunities for 7th and 8th grade students in math, science, communications, and computer technology.
- Raise educational aspirations by exposing link between higher education and economic success
- Empower parents to become more effective partners in helping children achieve their academic potential
- Motivate students to reach educational goals
- Expose parents and students to early college awareness
- Encourage and increase minority and disadvantaged student enrollment in college.

Significance to Educational Studies

- A Hartford Primer & Field Guide

- Supports the need for programs with goals similar to those of the Saturday Academy

- Hartford has the largest school system in the region but also the most troubled

- 1998-2000: 22,458 students in Hartford compared to next largest, West Hartford, with 9,044 students.
- 1998-2000: dropout rate of 51%, and only a 52% rate of students pursuing higher education.
- In 2000, of the three public high schools in Hartford combined only 544 students were graduated.

Significance to Educational Studies

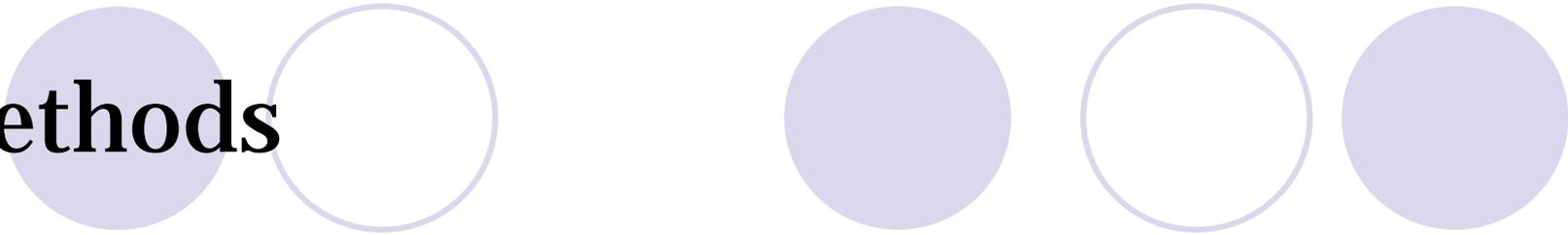
- Carnegie Council on Adolescent Development

- “middle school years are a critical turning point when attitudes toward educational achievement are shaped. Many students, particularly those who are disadvantaged...are less likely to pursue higher education”
- Saturday Academy designed as means to curb these things from happening.

- “Where Need Meets Opportunity: Youth Development Programs for Early Teens” by Jane Quinn

- “Early adolescence is a time of burgeoning independence, autonomy, and focus on peers. It is also a time when individual interests, skills, and preferences become salient to young people.”

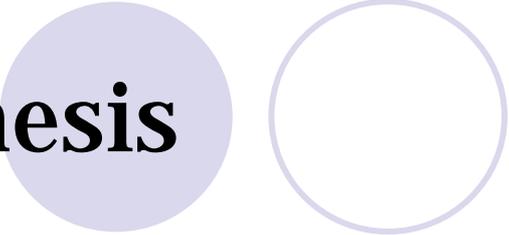
Methods



- Approval of IRB – following ethical guidelines
- Sent out 151 surveys to original cohort, only 1 returned.
- Lack of response lead to broadened cohort and addition of parents.
- Tape recorded phone interviews of 3 parents and 1 graduate and 4 graduate surveys. Total: 3 parents, 6 graduates.

Participants

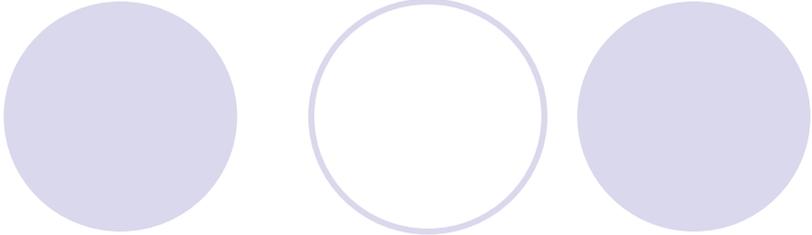
Jane, 18: Project Concern to Providence College, RI	Phone interview	No parent interview
Abbey, 19: Sport Sci. Acad. to CCSU, CT	Survey returned in mail	No parent interview
Jessica, 13 CMP – Quirk MS.	Survey	Parent 1 Interviewed
Sarah, 17: Shiloh to Pensacola Christian Univ., FL	No interview	Parent 2 Interviewed
Mary, 21: NWCHS to Wesleyan Univ., CT	Survey	Parent 3 Interviewed
John, 17 NWCHS, CT '04	Survey	Parent 3 Interviewed
Total = 6 Graduates	---	Total = 3 Parents



Thesis

Part I

- Since their experience at the Saturday Academy, most graduates have continued their secondary and higher education through private or parochial institutions, rather than public ones. With these secondary educations, most graduates are pursuing specific educational, and thus career goals and/or ideas.



Part II

- Both parents and graduates tend to think positively about the benefits of the program, but for different reasons.
 - Parents – more focused on emotional and social benefits
 - Graduates – more focused on positive influence of specific academic skills of the program.

Thesis Part I: Interpretation and Analysis

What have become of graduates? Trends.

- Though residing in Hartford, most graduates did not attend Hartford public schools for high school – 5 out of 6.
- 3 out of 6 are currently attending private or parochial colleges, with a 4th intending to in the Fall of 2004.
- 5 out of 6, simply stated, are *going to college*, and all are 4 year institutions.
- Mostly all have a specific educational goal leading to a specific career field.

Thesis Part II : Interpretation and Analysis

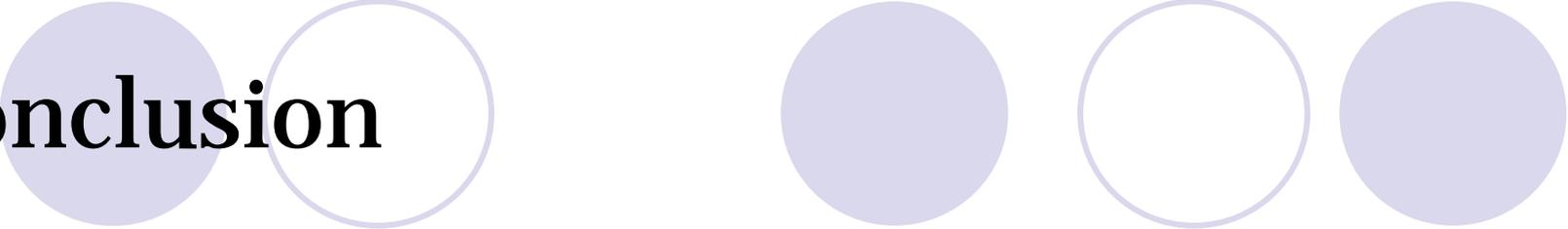
Parents' Perception

Parent 1 (daughter)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">● “she was born in Africa, and she has really had to adjust to American culture, American education so I just thought it would be a good idea to give her as much exposure as I can.”● “there were a lot of children there...they started to bond more as a result of the SA.”
Parent 2 (daughter)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">● “We were just trying to accommodate her...to assist her socially.”● “She wanted to go...it was a great experience for her.”
Parent 3 (2 children)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">● “I think it was good for the kids socially to have their parents there.”● “it helps a lot of kids I saw begin to open their eyes to the possibilities”● “they make new friends...parents are there and the parents get to know the parents...that’s building community.”

Thesis Part II : Interpretation and Analysis

Students' Perception

- More focused on academic skills acquired.
 - 4 out of 6 mentioned public speaking skills learned
 - 2 out of 6 mentioned math
 - 3 out of 6 mentioned science
 - 1 out of 6 mentioned computer skills (Power Point)



Conclusion

- All 6 graduates that were interviewed or surveyed are currently on solid courses with their educations. Most have a set career in mind.
- Both parents and graduates feel that the Saturday Academy was beneficial in their lives.

Opportunities for Further Research

- Increased participation.
- Interviews with teachers of program.
- Why are programs such as this being cut when they are clearly having an impact on the lives of those that experience them?