**UNDERSTANDING LOW INCOME URBAN BLACK FAMILIES'
PERCEPTIONS OF EDUCATION**

By

Deianna L. Tyree

A thesis submitted to the faculty of the University of Delaware in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Science with a major in Individual and Family Studies

Spring 2007

UMI Number: 1444685

UMI

LOW INCOME URBAN AFRICAN AMERICAN FAMILIES' PERCEPTIONS OF EDUCATION

By

Deianna L. Tyree

Approved: _____
      Michael Gamel-McCormick, Ph.D.
      Professor in charge of thesis on behalf of the Advisory Committee

Approved: _____
      Michael Gamel-McCormick, Ph.D.
      Chair of the Department of Individual and Family Studies

Approved: _____
      Timothy K. Barnekov, Ph.D.
      Dean of the College of Human Services, Education & Public Policy

Approved: _____
      Carolyn A. Thoroughgood, Ph.D.
      Vice Provost for Research and Graduate Studies

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

There are many people who I am indebted to both professionally and personally for their help in completion of this project.

I want to thank Poppy and Granny, my grandparents. Granny, you taught me the importance of education and the foolishness of letting an educational opportunity slip away. Poppy, there is no better example of hard work, strength and innate intelligence that is within our family even though none of us were formally educated. I have always wanted to make you both proud and I hope that I will. Thank you both for caring for Makai when I couldn't due to work or school.

Thanks Danielle, my beloved sister for setting a wonderful example and for providing help with Makai and critiquing my work. Ali- thanks for helping me with technology.

Thanks Mommy for teaching me a good work ethic and for supporting my decision to go to college. You were selfless in providing countless hours of care for my son so that I could complete classes, assignments and ultimately this effort. Without you, this would not have been possible.

Thanks to Ms. Doris for your never ending generosity and your instrumental help with Makai. Thanks also for gently prodding me to get this thing done. Arri, I pray that

we can help set high goals for our son and that we can help him attain them. Thanks for your patience.

Makai, you are my true inspiration. I hope that I am showing you that education is both fun and necessary. You continue to amaze me with your natural curiosity.

For my dear friend Nona, you have been a constant cheerleader. Thank you from the bottom of my heart for not letting this dream fade. Thanks also for practical help with revising and editing.

My sincere appreciation to Maria Palacas and the McNair Program for believing in me and getting me started on my scholarly journey.

And of course, thank you to my advisor and chair, Michael. You understood this research from the beginning and encouraged me to continue it. You are a great example to first generation college students and a great leader. I also appreciate the input of my other faculty advisors Martha, Bahira and Norma. Thank you to my fellow grad students.

I am so grateful that I had this road to travel with each one of you. I am blessed to have had the opportunity. Ultimate thanks to God for his blessings and love.

This manuscript is dedicated with love to my grandfather,
Truman Theodore Tyree
September 09, 1938- April 08, 2007

TABLE OF CONTENTS

APPENDICIES

LIST OF TABLES

TABLES

ABSTRACT

This qualitative study describes the attitudes and actions of low income inner city Black families regarding educational aspirations for their children. This research is different from previous research in that it accounts for the role that the grandparent, specifically the grandmother, plays in shaping and guiding educational goals. Prior research suggests that the extended family and elders are uniquely important to Black families (Stack, 1979). Though there are many research studies focusing on the educational aspirations of youth, little if any research has examined the multi generational aspect of educational goal setting and the strategies that parents and grandparents employ to steer their children toward the goal. The research seeks to challenge part of the misinterpreted Culture of Poverty Theory and uses the ecological model to illuminate the multi generational attitudes of low income inner city Black families toward education.

Chapter 1

INTRODUCTION

Statement of the Problem

Education for low income inner city Black youth is currently in crisis (McClafferrty, Torres & Mitchell, 2000) and is finally gaining the attention that it is due as evidenced by the No Child Left Behind Act of 2002; the act is the first large scale reform passed by Congress in forty years (Wanker & Christie, 2005; US Department of Education, 2001). The crises in inner city schools with mostly minority populations are almost innumerable. Policymakers have long known that inner city public schools do not have comparable facilities, space, instructors, and materials as do other schools, they are essentially unequal (Kozol, 1991; Monk, 1981; Roscigno, 1996; Sutton, 1991; Wise & Gendler, 1989). Schools in many cities remain segregated based on class and race (Bankston & Caldas, 1996; Kozol, 1991; National Center for Education statistics [NCES], 2006). Violence in inner city schools has caused not only security guards, walkie-talkies and search wands to be a mainstay, but schools are now recruiting uniformed police officers to quell violence (Lopez, 2003). Teachers in inner city schools face a greater threat of victimization than do teachers in rural or suburban school (NCES, 2005a) this violence, or perceived threat of violence often leads to teachers leaving urban school or the profession altogether (Smith & Smith, 2006). In this backdrop of complete

chaos and lack of resources low income inner city Black youth continue to under perform when compared to other groups. The educational achievement gap between Black students and their White counterparts (Jacobson, 2001; Lee, 2002; Ogbu, 1991; Rouse, Brooks-Gunn & McLanahan, 2005; U.S. Department of Education, 2005) may in fact be the result of the aforementioned crises or gaps.

These differences in academic achievement follow Black youth through adolescence, into young adulthood, through adulthood and into old age. Although rates of high school completion have increased for all races since 1972 (NCES, 2006), Black students drop out of high school more often than White students but less frequently than Hispanic students (NCES, 2001). The majority of dropouts are low-income followed by middle income and upper incomes (NCES, 2001). Black students do not enroll in college and do not graduate from college in the same patterns that White students do (Jacobson, 2001; NCES, 2005b) (http://www.infoplease.com/ipa/A0779196.html). What is at first glance a problem of school age children and families becomes a problem for children as they develop and seek adult functions. Lower education attainment is related to future low income (NCES, 2004). Low income living is associated with many social problems including poor physical health and lack of healthcare, malnutrition, homelessness lower birth weights and or deaths for neonates and a lower life expectancy (Jaynes & Williams, 1989; Leland, 1990; National Center for Health Statistics, 2005). There is an overwhelming recognition that the disparities in educational quality and longevity have long lasting effects on an individual's life chances as related not only to employment, but to health and death.

Related to the concerns with low income inner city minority students' receiving a substandard education and thereby underperforming is the idea that these students and their families do not value education. Some argue that the low income urban minority student can look to his or her own family and inward to find the only source of their failure; some have labeled the educational crisis as a cultural crisis. The idea that low income urban minority people are deficient, delinquent or just plain different allows American citizens and politicians to avoid dealing with poverty (Gans, 1997). The idea that the poor, especially the Black urban poor are an "underclass" with different morals than the middle class affects the way that the poor are treated by society, namely by teachers, healthcare providers, the courts, the bus driver etc… (Gans, 1997).

Purpose

The purpose of the research is to come closer to understanding the ways that low income urban Black families perceive higher education. This study attempts to understand the actions that low income inner city Black mothers and grandmothers take to try to shape their children's views about the importance of education. The study seeks to understand the barriers as well as opportunities that mothers and grandmothers see within the educational system, the community and their individual children. The study further seeks to refute part of the myth that low income urban minorities are wholly responsible for their poverty by their actions (or inactions) surrounding educational goal setting and attainment. Another purpose of the study was to give low income Black families a voice and an opportunity to be part of the larger dialogue about societal

elements and issues which directly affect their children, families, neighborhood and schools, and life chances.

The reader should note that efforts were made to include adult males in the sample of parents and grandparents, but this was not possible; therefore this research is specific to mothers and grandmothers as educational definers and facilitators. For more on participant selection criteria, see the methodology section.

Research Questions

This research attempts to address several main questions about low income inner city families' perceptions of higher education. For the purposes of this study the term higher education will refer to education beyond high school. The research is particularly interested in the extended family and the actions or facilitation that parents and grandparents make together for the child, and their perceived influence on the child's decision. The researcher chooses to examine the involved extended family as primarily a strength of Black family, not pathology as previous researchers have asserted (Kardiner & Oversey, 1951; Pettigrew, 1964). In addition, the researcher is interested in the barriers that families perceive as a possible or plausible hindrance to post secondary education.

There are only two main questions that the research explores. These two main questions arise from the assertions of the new Culture of Poverty Theory. The main questions are flexible enough to allow a data collection tool to be designed that will address them. The main questions are:

1. How do low income, inner city Black families perceive education?

The first question addresses several sub questions.

5

a. What does it mean to be a successful Black person?

b. What are ways to achieve success?

2. What specific actions do mothers and grandmothers take to help their child know the importance of educational success?

Significance of the Study

The current literature in educational opportunity and equality for low income minority students has identified key components to advancing student achievement. High student achievement is related to familial and significant others' modeling and definitions of success as well as well equipped schools.

Relationships with others, specifically peers, parents, teachers and other school personnel affect student educational and vocational aspirations (Sewell & Shah, 1967). The adult role in children's education is usually filled by parents and is very highly related to student educational goals (Duncan, Fetherman & Duncan, 1972; Honora, 2002; Hotchkiss & Borow, 1984; Reynolds & Gill, 1994; Sewell & Hauser, 1980; Sewell, Hauser & Wolf, 1980; Sewell and Shah, 1967; Teachman & Paasch, 1998; Wilson and Wilson, 1992). According to the literature, students that have an interested adult involved that maintains specific strategies to help the child succeed academically are indeed more likely to do well in school (Brown-Rosier, 2000; Ensminger & Slusarick, 1992).

Due to the incongruence between parents reported goals for their children, their strategizing and their importance as definers of their children's academic goals, and to the comparably low academic achievement of these children who appear to be well planned

for further investigation is needed. This study is needed to allow for a more meaningful understanding low income urban Black s' valuation of education and the ways that these families are preparing their for students' current and future educational success.

Theoretical Approach

This research is qualitative by design and will use theoretical approaches that lend themselves to analyzing qualitative research. These theories will guide the investigator's thinking when analyzing the participant responses.

The Ecology of Human Development Theory

Ecology theory is a theory that is well suited for use with qualitative exploration. In fact, Bronfenbrenner is clear that when studying education, children and families, the formal experiment and quasi-experiment may not always be the best approach (1976)(1977). The ecological approach fits well with this research effort because the researcher, like Bronfenbrenner recognizes that to understand educational goal development; one must look further than interviewing parents only and examine the families' larger beliefs about educational systems. Bronfenbrenner (1976, p.5) succinctly states that how children learn is a function of "the characteristics of learners and the surroundings in which they live out their lives."

The primary strength in using the ecological approach is that it allows the researcher to examine all of the elements impacting an individual. White and Klein state that the theory asserts several main tenets that differentiate it from other theories of human development (2002). It is these tenets that make the approach useful here.

The human ecological theory's major contribution is its recognition that the individual is embedded within larger social units and that these units have an influence on the individual and vice versa. The child develops as a result of such relationships with others and as a result of his/her genetic endowment; this theory captures both nature and nurture. The ecological theory will provide the researcher with a tool to answer the research questions.

The micro-system is the smallest unit within the ecological model. The micro-system includes those closest to the target child such as parents, peers, teachers and neighbors. The meso-system is the interaction point between the various micro-systems, such as a parent teacher conference, a classroom, etc. The exo-system and the macro system are linked in that the exo-system impacts the meso-systems outcomes. The exo-system consists of a setting where the target child would not actively participate, but where decisions or outcomes directly affect the child. Examples of important exo-system units for the families involved in this study include the school board, the parent's employment, the media etc. The macro-system depends to a certain extent of the exo-system. The macro-system is characterized by broadly held values, mores, stereotypes, beliefs some of which are codified into laws (Bronfenbrenner, 1976; Bronfenbrenner, 1977).

The ecological theory can be used in conjunction with other theories. The use of the other theories illustrate that ecological theory is all encompassing and can be thought of as a companion to other theories, and not as an 'either/ or' approach. The fact that the ecological theory can be used with other theories is yet another of its strengths. The

ecological theory has been criticized for its inability to explain change and the difficulty

of choosing an appropriate level of analysis. Interestingly, the theory has also been

criticized for what was cited here as a strength, that of examining everything that may

impact an individual (White & Klein, 2002).

Micro-System: Family Systems Theory

The micro system includes the individuals' immediate setting (Bronfenbrenner,

1977). The home and school typically comprise a child's micro-system. With that in

mind, the family systems theory fits well with the micro level of the ecological theory.

The Black family has contact with family members who might be considered to be

extraneous or non-immediate to others. For the Black families that this research is

interested in, the extended family such as grandmothers will be included in the micro-

system due to the routine contact and their centrality in the lives of the family group.

The ecological theory and the family systems theory are compatible in that both stress the

roles and relationships of units within the family to facilitate functioning.

The family systems theory has four main tenets. Primarily, all parts of the system

are interconnected (White & Klein, 2002). This tenet is particularly supportive of this

research because the study assumes that grandparents, as well as parents influence the

target child. Secondly, the theory states that understanding is only possible by viewing

the whole (White & Klein, 2002). Although this research does not exam the entirety of

the family, it attempts to view more of the family than previous studies. Families are

more than a group of individuals, they are greater as a whole and the researcher must be

mindful of this. The third tenet is that the system effects its environment and the

environment affects the system. Family systems may not be aware that they can influence other systems and the larger environment. The families in this study are very much aware of how larger systems affect their family and the individual units within their family. This tenet speaks directly to the interconnectedness of all systems; this is in turn an assumption of the ecological approach. The final tenet of the systems theory is that is systems theory is not real; it is simply a way to look at phenomenon. Another important concept that systems theory can offer this research is the idea of boundaries (White & Klein, 2002). Family systems, perhaps more than other systems can have rigid boundaries and this has an effect on the sharing of information with those who are outside of the system.

Meso- System: Conflict Theory

The conflict theory can be used to understand the interactions at the meso-system level. The conflict theory was chosen to examine the meso-system because of the very meaning of the meso-system, which is interaction between several parts of the micro-system. Indeed, the conflict theory states that conflict is both endemic and inevitable; it is a natural state (White & Klien, 2002). Therefore, we can safely say that any and all interaction between micro-systems will be conflicted. Practical examples of the meso-system at work in this research might include communication within the family, or between the school and the family. Other interaction points of the micro-system might include communication between the daycare, after school program, extra-curricular activities and the family. Micro-systems interact with one another and influence and affect one another.

The family as a system may be in conflict with other systems or even within the family themselves. Conflict occurs when individuals or groups clash over "scarce resources, controversial means or incompatible goals" (White & Klein, 2002). The major concepts of conflict theory include structure of the groups both within and in relation to others, resources, and negotiation and consensus to manage conflict (White & Klein, 2002). The concept of structure is salient for this research because the families of interest here are not structured to successfully engage in confrontation with the school system, mostly because of race and class issues. This fits into the second concept of scarcity of resources and the control of resources. Within the history of the conflict theory is the control of the means of production, Karl Marx's term and concept. Although many things are different from the time that Marx began work on the theory, one thing remains the same, which is that the control of the means of production is largely tied to an education and wealth. Low income inner city Black families can be viewed as being in conflict with more privileged groups for the opportunity for a higher education, and they may also be in conflict with the group that controls access to education- the educational administrators. The final concept of conflict theory is managing the inherent conflict between micro-systems. The inherent conflict between families and schools has a long history for the low income Black family. Conflict has been managed by integrating the school systems, inviting parents to participate in school meetings, and by offering nominal assistance with course selection and counseling about plans for youth after high school completion.

Exo- System: Life Course Theory

The child and his or her family members often do not participate directly in the exo- system, but this system can limit or structure the development of an individual (Bronfenbrenner, 1977). Like the exo-system level of the ecological theory, life course theory is concerned with the social and temporal factors that influence an individual's life trajectory (White & Klien, 2002). The key principles of the life course theory are historical time and place, timing of events in the life including the concept of linked lives and the idea of human agency or free choice (Elder, 1998; Hareven, 1996). The life course theory has been used to study grandparent grandchild relations in other research to gain a more holistic look at the family (Mueller & Elder, 2003)

The first concept of life course theory, historical time and place, have important implications for this research as it examines the educational perceptions of individuals born into different eras or cohorts. Cohorts are united by central events in historical time that may delimit their life chances, for the grandmothers in these families; a cohort effect may include being the first generation to attend de-segregated schools. Life course theory has placed primacy on the idea of cohort since its inception and, maintains that events experienced as a cohort early in life can have long term consequences for an individual (Elder, 1998; Hareven, 1996). The second principle which emphasizes the importance of the timing of events in one's life is salient to this research effort because the decision to become a parent at an early age may very well be a purposeful decision given the shorter life expectancy of low income Blacks (Geronimus, 1991; Geronimus & Bound, 1996). Low income families bare children at non traditional times, or off- time.

A young person may think about the ability of his or her own parents to provide help with the child while they are still able. This illustrates both the concept of linked lives as well as human agency. Linked lives can also be thought of as parents and grandparents may someday depend on their offspring for part of their care when they reach old age and therefore, may set high educational and career goals for the youth in the hopes that they will indeed be financially able to assist them. The fact that several the grandmothers involved in the study grew up in segregated schools will most definitely affect their ideas about education in general and higher education.

The concept of linked lives is supportive of the ecological theory as families represent the system closest to the child and would have the most invested in the child. The major criticism of the life course theory is that it may account for the family life course of the standard middle class family, but not others (White & Klein, 2002). The life course theory is applicable here, to low income Black families due to the tightly interwoven fabric that is characteristic of the Black family, making the theory's key concepts highly salient.

Macro-System: Symbolic Interactionism

The macro-system is the umbrella of cultural patterns of a group, including the "economic, social, educational, legal, and political systems" (Bronfenbrenner, 1977, p. 515). Bronfenbrenner states that the macro-system is not a concrete or tangible system as are its predecessors that it feeds into (1977). This is the major commonality between the macro-system and symbolic interaction that will allow the researcher to examine the families in this study. The theories are also united in their discussion of adaptation. White

13

and Klein argue that the sharing of symbols as in symbolic interactionism have allowed humans to adapt to their environment (2002), and adaptation is a central concept of human ecological theory (Bronfenbrenner, 1979).

Symbolic interactionism focuses on the meaning that individuals make of things, events, and ideas (White & Klein, 2002) and calls for the interpretation of the phenomenon, or signs and symbols that the macro level generates. Symbolic interactionism can be used to guide this research because it focuses on the very notion of *perceptions and beliefs*. In this case the research will apply the concepts of symbolic interactionism to understand the value of education family members assign their economically and culturally disadvantaged child.

Symbolic interaction holds several assumptions and principles that fit well with this research effort. Foremost, the assumption that human behavior must be understood from the view of the individual (White & Klein, 2002) calls for an in depth understanding of the actions of low income, urban minority people from the inside out. This calls to mind one of the research sub-questions which asks what the true meaning of a successful Black person is. This assumption also causes the researcher to address the participant as expert on his or her situation and to consider decision making surrounding education in terms of each specific family. Secondly, the symbolic interaction concept of self and mind speak directly to this research in that individuals know that they are able to act, yet they are also able to be acted upon all while knowing that their actions have important meaning for others. The concepts of socialization and role are important because they describe how people come to assign value to phenomena. Simply put, socialization is the

taking on of the signs and symbols and their value by one's culture. The culture of poverty theory claims that the symbol of education has not been assigned great value by low income urban minorities.

Culture of Poverty Theory

This final theory that the paper will include, is not really a theory, but a set of beliefs backed by flawed and sparse research and most importantly by popular culture. The culture of poverty theory (CPT) was first presented by Oscar Lewis and later distorted by others (1968) (Jones & Luo, 1999). Vague references to this theory have become so entrenched in the natural discourse and in research concerning low income Black and Hispanic youth that research and commentary is not presented as either in support of or opposed to the theory. Instead, CPT is hidden within conversations and research without exploring it fully. Consider discussions of out of wedlock pregnancy and Black male joblessness. These are actually discussions of two of the elements of CPT, that of out of control sexuality and lack of value for work. The third principle of the theory is that low income urban minority people do not value education.

Lewis helped to usher in a proliferation of research, commentary and media related anecdotal accounts surrounding the actions and beliefs of the poor. The original CPT asserts that *some* poor minority city living people develop a set of values that are at first adaptations to an environment which is without hope (Lewis, 1959). After many generations these adaptations become pathological by perpetuating poverty. CPT was altered by conservatives shortly after its inception now has a completely negative connation. Even researchers who once espoused structural views of the causes of poverty

15

now agree that individual behavior is also to blame (Wilson, 1987). The evolved CPT claims that *all* poor minority urban peoples lack value for education, hard work in the labor force and further claims that they participate in irresponsible sexual relations resulting in out of wedlock births and fatherless children. These three behavioral factors, which according to CPT are unique to the poor, are claimed to reproduce poverty by themselves (Banfield, 1968; Gilder 1981; Gilder, 1989; Moynihan, 1965; Murray, 1984; Pettigrew, 1964; Wilson, 1987). For a review of theories related to the causes of poverty see Jennings 1999. Some have even argued that these behaviors which supposedly perpetuate poverty are an attempt to eschew the traditional White American culture of doing well in school, marrying and supporting one's children (Massey & Denton, 1993).

The entanglement of myth and fact, for some, shows proof that the low income minority family is to blame and is completely responsible for their failure to achieve in an open society. To illustrate how entrenched the ideas of CPT are in our culture one need only look to an April edition of Delaware's News Journal to find citizen commentary that supports the theory (2005). In fact, the commentator notes that "Black children do not do well in school because they do not care to do well in school" (News Journal April 2005).

It should be noted that both the CPT theory and the oppositional culture theory lack sound supportive empirical research (Jones & Luo, 1999; Small & Newman, 2001). The lack of research to support these theories may or may not have an impact on the public views of poor minority urban families. Again, this research is an attempt to invalidate part of the CPT theory and to get other researchers and laypeople thinking critically about the usefulness of such theories.

<center>**Chapter 2**</center>

<center>**LITERATURE REVIEW**</center>

Relationship between Education and Upward Mobility

Education has been called the 'great equalizer' for its ability to allow those from the lowest socio- economic levels to achieve the American Dream. Both laypeople and researchers agree that education has many effects on lifestyle and opportunities and is thought to be the gateway to middle class status (Bullock and Limbert, 2003; Hill, 1999; Macleod, 1996; Sommers, Cofer & Vander Putton, 2002; Washburn, 2002). Education is related to increased income and lower rates of unemployment (Bowen & Bok, 1998; Graham & Paul, 2002; National Center for Children in Poverty, 2003; U.S. Census Bureau, 1998). With increased income the opportunity arises to own a home in a relatively safe community, visit healthcare providers, and avoid the effects of hunger and other forms of deprivation. The link between education and upward mobility is supported by researchers' findings and by laypeople's observations and experiences. Higher education leads to higher incomes that allow relative freedom from hardship.

A college education also adds to the perception of being a member of the middle class. Class status is not only determined by income level, which is the most obvious factor, but also by occupation, and education, and educational level of the family.

<center>17</center>

Researchers have included number of years of education and parental education level as a marker of socio-economic standing since the 1960's (Sewell & Shah, 1967).

The Black middle class, while still small in comparison to the White middle class, is growing. In 1996, 8.6% of male professionals were Black and 13.1% of female professionals were Black. Black people comprised roughly 12% of the U.S. population in the late 1990's. The number of Black physicians has doubled since 1960; the number of Black engineers and attorneys has tripled in that time (Bowen and Bok, 1998).

Those with higher levels of education are the least likely to become unemployed. Research shows that the highest degrees such as Doctorate and professional degrees in medicine and law yield the highest employment rates and in some cases, the highest incomes (Bowen and Bok, 1998) though not equal, the incomes of male and female, Black and White increase with years of education (Graham & Paul, 2002; Jennings, 1999 http://www.bls.gov/cps/minwage2002pdf.pdf., 2002).

Individuals possessing a high school diploma or less are likely to have the lowest incomes. A study examining life panels was conducted to examine the likelihood of experiencing affluence or poverty over the lifetime. The major finding of the study revealed that the likelihood of experiencing extreme poverty or affluence is very real. Experiencing either of the extremes is highly influenced by race and education. Being Black and having less than a high school diploma dramatically increases the odds that one will experience poverty, while White Americans with a four year degree are less likely to experience poverty and more likely to experience affluence (Rank & Hirsch, 2001).

The Two Year Degree vs. the Four Year Degree

Studies vary as to the relative weight of income yielded from an associate versus a bachelor's degree. The Economic Policy Institute reports that women with bachelor's degrees earn on average $10,000 more each year than those with high school diplomas and about $5,000 more annually than women with associates degrees (1996). There is less discussion around employability of those with entry level degrees versus those with high school diplomas. Employment rates are steadier for those with lower degrees such as Associate's or Baccalaureate than for those with only some college experience or the high school diploma, or less (Graham & Paul, 2002). Because the cost of two-year colleges is quite low when compared to four-year colleges, it is possible that for some the two year college provides the best value for the investment. Students enrolled in or interested in enrolling in two year colleges or associate's programs not only hailed from low socio-economic backgrounds, but were more concerned about the affordability of schooling versus those enrolled in or interested in enrolling in the traditional four year college or bachelor's degree program (Somers, Cofer & VanderPutten, 2002).

A very large (n=80,000) nationally representative study completed in 1998 illustrates the relationship between graduation from a four year institution and employment. 93% of those that completed a bachelor's degree were employed full time at the time of the study. Among women, 20% of White women were voluntarily unemployed, meaning that they did not need or want to work as their spouse was able to support them. 60% of White female graduates worked full time. Of Black female

graduates 5% were unemployed and seeking work; while 85% of Black female graduates were working full time (Bowen & Bok, 1998).

For adults raising children this translates into security for themselves and their children. As parents' education rises it is less likely that their children will grow up in poverty, because it is more likely that their incomes will also rise giving way to a life relatively free from hardship (National Center for Children in Poverty).

Cultural Capital

It is clear that education is related to income and life chances. It is not clear about what makes individuals or groups more successful in gaining an education compared to other groups. Pierre Bourdieu's thinking about cultural capital may shed light onto this subject. Bourdieu argues that cultural capital is the understanding and application of the dominant culture's ideology, specifically regarding education and language as well as the skills and knowledge that one's family of origin passes on (Bourdieu & Passeron 1977). Bordieu and others (Bowles and Gintis, 1976) argue that schools prefer the cultural capital of the dominant group, White middle class Americans over other school children that they encounter. This favoritism is partly responsible for the success and failures of racial groups within the classroom, and the success and failure of these children when they are adults because they lack the education and other skills that America prizes (Lareau, 1987). The reliance on favoring students with the right cultural capital and tracking or dismissing other students leads to the reproduction of social classes by schools by sorting the poor into low paying jobs and the upper incomes into continued education and higher paying careers (Bowles & Gintis, 1976)

19

Low Income, Urban, Black Families' Valuation of Education

Assessing the Educational Achievement Gap

One of the most examined and talked about issues in public education today is the educational achievement gap. After 30 years of documented differences in school performance between minority and White students, President Bush and his administration enacted the No Child Left Behind Act to address the achievement gap (Lee, 2002). The achievement gap specifically refers to the gap in performance between Black and White students, although the education achievement gap is present for Hispanic versus White students as well (Lee, 2002). Researchers have challenged the need to frame Black achievement as a comparison to that of White achievement (McMillan, 2003). The very notion of this comparison gets at the core of centuries old debates about the innate inferiority of the African and innate superiority of the European.

Nevertheless, there exists a gap in achievement between Black students and White students that is documented from elementary school to high school completion through differences in rates of college matriculation and graduation (Bowen & Bok, 1998; Jacobson, 2001; Lee, 2002).

The national achievement gap is measured through outcomes of standardized test scores such as the college entrance exam, or S.A.T. (Chew, 2004), and the National Assessment of Educational Progress or NAEP (Lee, 2002). The most recent NAEP report illustrates that the Black- White achievement gap continues to be a concern with average scores of Black students increasing, but still lagging behind those of White students at all ages examined (U.S. Department of Education, 2005). The gap between achievement of

Black and White students is 0.9 standard deviations and .72 standard deviations for Hispanic and White students (Bali & Alvarez, 2004).

Also of great interest to researchers is learning about when the achievement gap first occurs and its progression over time. Though studies vary as to the exact grade level that disparities begin, it appears that the gap is present as early as kindergarten or first grade (Bali & Alvarez, 2004; Fryer & Levitt, 2003; Phillips, 1998).The achievement gap has an earlier onset and bigger difference for Black   versus Hispanic students as compared to White students (Bali & Alvarez, 2004). A nationally representative study found that Hispanic students begin to narrow the gap as they advance through grade levels; this is not true for Black students (Fryer & Levitt, 2004).

Collegiate Achievement Gap

At the collegiate level, rates of enrollment are continuing to increase for both Black and White students. However, rates of enrollment into college are not equivalent or even comparable for Black versus White students (U.S. Dept. of Education, 2003). Once Black   students have successfully entered college, they do not remain enrolled and graduate in the same patterns as do other students (Bowen & Bok, 1998; Jacobson et al, 2001). Similar to the disparities in rates of enrollment, rates of graduation are also not comparable. Graduation rates for Black and White students have remained relatively consistent for at least a quarter of a century. In 1976, 88% of all graduates from a four year college were White, compared to 6.4% of graduates which were Black. In 2002, 74% of graduates of were White and 10% of graduates were Black (Digest of Educational Statistics, 2003). A study of 80,000 students found that the lowest rates of graduation

among Black students. The authors of this study found that Black students leave college most often due to financial problems, family concerns, health problems and a lack of motivation. Ability to complete the work was not a factor (Bowen & Bok, 1998).

At the collegiate level the achievement gap is likely the result of earlier exposure to low quality educational environments that are not conducive to success in college (Warburton et. al., 2001). Previous research indicated that students who are well prepared for college entrance include those who had taken advanced placement courses (specifically high level math), prepared for and taken the S.A.T., those who had taken at least one year of a foreign language and those who had parents who had earned at least a bachelor's degree (Eccles, Vida & Barber, 2004Warburton et. al., 2001). Given the exposure to rigorous coursework needed, prepared students are more likely those that hail from middle class and more affluent origins. Low income families do not have the same access to high quality instructors and coursework , safe schools, and enriching activities as do others (Kozol, 1991; Quality Counts, 2000; Roscigno, 1998; Thompson, 2002) In fact, Black academic failure is strongly related to attending an all Black (or nearly all minority) school which, by definition has fewer resources (Roscigno, 1998). Clearly, this line of research supports the argument that the achievement gap is caused by unequal allocation of resources.

Explanations for the Achievement Gap

There are many possible reasons that Black students do not perform as well as White students in educational settings from grade-school through college. Possible

explanations include family conditions such as socioeconomic status, individual student behavior and poor quality schooling conditions.

A nationally representative study with a sample size of 20,000 found that only a few background characteristics need to be accounted for in order to eliminate the Black - White achievement gap in elementary schools. The economic condition of student's homes is highly related to their school performance. An improvement in socioeconomic status of one standard deviation increases math and reading scores by .45 standard deviations, narrowing the achievement gap considerably (Fryer & Levitt, 2004). Contradictory to previous findings, attendance in preschool, English as a second language, family size and mother's employment were not related to the narrowing the achievement gap (Fryer and Levitt, 2004).

Approaches to Narrowing the Gap

Researchers note that the achievement gap seemed to narrow in the 1980's and is now widening again (Harris & Herrington, 2006; Lee, 2002). Harris and Herrington suggest that school and teacher accountability be combined with putting more effort into recruiting well trained teachers and into increasing teachers' salaries (2006). The authors argue that without retaining quality instructors and increasing resources, the achievement gap will not narrow (2006).

Research has indicated that the home environment is at least partly responsible for the achievement gap (Fryer and Levitt, 2004); hiring and retaining quality teachers will eliminate the achievement gap without taking other measures. This should not be interpreted that families want their students to fail, or that families are not doing their best

to help students, instead, families are lacking in books, computers, time and knowledge about how to prepare their student. Interventions that aid the family in closing the achievement gap are seldom if at all discussed, but are a logical step in helping Black students gain parity with White students given the literature surrounding Black   students and their families. Involving the family by providing the family with help in meeting basic needs as well as with information on development and supportive educational activities may prove useful only when combined with eliminating race segregated schools and unequal distribution of resources.

Familial Influence on Educational Aspirations

When the literature is examined as a whole a picture emerges that illustrates the monumental influence that families have on the plans of children. Indeed, aspirations and planning lead in many cases to college enrollment and graduation. Research has repeatedly shown that both the families' and individuals hopes and goals are one of the most important factors effecting educational attainment (Duncan, Fetherman & Duncan, 1972; Honora, 2002; Hotchkiss & Borow, 1984; Reynolds & Gill, 1994; Sewell & Hauser, 1980; Sewell, Hauser & Wolf, 1980; Sewell and Shah, 1967; Teachman & Paasch, 1998; Wilson and Wilson, 1992). Families can account for fully three quarters of the variance in educational aspirations (Teachman & Paasch, 1998). The importance of others on student aspirations may be unique to the United States and other countries which have been classified by social scientists as having relatively less educational tracking in middle and high school (Buchmann & Dalton, 2002).

In examining the issue of family influence from the student perspective, Black students report that they are more influenced by their family's educational plans for them as opposed to the ideas that the peer group, teachers and counselors may have; other racial groups report that non-family members have the biggest influence on their future goal setting (Cheng & Starks, 2002). Black students are more likely to seek educational help from their families as opposed to professional people, while other students would discuss plans with a professional person before consulting with family (Mau, 1995). Family continues to play a significant role in the lives of Black students after they enroll in college. While White college students perceive more support from friends in times of stress, Black students are more likely to cite family as the main supporter. Perceived support from family members was related to lower depression among Black students (Jung and Khalsa, 1989). The research indicates that family is highly persuasive in setting educational goals, that educational goals are related to educational outcome, and Black youth more so than others are attached to their families for guidance regarding educational choices.

Gender and Education

In school females are punished less harshly than males and are involved in more extracurricular activities than males (Lopez, 2003). At home, there are slight gender differences in the way that educational aspirations are transmitted and received for male and female children. Foremost, females report higher educational and occupational aspirations than do males (Cheng-Mau & Bikos, 2000; Honora, 2002). These higher aspirations have resulted in higher outcomes, since 1981 women have earned more

Bachelor degrees than men and since 1986 women have outpaced men earning more masters degrees as well (NCES, 2006). Females are more influenced by the family and the families' plans for their future than are males (Cohen, 1987; Honora, 2002). Cohen found that female children are more influenced by observing models that provide a basis for emulation, as opposed to parents who serve as verbal definers of expectation. Black girls also seek help with educational issues such as course selection more often than do Black males (Mau, 1995). It is unclear why Black females are more influenced by their families than are Black males. Perhaps females are socialized to pay closer attention to the needs or wants of the family. Black girls with fewer goals expressed that they talked less with family about plans for the future. Girls of parents who had high aspirations with many goals were more likely to hail from families where there was strong communication and planning for future education (Honora, 2002). This is true for males also, but is more pronounced for females.

Children whose parents, specifically their mothers, have high aspirations for them are themselves more likely to have high aspirations for themselves (Cheng & Starks, 2002; Eccles, Vida & Barber, 2004; Wilson & Wilson, 1992). Mother's educations exert some influence on outcomes of children's education, whereas the same effect has not been true for father's education (Cheng & Starks, 2002; Kerckhoff & Campbell 1977; Singer & Saldana, 2001). In addition, mothers' who have higher status occupations also have children who aspire to these same higher status careers (Singer & Saldana, 2001).

Educational Aspirations of Low Income Black Students and Families

   Impoverished Black families believe that education is crucial to breaking free from poverty and in being a free person. The link between the struggle for literacy/ education and freedom in both a literal and figurative sense is well documented in the biographies of Black Americans like Frederick Douglass, Malcolm X, Septima Clark, Maya Angelou, Ben Carson, Don L. Lee, Harriet Jacobs and countless other who have not become famous or had their stories told (Perry, 2003). All of these Black people faced considerable adversity in learning to read or in pursuing education and they each sight their family as having risked persecution and in some cases, death to get them to the library, to school or to someone who could teach them to read (Perry, 2003). That tradition has continued and low income Black students cite the family as helping to shape their goals (Honora, 2002).

   Studies have demonstrated time that low income people of various races appreciate and desire education for their children specifically as a means to gain economic security (Delgado- Gaitan, 1992; Goldenberg and Galimore, 1995; Scott-Jones, 1995). This desire for education can sometimes be more pronounced among poor Black s as compared to middle income Blacks. Both low income and middle income Black s were surveyed to learn the most important value that they want to instill in their children. Parents were asked to choose from values such as having respect for self and others, being obedient, and doing well in school. 42% of low income Black parents felt that doing well in school was the top priority, while only 21% of higher income Black parents felt that doing well in school was the top priority (Hill, 1999). It is possible that

low-income families see education as more important than their well to do Black counterparts because the link between education and earning power is more central to their lives.

Sociologist Jay MacLeod explored the aspirations of both Black and White low-income urban teens using the participant observation methodology (1995). Macleod found that the Black youth saw education as a legitimate way to achieve success. The Black adolescents wanted to complete college and obtain careers free of manual labor and did not feel that being Black or poor would have any relationship with their future success. Their low income White counterparts saw education and attainment as biased both towards those with money and minorities, and therefore rejected education.

In research that is not limited to low income students, Black males and females often rank first or second among other racial groups in studies that attempt to measure students' educational goals (Kao & Tienda, 1998; Mau, 1995; Singer & Saldana, 2001). In addition, females from single parent mother headed homes report the highest goals of all; though these goals are generally altered by the tenth grade (Kao & Tienda, 1998). Even the most disadvantaged group, Black, poor and urban teen mothers report that they want to earn a four year college degree (Bell-Kaplan, 1997; Hellenga, Aber & Rhodes, 2002). Asian males consistently report the highest levels of aspirations while Hispanic and Native American consistently report the very lowest academic aspirations (Kao & Tienda, 1998; Mau, 1995).

Many research studies have shown the importance of education for the low income adult community. Sixty-nine low-income welfare to work mothers were engaged

in educational programs past the high school level. All of the women expressed that the degree *ensured* them middle class status. The women also noted that access to education is often not possible for the poor and favored structural explanations of poverty rather than explanations based on an individual's failures (Bullock and Limbert, 2003).A similar population was examined in Kathryn Edin and Laura Lein's study of the strategies that low wage and welfare dependent women use to survive as impoverished mothers (1997). The women though forced to participate in job training programs that prepared them for the kinds of jobs they already qualified for (cook, secretary, and housekeeper) saw the four year degree as the only way to secure a position that would enable them to care for their family without state support (1997).

Black Males and Educational Aspirations

Black males have been shown to under perform compared to Black females and other groups in every level of schooling from elementary through college graduation. In elementary school Black males are more likely to be labeled as having behavior problems (Hilliard, 1991) suspended or expelled from school (Meir, Stewart & England, 1989), and more likely to be placed in special education classes (Herrara, 1998) and labeled unintelligent (Hilliard, 1991). Researchers argue that Black males are treated differently in school and therefore perform differently (McMillan, 2003; Noguera, 2003).

There is no clear explanation concerning the attitudes of Black males regarding education. Many studies illustrate that Black males feel that education is important (Cook et al, 1996; Kao & Tienda, 1998; Noguera, 2001; Roderick, 2002). Ninety percent of Black males studied in a 2001 research study reported that they felt that education is

important and that they wanted to go to college (Noguera). However, only 22% reported that they worked hard to get good grades and 18% felt that their teachers treated them fairly (Noguera, 2001).Several studies indicate that Black males experience the most unstable educational goals. As early as second grade some poor Black boys admit that while education pays off in terms of lifestyle, they feel that they cannot attain it and their goals change from traditional goals to that working class (Cook et al, 1996). By tenth grade, low income Black boys who had previously reported goals which included completing college and graduate school had changed their plans (Kao & Tienda, 1998). A crucial aspect that these studies lack is a real attempt to explain why students altered their goals and what they are planning to do with their futures if not pursue education.

Another concern that educators and parents bemoan is the fourth grade syndrome which refers specifically to Black males and has recently garnered attention from researchers. The syndrome is characterized by a Black boy's grades slipping, and their attitudes towards achievement shifting, if they have not already. Some attribute this marked difference to a change in physical appearance, a maturing in which Black boys are beginning to transition into becoming Black men (Hilliard, 1991; Noguera, 2003). Teachers may perceive these buys as threatening and this may in turn affect their treatment of their students.

Black Pride and Educational Aspirations

Contrary to Ogbu's Oppositional Culture theory, Black ness or being Black does not *always* preclude being intelligent and striving for educational excellence. Black students are being underestimated if the reader is to believe that *all* Black students are

the same, and that *all* Black students are so concerned with acting White that they are willing to forego their families and their ancestral hopes for pursuit of education, as well as an opportunity to escape poverty. In fact, research suggests that Black students are able to maintain their Black ness while maintaining high aspirations and that Black students teased each other for failing grades, not for high grades (Kao & Tienda, 1998; Lopez, 2003). Black students are able to code switch with relative ease and therefore are able to plan for college and do well in school and at the same time be accepted by their group of origin without sanction (Horvat & Lewis, 2003). Black students shared their educational success and plans with those whom they perceived as supportive, while camouflaging it with others who they perceived as less supportive (Horvat & Lewis, 2003).Black children who strongly identify with being Black and see Blackness as something to be proud of are more likely to attend college (Chavous et.al, 2003; Roderick, 2003) and teachers openly discuss education as a means of advancing the entire Black race (Tyson, 2003).

Teachers and Low Income Black Students

Schools are responsible for many aspects of socialization in American society. It is here that children are socialized to work with a peer group, wait, obey, and show respect for authority. Schools can also be a place where students are faced with racism, sexism, and classism from other students and from staff. The way that adults help students deal with this may have important ramifications for the way that Black students feel about their Blackness, about America's history of chattel slavery, and about persistent racism. Some Black teachers make the classroom a ground for teaching about race and poverty by warning their students that education is the only thing that will keep

32

them out of the ghetto (Tyson, 2003). The affects of this are unknown. Teachers, as important figures in the lives of children are in a position to help students cope with stereotypes about Black people.

Previous research has indicated that Black students are aware of stereotypes that suggest that they are educationally less than other students between ages six and ten, with stereotype consciousness increasing over those years (McKown & Weinstein, 2003; Selman, 1980). In addition, research has suggested that stereotypes about Black inferiority are partly to blame for Black students' underachievement (McKown & Weinstein, 2003). Children from educationally stigmatized groups show greater awareness of the stereotypes than do White children. The effect of being aware of broadly held negative stereotypes was that students withdraw from academic endeavors and perform worse in school (McKown & Weinstein, 2003).

Research has attempted to explore what happens to students and families when the stereotype comes from within the classroom, from the teacher. Stereotypes or racially motivated actions by teachers can be as outward as not calling on Black students to as covert as dismissing Black students discomfort about racism from other students (Lewis, 2001) and to refusing to discuss contemporary racism (Lopez, 2003). Teachers provide an important source of support for students and teacher expectations have the affect of increasing student motivation and belief in their ability to succeed (Weinstein, Madison & Kuklinski, 1995). In contrast, teachers expect low income students to perform worse in school than those from more affluent homes (Roscigno, 1998). When teachers believe that their educational values differed from those of the parent they had lower expectations

for the students' future success (Hauser-Cram, Sirin and Stipek, 2003). Teachers may

feel that parents' educational values are incongruous with their own because low income

Black parents do not participate in school activities such as conferences, volunteer work

and meetings as often as other parents (Casanova, 1996; Lareau & Shumar, 1996).

Teachers may feel that these parents do not share the same ideals that they do and that

parents primary interests are not academic. However, low income Black parents tend to

view the teacher as expert and defer to the teacher's decision making (Lareau, 1994)

while maintaining that they are indeed responsible for their child's academic success

(Drummond and Stipek, 2006). If parents see the teacher as the expert based on teachers

training and education, it is easy to understand why parents feel that they are secondary

players in terms of the child's education.

Human Agency and Educational Goal Strategizing

When parents believe that they can affect their child's future, that they have some

source of power, that their actions matter, they are more likely to talk specifically about

education as an option and to enlist strategies to make the option come to fruition

(Crosnoe, Mistry and Elder, 2002). The literature around low income urban families that

successfully prepare and transition their children to college discuss strategies that the

adults employ to guide the child toward the educational goal and away from the dangers

of city living.

There are a myriad of strategies that poor urban minority families use to help their

children succeed academically. The literature describes parents and sometimes

grandparents actively doing things to help their child stay out of trouble and focus on

school. In the elementary years mothers monitor their children's friends allowing their children to associate only with 'decent' families (Brown-Rosier, 2000). Parents try to keep their young children busy by involving them in extracurricular activities such as sports and in the church and they talk with their children often about the importance of doing well in school. They also carve out a specific place to do homework, help with homework, maintain a daily routine and consult with school personnel (Brown-Rosier, 2000; Christenson, Rounds & Gorney, 1992). Successful low income parents who actively facilitate their children's success in school have strict rules about school and free time (Ensminger & Slusarcick, 1992).These parents are also more likely to make sacrifices that benefit the child's education. Brown-Rosier found that parents who were efficacious sacrificed scarce resources like time or money to get pursue better options for the child academically (2000).

As children age, parents continue monitoring friends and paramours and at times force their children to attend church and commit to other activities. Parents enlist the help of other parents, family members and community members to help them keep their teenager on the path toward college. They monitor the teen's daily activities and talk daily about school that day and future educational and occupational plans (Roderick, 2003). This differentiates the high school completers/ college matriculants from the other two groups in the study. One group was characterized by members whose parents were almost entirely unavailable and their children consequently dropped out of school, while the other group was composed of children whose parents talked about doing well in school, but did nothing to facilitate progress (Roderick, 2003).

Multiple Generations and the Child

Families help shape their members' opinions on many important topics including religion, politics, gender roles, education and countless others. From birth, the family influences the youngest members' perceptions about the world around them. The definition of the term "family" varies depending upon who defines it. The term family has most often been used in such a way that it specifically describes the traditional family, which consist of a married man and woman and their biological offspring (Schneider, 1968). Any formation other than this has been considered non-normative or deviant (Gilby and Pederson 1982; Schneider, 1968; Shorter, 1975). The deviant family structure might take the form of an unmarried cohabitating couple, adults who remain childless, or the gay or lesbian family.

The traditional family unit has largely been a myth for Black families, historically speaking, due to the conditions of slavery which often forbade marriage, condoned institutionalized rape of slave women by their masters and consequently produced illegitimate offspring. Within recent times one can conclude that the traditional family is more an archetype than a reality for both Black s and Whites by looking at the rates of divorce and births to women who never marry, or marry someone other than the father of their child (Uzoka, 1979). The trend in divorce has remained for approximately twenty years: about half of all first marriages will end in divorce. Specifically, 70% of Black unions will end in divorce, while 47% of White unions will dissolve (Raley and Bumpuss, 2003).

This diversion from what is considered typical and desirable- the myth of the traditional family- has led some researchers to assert that the low income Black family is pathological because of the high rates of female headed households. Among families living below the poverty line in 2002, 47.5% were headed by Black women, compared with 34.7% which were headed by White women (National Center for Health Statistics, 2004). Low income Black families in particular have long been noted as being somewhat unique to researchers in that the extended family maintains close ties with the original unit from which it came. Researcher Melvin Wilson has gone as far as to say that the appropriate unit of measure or study in the Black community is the extended family (1986).The Black extended family could include a myriad of individuals who would under usual circumstances, not be a major part of the traditional view of what constitutes the formation of a family. The extended family might contain grandparents, great grandparents, nephews, nieces, aunts, uncles and the like. Members are not only acquired through marriage and a resulting birth but through *absorption* of others who may or may not be blood relatives (Hill, 2002; Wilson, 1986).

Fictive kin may be absorbed into an existing family while remaining part of their own biological family. Several researchers have argued that fictive kin become part of the kin network partly out of need, relationship, and as remnants of the West African heritage that slaves came from (Stack, 1975; Wilson, 1986). Children born to unmarried and unprepared young mothers are often absorbed into the extended Black family, through a process called informal adoption by social scientists. Informal adoption, specifically by elderly Black grandmothers has been cited as a self help mechanism among low income

Black families (Hill, 1971). Informal adoption has no doubt kept many Black   children

out of orphanages, institutions and states systems.

Black grandparents are part of the extended family and are rarely studied in their

own right and therefore, little is known about their role other than as crisis control

(Szinovacz, 1998) or to ameliorate the effects of living in poverty (Hill, 1999). The

earliest studies of grandparenthood included a paragraph or two about "colored" and

Native American families, but the focus of the research was most defiantly White middle

class families (Von Hentig, 1945). When these early studies mentioned Black families,

they were clear that the grandmother held a special status in the group (Von Hentig,

1945). Even at this early stage, the researcher though that this special status was due only

to the supposed lack of the Black male. It was assumed that a matriarchal lineage was

inherently flawed and that the Black family was synonymous with pathological.

Measurement of Grandparent Involvement

Grandparent involvement has been conceptualized in the research as a function of

the amount of contact between a grandparent and grandchild. The proximity of the

grandparent to the grandchild has been found to be an indicator of frequent face to face

contact (Barer, 2001; Cherlin & Furstenburg, 1986; Kivett, 1993; Mueller & Elder, 2003;

Timberlake, 1980). Those families that live closer to one another have been found to have

the most frequent contact, and similarly the greatest amount of involvement. Black

grandparents who spend more time with their grandchild perceive themselves to be more

effective in what they consider to be their major role as a grandparent- that of teacher

(Strom, Collinsworth, Strom & Griswold, 1995). Grandchildren also perceive that

grandparents were more effective when they spent more time together. Strom, Collinsworth, Strom and Griswold found that 72% of Black grandparents spent five hours or more with their grandchild, as compare to 30% of White grandparents who reported that they spent five hours or more with their grandchild (1995).

The relationship between the two adult generations is important to understanding the relationship between the grandchild and the grandparent. Grandparent involvement with grandchildren is a reflection of the relationship between grandparents and their own offspring. The middle generation acts as a gatekeeper to the children, specifically the mother (Kivnick, 1985; Matthews & Sprey 1985; Mueller & Elder, 2003; Robertson, 1977). Parents and grandparents most often conflicted about the amount of involvement that grandparents should have in enforcing parents' rules and routines (Hill, 1999). Conflicts between grandparents and parents affect the level of involvement between grandparents and grandchildren.

Grandparents seem to be less involved when there are numerous grandchildren and great-grandchildren. Some grandparents who have many grandchildren do not have a close relationship with any of them and may not know their names (Barer, 2001; Hill, 1999). At times grandparents attend specifically to one or two grandchildren when there are many, a process called selective investment (Cherlin & Furstenburg, 1986b). Selective investment may depend on the characteristics and temperament of each grandchild such as being happy, smart, or funny and the needs of grandchildren (Mueller & Elder, 2003). Great grandparents are more involved with their grandchildren as compared to their great grandchildren (Ruoppila, 1991).

The literature is not clear about the way that the age of the grandparent affects the relationship or involvement with the grandchild. Some research reports that younger grandparents are more involved with their grandchildren (Cherlin & Furstenberg, 1986) (Mueller & Elder, 2003). This is supported by research that indicated that very old grandparents and great-grandparents report that they are not as involved as they were when they were younger and are more passive during old age (Cherlin & Furstenburg, 1985). The reasons cited for this change includes poor health and lack of physical ability (Barer, 2001). Other literature suggests that younger grandparents are less involved with their grandchildren because they are still active with their own careers, intimate relationships and the like. When grandparents assume the grandparent role too early, many reject the role because they feel it makes them too old too soon (Burton & Bengston, 1985). On time entry into grandparenthood lies between the mid forties through age sixty for the middle class (Neugarten, Moore and Lowe, 1965). Low and medium income Black grandmothers become grandmothers at age 43; the average age at which White women become grandmothers is age 50 (Watson & Koblinsky, 2001). Early or off time entry into grandparenthood creates tension and conflict between the grandparent and the adult child about who will assume primary responsibility for the new grandchild (1985).

Other research suggests that age does not mediate grand parenting (Pearson, Hunter, Ensminger & Kellam, 1990) Age at onset of grandparenthood is most likely a non issue when the grandparent perceives that the timing of the event in the course of the family, as well an in the personal life course is on time.

The Meaning of the Role of Grandparent: Symbolic or Real

In the study of grandparenthood, attention has been paid to defining what it means to be a grandparent. The role of grandparent has been thought of as both an "ideological" and "real" role (Werner, 1991). It is conceptualized as an ideological role as there are no set expectations or obligations for grandparents. To contrast grandparenthood with parenthood, the obligations for parents are more clearly defined. The role of parent shapes everything else about one's life. The role of grandparent is shaped by other things in life such as how, if or when to become grandparents. There are little in the way of specific behaviors that society expects that grandparents will fulfill. For instance, grandparents are not expected to pay child support when a marriage dissolves, nor are grandparents pursued to provide such support. There is no system in place to enforce such an expectation even if it existed (Riley, Foner, Hess & Toby, 1969). Conversely, there are no specific rights that arise with the status of grandparent. The issue of grandparents' rights is changing due to grassroots action that began as a result of divorces of parents that resulted in grandparents being denied visitation by the divorced parent (Keith and Wacker, 2002).

Grandparenthood is thought of as ideological or symbolic because it is a status often attached to age and place in one's life course. It is associated with an emotional state for the grandparent and as part of that person's development (Kahuna & Kahuna, 1971; Werner, 1991).

Finally, grandparenthood is ideological as it is a continuation of generations or a way to ensure that one's lineage is continued. Grandfathers tend to stress the

intergenerational continuation of their family more so than grandmothers (Thomas, 1995). According to the socio-biological approach to the study of grandparenthood, the maternal grandparents invest the most in their daughter's offspring because they can be certain that these children are their direct descendents (Smith, 1991).

Neugarten and Weinstein (1964) pioneered the quest for knowledge about American grandparents by investigating the comfort level and significance associated with grandparenthood, as well as outlining relationship types between the grandparent and grandchild. Neugarten and Weintsein described five types of grand parenting. The formal grandparent maintains a clear line between parent-work and grandparent- work and strictly adhere to the norm of noninterference. The fun seeker joins the child in activities specifically for enjoyment; the surrogate parent actually parents the child in the absence of a parent due to work. The reservoir of family wisdom typology is a distinct male lineage oriented style in which the grandfather maintains authority. The distant figure grandparent is generally involved only in holidays and other special occasions.

Cherlin and Furstenberg interviewed grandparents in the mid 1980's and delineated a similar typology of grandparent styles, but involving only three categories (1986). Remote grand parenting is characterized by an emotionally distant relationship, which is also usually geographically distant and is seen in 29% of relationships. The companionate relationship is one in which the grandparent wants to have more contact with the grandchild but is unlikely to initiate such contact. The companionate grandparent defers to the norm of noninterference and at times, prefers that they do not have responsibility over the grandchildren, so that they can focus on pleasurable activities with

them. The frequency of this relationship is 55%. The involved relationship is more clearly delineated from the others in that grandparents and grandchildren have regular, frequent contact defined as at least weekly. The involved grandparent is not afraid to "interfere" and as such, offers his/her opinion readily to both grandchild and adult child. Many of the grandparents that are categorized as involved reside with their adult children and grandchildren and take on the role of surrogate parent. Sixteen percent of grandparent- grandchild relationships are categorized as involved.

Roberto (1995) expanded upon earlier literature describing grand parenting styles. The individualized style of grand parenting is primarily a mechanism to help grandparents feel youthful and the apportioned style is characterized by doing what is morally right for the grandchildren while reserving the right to spoil and indulge them. The symbolic style is only concerned with doing what is morally right for the grandchildren. Roberto agrees that the remote style places little if any emphasis on the grandparent grandchild relationship.

All three sets of typologies recognize that grandparent styles are different and that most grandparents give some thought to the norm of noninterference. In addition, all three sets recognize that the grandparent- grandchild relationship is characterized not only by "giving" to the grandchild, but on "getting" something in return, such as, companionship, the feeling of youth, satisfaction with life, or the feeling that one's life is eternal through continuing the lineage.

The literature measures investment and/or involvement in the lives of grandchildren by examining not only the amount of time spent with grandchildren, but in activities shared and saliency of the grandparent role (Kivnick, 1985). Grandparents prefer spending time with preschool and elementary aged grandchildren (35%) to adolescent children (8%); however, 42% have no preference and enjoy all ages equally (Cherlin and Furstenberg, 1986). Both Black and White grandparents feel that they are most effective in teaching and grand parenting children younger than age 12 (Strom, Collinsworth, Strom, and Griswold, 1995).

Adolescent grandchildren report that their most frequent activities with their grandparents include brief visits to talk about things that are important and to help grandparents with chores (Roberto, 1995). Grandparents are likely to receive the same kinds of supports from their adult children as they do from their adolescent grandchildren with the additional supports in the areas of receiving financial help, receiving transportation, and help with business or record keeping of finances (Jackson, 1970). Black grandparents receive more aid from grandchildren and give more aid to grandchildren than their White counterparts (Kivett, 1991). Grandparent's activities with all ages of grandchildren are many and include giving money (82%), joking or kidding (91%), watching TV together (79%), talking to children about grandparents' childhood (77%), and participating in religious activity (43%) (Cherlin & Furstenberg, 1986).

Shared activities change over the course of the relationship between the dyad. When grandchildren are very young, grandparents are more likely to baby-sit, give toys and gifts, seek fun activities and co-reside. As the children age and the relationship

mature, fun seeking fades and is replaced by mutual assistance, advice giving and

discussion of problems. In some relationships, teenaged grandchildren and grandparents

seems to drift apart and the relationship is more of a passive one (Cherlin & Furstenburg,

1985).

Black Grandparents

When researchers look specifically at Black families and what Black grandparents

perceive to be the most important aspect of their role as grandparents, they are clear that

it is in teaching. Black grandparents want to teach grandchildren a sense of right and

wrong, manners, and most importantly for this research to care about others and to pursue

learning throughout the lifetime (Cherlin & Furstenberg, 1986; Strom, Collinsworth,

Strom and Griswold, 1985; Watson & Koblinski, 2001). Black grandmothers reported

making greater efforts at teaching important family values than did their White

counterparts (Watson & Koblinski, 2001) and Black grandmothers report that

grandmothering is more important to them than White grandmothers (Kivett, 1993). In

addition, Black grandmothers are more likely to retain an authoritative style of grand

parenting, more akin to parent- work, as opposed to White grandparents who prefer to

stay away from parenting behaviors (Cherlin and Furstenberg, 1986; Ensminger &

Kellam, 1990; Pearson, Hunter, Ensminger & Kellam, 1990). Parent like behavior or

parent-work is best described as disciplining, advising and correcting behavior. Cherlin &

Furstenberg found that 63% of Black grandparents were parent- like and 26% of Whites

were parent-like in terms of involvement in disciplining activities (1985). Black

grandparents receive more aid from grandchildren and give more aid to grandchildren

than their White counterparts (Cherlin & Furstenberg, 1985). Low income Black grandmothers report more frustrations with the role, possibly due to struggling with employment difficulties, financial burdens, poor healthcare and so on (Watson & Koblinsky, 2001).

The research suggests that grandmothers have a special relationship with grand children. This might explain the significant lack of research findings related to grandfathers, and the greater focus on grandmothers. Grandmothers have a stronger relationship with the grandchildren than do grandfathers and that the role of grandparent is more central to their life (Cherlin and Furstenberg, 1985). Grandmothers report that they are more satisfied in grand parenting than grandfathers (Strom, Collinsworth, Strom, & Griswold, 1995; Thomas, 1995).

Adolescent grandchildren report that they have a stronger relationship with their maternal grandmother than any of the other grandparents (Roberto and Stroes, 1995). In addition, grandchildren perceive that their values are influenced more by their grandmothers than by their grandfathers in all areas expect politics and work ethic (Roberto and Stroes, 1995).

Summarization and Limitations of the Literature

Low income, urban Black families are getting much deserved attention in the area of education, specifically the educational gap. This increased attention is coming from researchers and policymakers. Much of the discussion about the educational gap has to do with beliefs about the nature and causes of poverty and the underlying belief that poor urban Blacks don't want an education or are unable to be educated. The literature

suggests that low income urban Black families value education greatly, although there is little if any research devoted specifically to investigating grandparents as educational definers and actors on behalf of their grandchildren. Similarly, there is a scarcity of research regarding grandparents and parents acting together on behalf of their minor student.

The research that is presented here is limited in that much of it fails to consider the *psychological* burden of being impoverished and Black in America in a time of relative prosperity. In addition, the research sometimes fails to help determine practical courses of action for professionals such as teachers, counselors, and social workers, not to mention practical application for parents and extended family. Social science researchers who define themselves as activists or advocates have fallen short of their calling in this way. Very few of the studies are longitudinal and therefore, none have the ability to show change over time which is of clear importance to developmental scholars. Lastly, given researchers knowledge of the importance of the extended family more effort should be put into including their voices in a meaningful way. This study will help to fill the void of research pertaining to Black grandmothers. Like other research in the grandparent field, this study is lacking in that it does not examine the role that grandfathers fulfill. Hopefully this research will spur other researchers to continue investigating Black grandmothers and grandfathers while simultaneously giving voice to poor urban Black families.

Table 1, titled Literature Review illustrates the dearth of research that specifically examines grandparents and parents functioning together to facilitate the child's

education. Additionally, there is a lack of studies that specifically investigates or

illuminates the role of the grandparent in the educational life of the low income Black

student. Those studies which examine the extended family are lacking in that they do not

explicitly define the term "close relatives" (Cheng & Starks, 2002), or rely on siblings as

comparison and evidence of family influence on educational values (Honora, 2002;

Teachman & Paasch, 2002). Conversely, there are a great many studies in other areas

having to do with educational and vocational aspirations and/or expectations. The table

visually illustrates the great number of research studies dealing with teachers/ other

professionals and low income minority students and parents and low income minority

students.

TABLE 1
Literature Review

TEACHERS & OTHER PROFESSIONALS AND LOW INCOME MINORITY STUDENTS	BLACK CULTURE AND EDUCATION	PARENTAL INFLUENCE AND LOW INCOME MINORITY STUDENTS	PEERS AND LOW INCOME MINORITY STUDENTS	EXTENDED FAMILY AND LOW INCOME MINORITY STUDENTS	GRANDPARENTS & PARENTS AND LOW INCOME MINORITY STUDENTS
Bankston & Caldas, 1996 Cheng & Starks, 2002 Drummond & Stipek, 2004 Hauser-Cram, Sirin & Hellenga, Aber & Herrera, 1998 Lewis, 2001 Lopez, 2003 Mau, 1995 McMillan, 2003 Rhodes, 2002 Roderick, 2003 Roscigno, 1998 Smith & Smith, 2006 Smith-Maddox, 2000 Stipek, 2003 Thompson, 2003 Tyson, 2003 Wilson & Wilson, 1992	Banfield, 1968 Gilder, 1981 Gilder, 1989 Horvat & Lewis, 2003 Lewis, 1959 Lewis, 1968 Moynihan, 1965 Murray, 1984 Noguera, 2003 Ogbu, 1991	Brown-Rosier, 2000 Buchman & Dalton, 2002 Cassanova, 1996 Cheng & Starks, 2002 Cook, et al., 1996 Crosnoe & Elder, 2004 Crosnoe, Mistry & Elder, 2002 Drummod & Stipek, 2004 Eccles, Vida, & Barber, 2004 Hellenga, Aber & Rhodes, 2002 Hill, 1971 Honora, 2002 Hosler & Vesper, 1993 Jhung & Khalsa, 1989 Kerkhoff & Campbell, 1977 Mau & Bikos, 2000 Mau, 1995 Reynolds & Gill, 1994 Roderick, 2003 Roscigno, 1998 Scott-Jones, 1995 Sewell & Hauser, 1980 Smith-Maddox, 2000 Somers, Cofer & VanderPutten, 2002 Wilson & Wilson, 1992	Buchman & Dalton, 2002 Cheng & Starks, 2002 Horvat & Lewis, 2003 Kao & Tienda, 1998 MacLeod, 1995 Mau, 1995 Ogbu, 1991 Roderick, 2003 Roscigno, 1998 Sewell & Hauser, 1980 Smith-Maddox, 2000	Cheng & Starks, 2002 Honora, 2002 Teachman & Paasch, 2002	

Chapter 3

METHODOLOGY

Research Questions

There are two main questions in this research study. The first asks about the ways that low income inner city Black families' perceive education and the importance of education for becoming successful. The second question asks about the actions that mothers and grandmothers take, if any, to facilitate the child's educational success. These two main questions arise from the claims of the new Culture of Poverty Theory and from information gathered by a pilot study conducted by the researcher in winter of 2003. The main questions are flexible enough to allow a data collection tool to be designed that will address them. The main questions are:

1. How do low income, inner city Black families perceive education?

The first question addresses several sub questions.

      a.   What does it mean to be a successful Black person?

      b.   What are ways to achieve success?

2. What actions do mothers and grandmothers take to help their child know the importance of educational success?

The topics that researchers seek knowledge about pertaining to families are often

protected and private. The very nature of the family network allows some to be privileged

members while others are clearly outsiders. This in-group/ out-group dynamic makes it

difficult for researchers to learn about processes that occur within families. For this

reason, the face-to-face interview is considered the preferred method of learning about

families (Franklin, 1996; Gilgun, Daly & Handel, 1992). Further, interviews can be

tailored to fit each family during the actual discussion as new developments unfold

(Babbie, 2004). The qualitative approach is an appropriate choice to learn about the

values of low income Black families regarding education because it fits well with

description of a topic and exploration of an experience (Babbie, 2004).

The type of interview selected to collect the data is the open ended semi-

structured interview which is ideal for exploration (Seidman, 1998). The interview type

used can best be classified as a depth interview due to the open, direct questions that seek

to elicit narratives about a specific subject (Miller & Crabtree, 2004).

The depth interview is different from the holistic ethnographic approach in that it

does not gather information about all aspects or nuances of a culture or subculture (Miller

& Crabtree, 2004). A true ethnographic approach is not warranted in this research

because the researcher is a member of the group being studied and therefore comes into

the research situation with unique knowledge of the parts of subject area. Because the

researcher shares similarities to the participants such as racial minority status, gender and

class, the respondents may have been more comfortable and hence more forthcoming

(Seidman, 1998). Recognizing that the depth of the information shared depends wholly on the comfort level of the interviewee (Babbie, 2004) it was at times necessary for the researcher to disclose personal information in order to facilitate the discussion and provide a context for asking such personal questions in the first place (Seidman, 1998).

Sample

Participant parents were selected on the basis that they met several criteria. All were low income, living in the City of Wilmington, self described as Black or African American, had a parent who was also willing to be interviewed and participants must have had a child between the ages of eight and twelve years old. Grandparents must also have been low income, but need not live within the city limits.

Although the study was initially interested in grandparents and parents, it became limited to mothers and grandmothers for several reasons. Primarily, adult males were not readily available. The researcher attempted to solicit fathers and grandfathers but they were either simply inaccessible, working and couldn't make time to participate or uninterested. The research design was not compromised by limiting the sample to mothers and grandmothers because the intergenerational aspect was still able to be examined.

The age range of including only those children aged eight to twelve was selected to help make responses to a somewhat abstract concept more realistic. For example, parents of very young children may perceive that all possibilities are open to their child, while parents of adolescence will likely feel locked into a course of educational or vocational action based in part on the child's age, development and previous scholastic success.

Previous research indicates that families begin making plans for their child's future prior to entrance into high school which has traditionally been the age of inquiry for researchers interested in post high school attainment (Eccles, Vida & Barber, 2004). Furthermore, research suggests that parents begin thinking about college or post high school plans as early as elementary school (Brown-Rosier, 2000) or during early middle school (Somers, Cofer & VanderPutten, 2002). Whatever the case, it is clear that families begin thinking about and possibly planning for post high school plans before the onset of high school. The range was also selected because students had not entered the middle and high school tracking or sorting system, which guides students either toward college or away from it (Cheng & Starks, 2002; Kao & Tienda, 1998).

In addition to families having students of the target age, families must have incomes no more than twice the federal poverty line for their family size. Please see Appendix A for a chart outlining the current poverty levels. Social scientists have argued that the poverty line is much too low; at the time of the study in Delaware the minimum wage is $6.15 per hour (http://www.dol.gov/esa/minwage/america.htm#Delaware). An individual working forty hours per week at $6.15 per hour would earn $11,808 per year before tax and other withholdings such as insurance, liens, or child support directly withdrawn.

Theoretically, an individual who earns the minimum wage should be able to escape poverty, but this is not the case for many. The Economic Policy Institute notes that the self-sufficiency standard changes by year, family type and geographic site. At the time of data collection the calculations for Wilmington Delaware reveal that the minimum wage would need to be more than doubled to allow a family to live a modest lifestyle (Pierce &

53

Brooks, 2003). A family of one adult and one preschooler in Wilmington would need to earn at least $14.39 per hour to live modestly, meaning without government aid and with safe housing, adequate nutrition, and health care. One adult with no children must earn $8.35 per hour to make ends meet in Wilmington (Pierce and Brooks, 2003). Due to the recognition that the poverty line is uselessly low, this research will include families which have incomes no more than 200% of the federal poverty line. Equally as important, the researcher is interested in those who self describe as low income. An individual's assessment of his/her relative hardship is important to the researcher as it provides an understanding of that person's economic and social standing.

Parents and children must live within the city limits in order to more fully test the culture of poverty theory. Although Wilmington is a small city when compared to nearby Philadelphia, Baltimore and Washington DC, evidence of urban characteristics abound. The map in appendix B shows Wilmington's various neighborhoods with those high poverty areas indicated by shading. Participant's neighborhoods are indicated with a dot.

The final selection criterion is that only those parents whose own parent is available for interview will be selected. This is to understand the goals that the grandparent has for the grandchild and his or her role in instilling the goal and helping the child reach the goal. Families in which grandparents, parents and children co-reside were deliberately excluded to focus on those who did not live together. It is possible that multigenerational co-residential families would function differently than those with grandparents living separately, as such, these families were purposely excluded.

Sample Selection

The study began with parents, specifically mothers, of students enrolled in a charter school in the city of Wilmington who showed an interest in team sports. Participant parents were recruited through researcher contact with them at the sporting events, through flyers and word of mouth by an administrator. After recruiting approximately half of the families through the charter school, the researcher was unable to recruit any additional families. Obstacles for recruitment included lack of an available grandparent or parent and the fact that the school year was quickly ending as was the team sport. After the final charter school dyad was interviewed, the researcher asked participants via telephone or at the end of the interview if they knew of any additional families that met the three selection criteria. One family referred the researcher to two additional families and the last family provided contact info to others. This sampling technique evolved into a snowball sample, which is useful when members of a special population are particularly difficult to locate or engage (Babbie, 2004). The snowball sample is nonrandom and is compatible with the depth interview which aims to increase richness of responses and is therefore uninterested in randomness (Miller & Crabtree, 2000).

The sample size numbered eight grandparent-parent dyads and each respondent received a twenty dollar stipend to encourage their participation. A copy of the stipend receipt can be found in Appendix C. The decision to interview eight dyads was made in conjunction with advisors and in keeping with the exploratory tradition which calls for in depth interviews with a smaller number of respondents (Miles & Huberman, 1984). The data reached a saturation point prior to interviewing all eight dyads. Saturation in

55

interview research is the point at which no new information emerges from the

participants; rather, the information takes on a repetitive quality (Seidman, 1998).

Instrument

A copy of the research protocol can be found in Appendix D. The instrument is

divided into two sections, the first collects basic demographic information, while the

second actually addresses the research questions.

The interview protocol was developed partially from the review of the literature, and

from collaboration between the researcher and advisors. A similar protocol was

developed for the pilot study of the project and the resulting protocol is the revision of

this older instrument. The pilot study revealed difficulties with certain questions and the

absence of other questions needed to understand the topic more fully. The probes that the

researcher employs are a direct result of literature that suggests that low income families

want their children to continue their education and as such engage in strategies to ensure

their child's current and future scholastic success (Brown- Rosier, 2000). The instrument

includes questions specific to gender because readings also reveal that families sculpt

aspirations and that parents may have different goals for male and female children (Hill,

1999; Hill, 2002). Research questions focus on the strategies that families employ to keep

the child focused on education as well as why they perceive that higher education is

necessary or desirable. Questions also address the plans that families have to move their

child into post secondary education and the specific barriers that stand in the way.

Research has suggested that individuals born into different cohorts have differing

opinions about the nature of contemporary racism (MacLeod, 1995); consequently both parents and grandparents are asked about the role of race in their child's education.

Data Analysis and Reporting

The interviews occurred in the homes of the participants, although selection of an interview location was left up to the participant. Three of eight interviews were conducted with the grandparent-parent dyad together with the interviewer; the remaining five of eight were conducted individually. Again, participants chose to speak with the researcher alone or with the other adult present and also being interviewed. The rationale for this approach was to be as participant focused as possible in order to facilitate an atmosphere of comfort and trust.

Prior to the interview the researcher explained the study, the informed consent process and had the informed consent forms signed. A copy of the informed consent form can be found in Appendix E. Interviews ranged from lasting approximately thirty minutes to two hours and twenty minutes. Through another research method, observation, the researcher noted changes in posture, emotion and other nonverbal gesturing in a series of field notes as set forth by Babbie (2004). The researcher also hand wrote responses while interviewing participants as well as audio recorded these responses.

Analysis includes examining the transcripts of the recordings for themes that are common across families, and for identifying robust or disconfirming cases (Babbie, 2004). Coding may take several forms including physically cutting transcripts and putting themed categories together in an envelope and using multi colored writing instruments to specify categories. The analytical process is always in motion. As new themes emerge

with the addition of new cases, other themes may be thrown out as they no longer fit. In addition, categories may have to be collapsed if they are really part of the same larger phenomenon (Babbie, 2002). Advisors and other colleagues become important during the analysis of the data as what emerges from the transcripts are the result of the researcher's understandings and perceptions of the content. Others may aid in the process by checking to see if the themes are logical and represent the participant fully. Colleagues such as other graduate students who have used the qualitative interview and a licensed family therapist helped provide checks with this undertaking.

Validity

Valid findings are an issue for all professional research that is to be taken seriously. Validity is of particular concern when qualitative interviews are the data collection method. The fact that a pilot study was conducted to refine questions and familiarize the student researcher with the research process was helpful in managing this project and in increasing validity.

In addition, researching the qualitative process aided the researcher in learning the ways that researcher bias can affect not only the interpretation of the data, but the very responses to the questions (Babbie, 2004). The major way to combat the unique bias that every researcher brings is to have others review the data and themes searching for accuracy and perhaps, other themes that the researcher neglected. These themes were reviewed by an experienced researcher advisor, a graduate level student and a licensed therapist.

Chapter 4

RESULTS

This chapter will discuss the results or findings of the research inquiry. The context and setting will be introduced with basic information about the City of Wilmington and the city's demographic makeup. Next, demographic information about the participants will be discussed in text and shown in a chart format. The themes will be introduced and then expounded upon in the participants' own voices.

City of Wilmington

The researcher is familiar with the context of the study, the City of Wilmington, located on the east coast mid Atlantic state of Delaware. The city of Wilmington is home to approximately 72, 000 people, of which 56% of Wilmington's inhabitants are Black or African American (U.S. Census, 2000). Outside of Wilmington, but within the state of Delaware, only 9.2% of the population is Black or African American (US Census, 2000). In addition, 21.3% of the city's population is below the poverty line compared to 9.2% of the state's population living outside of Wilmington (U.S. Census, 2000). To illustrate Wilmington's dense population compared to the rest of the state, consider that there are 6,698.1 people per square mile living in the city of Wilmington compared to only 401 people per square mile living outside Wilmington in the state of Delaware (U.S. Census,

2000). The racial, income and population density differentiates Wilmington from the remained of the state and identifies Wilmington as the state's most urban area.

Wilmington might be described as a micropolitan area. The census defines a micropolitan as a core urban area of at least 10,000 people as the nucleus with an "adjacent community having a high degree of economic and social integration with the core" (U.S. Census, 2000). Some argue that urbanicity based on size is a useless definition as it does not capture the peculiarities of a place that lend themselves to being city-like (McClafferty, Torres & Mitchell, 2000). The previous assertion seems to describe Wilmington quite well.

Ironically, although Delaware is relatively small in terms of geographic space and population, it often ranks high among other states among indicators of high risk. For example- Delaware has been identified as the seventh most dangerous state to live in regarding violent crime (The Disaster Center, 2006). The Annie E. Casey Foundation identified the Philadelphia/ Camden/Wilmington metropolitan as having the fourth highest population of children living in severely distressed neighborhoods, defined as having high rates of poverty, female headed homes, unemployed adult males and high school desertion (O'Hare & Mather, 2003).   Wilmington is also home to the nation's 11th highest AIDS/HIV rate (Centers for Disease Control, 2000), and has been categorized in the top ten state's concerning illicit drug use (US Department of Health & Human Services, 2000). Other social risk indicators that plague Wilmington include a higher than state and national average teen pregnancy rate, low birth weight rate, infant mortality and children in one parent families (Kids Count in Delaware, 2006).

Also, although over half of the state's poverty is in New Castle County, the county in which Wilmington is situated, the highest state incomes are also within New Castle County (Kids Count in Delaware, 2006). This juxtaposition of poor and wealthy living alongside one another coupled with an area rife with violent crimes, illegal drugs, high poverty, teen pregnancy, infant mortality and other risk indicators create a situation of hopelessness and desperation. Based on the information presented here about Wilmington, one can conclude that it is indeed a city where a researcher can find elements of the Culture of Poverty theory present.

All the children and mothers participating in the study lived within the city limits of the city of Wilmington. Two grandmothers lived outside of the city limits but were born or raised in the city of Wilmington. Both of these grandmothers continued to live in a low income area when they relocated from Wilmington.

Participant Demographics

Table one contains the demographic information collected at the time of the interview. Mothers ranged in age from twenty-five to forty three years and grandmothers ranged in age from forty-one through eighty-one. This makes the sample somewhat varied, but overall quite young. Income was low for all participants, with a range from earning less than ten thousand per year to thirty five thousand per year as the maximum. Appendix A lists the federal poverty guidelines at both 100% of the level and 200% of the poverty level. Clearly, these families are low or moderate income. At the outset of the interviewing process all participants self identified as low or moderate income.

Of the total sample, six mothers identified high school completion as their highest level of education, one parent had completed college and one parent stopped attending high school just short of graduating. Similarly, six of eight grandmothers identified high school completion as their highest level of formal schooling, and like their daughters, one grandparent started college but didn't complete and one grandparent ended their education before finishing high school. Two grandmothers reported that they finished high school only after first dropping out, baring children and then returning years later. Thirty percent of Wilmington's population has completed a high school diploma or its equivalent; 18.4% of Wilmington's population dropped out of high school and 18.6% of Wilmingtonians dropped out of college (U.S. Census Bureau, 2000). The educational demographic information for the grandmothers fits well with Wilmington's larger set of education completion data. For both cohorts, six of eight were gainfully employed at the time of the interview and a total of four participants were either unemployed or retired. One of the two unemployed mothers was in the advanced stages of pregnancy and was out of work expecting her sixth child.

Concerning marital status, the majority (six) of mothers were single, one was married and the oldest mother was divorced. There was more variety among the marital status' of grandmothers. Three grandmothers were single, one was a widower, two were divorced and two were married. Half (four) grandmothers had their own children in their home; two were still raising minor children while two grandmothers lived with their adult daughters who were the biological maternal aunt to the study child. All adult participants were female and all participants are Black as determined by self description.

Among children involved in the study, all were described as Black by their caretakers. There were two female children involved in the study and six male children. Children ranged in age from eight through twelve. Three children were enrolled in public school at the time of the study and five were enrolled in charter school although there was considerable changing of schools among all students. School changes were due to both moving and an attempt to find a school that the family thought was most conducive to their child's education. Two of eight children were diagnosed as having ADHD and were medicated for this concern. The tables below summarize the demographic data of the mothers', grandmothers' and children respectively.

TABLE 2:

Mothers' Demographics

CODED NAME & MARITAL STATUS	AGE	RACE	INCOME & OCCUPATIO N	# CHN IN HOME	HIGHEST EDUCATION LEVEL
Sincere Single	27	Black	15-20k Unemployed	5	HS Graduate
Rochelle Married	25	Black	30-35k Occupation unknown	4	Some College
Liz Single	37	Black	25-30k Telemarketing	4	HS Graduate
Vikki Single	27	Black	10-15k cleaner	2	11th Grade
LaTecia Single	28	Black	<10k institutional custodian	2	HS Graduate
Karla Single	28	Black	20-25k Claims Processor	2	HS Graduate
Crystyn Divorced	43	Black	15-20k Unemployed	4	College Graduate
Tammy Single	33	Black	25-30k Occupation unknown	0	HS Graduate

TABLE 3:

Grandmothers' Demographics

CODED NAME & MARITAL STATUS	AGE	RACE	INCOME & OCCUPATION	# CHN. IN HOME	HIGHEST EDUCATION LEVEL
Gertrude single	50	Black	25-30k Occupation Unknown	0	HS Graduate
Donnetta married	51	Black	35-40k Seamstress	0	HS Graduate
Celestine married	81	Black	25-30k Retired	0	HS Graduate
Andje single	43	Black	15-20k Institutional Cleaner	2	8th Grade
Desiree single	41	Black	15-20k Cleaner	1	Some College
Anne widower	45	Black	30-35k Daycare Provider	1	HS Graduate
Joan divorced	62	Black	15-20k Retired	0	HS Graduate
Arneice divorced	57	Black	25-30k Daycare Provider	1	HS Graduate

TABLE 4:

Child Demographics

CODED NAME	AGE	RACE	GENDER	SCHOOL	KNOWN DISABILITY
Jadavan	8	Black	Female	Public	No
Keith	9	Black	Male	Charter	No
Ethan	8	Black	Male	Charter	Yes, ADHD
Jeslyn	10	Black	Female	Charter	No
Rodney	9	Black	Male	Charter	Yes, ADHD
Jesse	10	Black	Male	Public	No
Ryan	9	Black	Male	Charter	No
Shommar	12	Black	Male	Public	No

Five Themes

The participants shared a great deal of personal information concerning their families and their family history. They spoke meaningfully and at times angrily about the school system as a whole and passionately about subjects such as race and inequality. They drew upon their lived experiences and those of other family members as well as observations of today's America to discuss their perceptions of education. Several of the grandmothers in particular were quite conscience of and articulate in discussing historical

and contemporary concerns with educational systems. As a result of the participant interviews five themes emerged from these participants narratives including: 1.) Families as a Child Rearing Machine, to include Role Strain; 2.) High Valuation of Education and Varying Definition of Success; 3.) Concerns with Inequality; 4.) Use of Strategies; and 5.) Child Self Determination.

The five themes will be presented one by one beginning with a brief introduction. Frequency tables and a summary follow each theme Participant quotations were chosen based on their ability to convey the overall theme. When possible, both a grandmother and mother's comments are used. The researcher chose to copy the transcripts into this document verbatim in order to give the reader a context for the participant responses and to further establish credibility. A final note- In most themes no effort was made to parse out grandmothers versus mothers comments because they were similar, differences were noted.

Theme One: Families as a Child Rearing Machine including Role Strain

Theme one describes the way that mothers negotiate child rearing with maintaining employment among other responsibilities. This theme also involves the profound importance of the family as whole as central to the adult leaders. Each mother and grandmother that was involved in the study spoke of their family of origin, their family of procreation and their extended family very highly and quite frequently. Among the three dyads that were interviewed together responses and dialogues flowed between the two seamlessly. It was clear that mothers and grandmothers alike believe that the family is paramount to the child's well being. Even beyond the grandparent- parent dyad

there were mentions of aunts in particular participating in help with the target child and

his/her mother. The following passages will demonstrate the families' dedication to each

other and to the children. Consider the dyad interview with mother Karla and

grandmother Anne's response to the interviewer's first question:

> DT: Alright, so you know that the study is about the educational goals that
> families have for their kids, and even in a broader perspective, well, I'm just
> wondering how you feel that people can become successful in American society.
> Karla: Um, education is basically the key to them becoming successful. But also
> having a *strong family background, you know, ethics, morals, stuff that is
> basically not taught at school, it's taught at home is a way of children becoming
> successful. They are a product of their environment so if they see that there
> parents are doing well, they will do well also they wanna follow in their footsteps.*
> Anne: I agree, but it takes two people to make a child- and the *whole tribe to raise
> the child. When the parents can't be there, that when the grandparents and the
> rest of the family have to step up and enforce the morals, the manners, the
> homework, um, you have to show them that in a daily basis for the child to be
> successful...*

Anne's daughter, Karla who is the mother of Jesse spoke about the importance of

maintaining family pride and remaining devoted to family which was interwoven

throughout the sanctity of family theme. Karla also spoke of being compliant with her

mother and her extended family although she is an adult:

> DT: That makes sense that avoids a lot of confusion that shows a strong front
> Karla: Me and his father and on the same page- when you are on punishment here
> and you roll out to your father's house- that punishment follows you to your
> father's house. You don't get any reprieve; you will pay the price- all of the
> family is like that. If you are wrong- I am going to tell you are wrong- there are
> consequences for that- in our family that the way it goes. I am an adult- but I still
> have consequences to my mom and my aunts if I did something wrong- whether I
> made a personal decision or a decision for them that wasn't correct- we were
> always taught that you have somebody to answer to even when you are an adult
> you will have someone to answer to- in the end you answer to the lord. Don't take
> what you have for granted- my family teaches us not to be boastful- Our goals in
> our family is that we want to stay strong we want to stay together we have a
> saying in our family- *"BAAE"- which means blood above all else- that means*

that we are going to take care of our own, my grandmother used to have a saying charity starts at home and spreads abroad- I never understood that when I was little- now I do. You take care of home. That's what we are taught- that is what a family is. It is inevitable that everyone must go, but the next up will take their place and continue the strong bond that we have together.

Parent of nine year old Ryan, Liz is a single mother with four children. She succinctly states how her family operates to meet Ryan and her other children's needs:

> DT: It's gotta be hard working two jobs and having the kids all the time
> Liz: It is. It is. But it's better to be by myself than with their Dads. Like I said before the father of the youngest is, was, real violent. It took me a long time to get away from him; I mean it, a long time. Sometimes he calls and begs me to come back, but I'm over that. It's over and we're better off much better off.
> DT: Do you have any help [with raising the children]?
> Liz: Yes and no. My mom won't help me with the kids if it's on my second job…I'm sure she will tell you that she doesn't approve of me workin' at the bar.
> DT: That's your second job?
> Liz: Yeah, I bartend at night. She don't like me being out late like that and she don't like that it's a bar. Other than that, she loves these kids and she does a lot for 'em and for me.
> DT: Oh okay.
> Liz: And my sister lives right across the street. She helps me with mine and I help her with hers…that's the benefit of comin' all the way back home from down south. It works out good. We always got family to back each other up. But that's how it works--- I go to MBNA in the day and on the weekends I go to the bar. That's how we get by. I have to do what I have to do, I mean, I can't depend on their Dads. I don't get any child support from their Dads and I don't even want to go there.

Grandmothers and mothers were clear that the family aids in the child's development and that these family members should be active in the child's life in order to have an impact on it. This quote from Gertrude, grandmother of child Jadavan illustrates this point.

> DT: Do you feel like a relationship with an adult is crucial? [Long pause] An adult in the family?
> Gertrude: Oh yeah, adults must interact with children, must. It takes a lot of time. You have to listen to them and see exactly where there little minds are going and

then after that … you can pretty much enhance and broaden if you don't have that inner support, you will find a lot of that misbehavior

Later in the same interview Gertrude reiterates the importance of active involvement with her grandchildren:

> Gertrude: It is a daily thing, you can't let it go on and on what they want to do, you have to be in their lives everyday. It's a time investment, you know? That's what we do. I know exactly what is going on with each of them. Sometimes we have ten or eleven of them in here at the same time, but we manage to give each one of them individual attention.

Involvement in a grandchild's educational life also took the form of involvement in the adult parents' development. Grandparent of Jeslyn, Andje and her daughter Vikki were interviewed together and revealed another central aspect of the importance of family theme which was encouragement of the adult parent in order to benefit the minor child. This educational encouragement aspect was also part of the following grandparent/parent dyads: Andje/Vikki, Gertrude/ Sincere, Anne/Karla and Desiree/LaTecia. This excerpt from the interview with Andje and Vikki illustrates the encouragement piece of the centrality of family theme.

> DT: Do you talk with her [Jeslyn] specifically about what it is that you want her accomplish?
> V: Yeah, but I don't go deep into it. I tell her I want her to graduate, I want her to be successful, no children at a young age, learn new things, be outgoing, learn whatever she can learn. She know that I didn't graduate, I tell her not to be like me.
> DT: How do you feel that you can influence her?
> V: [Sighs] by me doing it, by me going back to school. [Laughs uncomfortably]
> DT: You know, I had this conversation earlier with your mom about going back to school, is she on your back about it?
> V: No, but she says nice things to me. Like sometimes, I say "I'm dumb, I don't know anything" she will say, "No, you're not dumb, you are not dumb, you are intelligent"….You know, she is my mom she is supposed to say that…

All: laughter

V: But, I see her trying to go back for her GED, so it's encouraging me. But, right now, I have to work to support my kids, make money. Once I get together what I got to get together I am definitely going back to school.

DT: Is working more important?

V: Yes and no

DT: That is an issue that I had, and that a lot of families have. Am I going to work, go to school or am I going to do both?

A: sometimes it's a toss up. Well, it ain't no choice- we gotta eat.

DT: Mhm, it can be very difficult

A: Well, that's what's been taking me so long to get my GED. I been getting it since, I been getting it since 1979.

With families having so many responsibilities both in and out of the home education for the adult members is at times secondary. Many families are able to survive through developing and maintaining relationships that meet the needs of members. Clearly, part of the reason for the importance of family involvement within low income Black families is in response to the many demands on a low income single Black mother. Bear in mind that seven of eight mothers were unmarried at the time of the study and that six were actively engaged in the work force, one was seeking employment outside the home and the other was due to give birth. These were women with more than one child who were working in low wage jobs or were seeking employment. In short, they were being stretched thin between their multiple roles. Due to working full time and being a full time mother, as well as other commitments, these women welcomed and sought help from family members often. The following segment will focus on the mother's reliance on family members to meet the needs of the child. The following passage helps illustrate the ongoing difficulty that mother Crystyn had when trying to hold down a full time job

and meet her son's educational needs. Crystyn's son Ethan was later diagnosed with

ADHD.

> Crystyn: Well, for me, um, the reason I reenrolled him in charter school- a lady works with me, she had advised me to send him to charter school. She was the person, somebody else's school .She advised me to put him there. Because she knew what I was going through with the preschool and Bush, the Bush Elementary. Every five minutes they were callin' me to come and get him. I mean, and I literally though that I had to come and go get him. I didn't know no better. So I would have to leave my job all the time. I would have a deadline [at work] at 12 noon and they would call me at 11:15, "Ethan wont get on the bus" or "Ethan is just falling out so we got him down the principles office, so I need you to come get him". So I have to pass my work to someone else, you know, "Can you do my deadline? I gotta go". You know, and this was all the time. So she talked to me, she said to me, "You know what, I met Ethan, why don't you try to enroll him [in charter]". And that's what made me put him in charter school, okay? And they haven't had those problems. I don't know why he hasn't they haven't had those problems there, maybe he matured. But I didn't get called off of work anymore and that was good for all of us.

Later in the same interview, Crystyn talked again about the difficulty that she had

managing her roles as provider and mother.

> Crystyn: I put him in four different schools in one week, because it was just that bad. The school that he was supposed to go to, they couldn't bus him from Head Start because it wasn't in their feeder patterns. So I would have to leave my job, pick him up from Head Start and take him there. Then in two hours, come back and take him back again. It was like I was always working half days. I was taking two leaves of absences for him.

At times during school Ethan's behavior became so extreme that his teachers demanded

that Crystyn accompany him on all field trips or he could not attend. This presented a

problem for her as she was working full time.

> Crystyn: And a lot of people know me because I fight for Ethan and my daughter. I know what they need and I want to know what you are going to do to give it to them. And if I feel that a teacher or another person they

are in contact with don't understand them, I will tell them "You don't know what you are doing".... I had to tell the YMCA daycare that. Every time I come, he is in a corner, or they had gave him to another teacher. The lady said "I'm educated and I know how to deal with kids like that" and I said "well, then why when you go on trips he can't go unless I go?" *Unless somebody goes with him, and a lot of times he didn't get to go on trips. If I couldn't take off- he couldn't go. I can't always be takin' off for filed trips, I can't. And then, what would make it bad is that I would have to find somebody to keep him or I would wind up having to take off anyways because they wouldn't provide back up care.*

Mother of Keith aged 9, Rochelle, works full time and has a total of four children. She also spoke of the difficulty of raising her children and working. Rochelle was unique in that unlike the other mothers in the study; she was married at the time of the interview. She was the parent in the household that was more involved in her children's schooling.

> DT: Tell me about the school. Which of you, or do both go to the school for meetings and....
> Rochelle: I go. Well, he [husband] basically thinks that I should go that I am in charge of their education and stuff. He will go sometimes if I can't go, or, or, my mom will go. Once she went with me. She goes out to the schools for me.
> DT: Why can't you go to the school?
> Rochelle: Because of work. Plus, I have four kids, between all of them I can't go to each of their schools or daycares all the time.
> DT: What interaction do you have with the school? Do you go to the PTA meetings or anything?
> Rochelle: Marion T. tries to make each parent volunteer at least two hours a month. I try to get in there but like I said, I work. I don't go participate in PTA because the other parents are, I don't want to label them, but they are well, they're, they're not disciplined and immature. They also have a fee. I think they should be more focused on raising the academic standards.
> DT: Do you think that being involved in Keith's school helps him?
> Rochelle: Yeah- it shows him that I care and I will know if he messes up.

Rochelle's mother Donetta stated that she volunteers in Keith's classroom as often as she can. She didn't specifically say that she did this because of her daughter or son in law's

73

work schedule, but instead focused on the value that she perceived was added to her

grandchild's school experience.

> DT: How do you show Keith that education is important? Do you talk about it with him, talk with the school?
> Donetta: A lot of things. Remember, Keith sees his family in school learning. His father has been in school, his mother has taken classes. I took classes and became an ordained minister. He probably thinking "As old as they are still runnin' off to school learning".
> DT: What about the school, do you visit the school? I had one family tell me that they dropped in on the school.
> Donetta: I volunteer in the classroom when I can.
> DT: Do you? Do you think that that benefits Keith at all?
> Donetta: Because of- When people's families are involved they get more attention. They know that they really have to come up higher with that child. They just can't push them aside.

Later in the interview Donetta talks about Keith being lucky that he has the entire family

as support to his academic endeavors and uses her life experiences to inform those of her

grandchild. Donetta is a seamstress and was largely self taught.

> Donetta: I'll use myself as an example. When I was growing up, I did not grow up in an academic household. I didn't learn anything until I got out of school, till I realized that it was important for myself. Then I started training. Then I really start getting different certificates and degrees and stuff. I didn't finish school and start training. 'Cause I didn't have that backing. And it is just a gift of God that I have the skills that I have 'cause they are natural to me. But, he has us backing him. He has our support. And a child with family support and one with no support, you will see the difference. And plus he has someone that he can go to. And I be the person.

Donetta felt very strongly that the family was Keith's major asset aside from his innate

intelligence. She felt that these two factors would allow him to succeed academically.

> DT: Can you describe any other relationships or things that need to happen so that he's able to continue to excel in school?

Donetta: He has his family. And he has grandparents, and parents and he has his uncles and his aunts and …… [Long pause] he has family. That is a very big part.

Although Rochelle is married, she stated that her mother has gone to the school on her behalf. Rochelle depends on her mother. Rochelle is similar to Vikki and the other mothers in the study in that she relies on family members, specifically grandparents to meet the education needs of the children. The following exchange between Vikki, mother of Jeslyn and grandmother Andje further illustrates the reliance on family theme at times because of work demands.

DT: What interaction do you have with Jeslyn's school?
V: I go to the awards ceremony, sometimes go to the PTA. I volunteer to clean, to set up for an event. *If I am not working- I like to be volunteering*
DT: is your schedule flexible- or does work interfere with school activities. For the awards ceremony- was there a problem getting off work?
V: Yeah sometimes the school will send a letter home for an event that is the next day…so it is hard to get off of work. The events always seem to fall on my busiest day
[Andje: Discussion about her shoes with her younger daughter]
DT: Okay- Do you feel that the volunteering in the school- the going to events is beneficial to Jeslyn?
V: Yes
DT: How so?
V: To support her, well, she bugs me to come, I want to show my face and be there to support her
DT: Have you been able to contact the school when needed- have they always responded?
V: Yeah. The teachers speaks to me weekly- by phone
DT: What about you grandma- what contact do you have with the school?
A: for my granddaughter- or daughter?
DT: Jeslyn
A: I go to her Thanksgiving Feast with her
DT: And did you go mom?
V: No- she went because I couldn't go

Perhaps more than any of the other participant dyads, Tammy depends on her

mother Arneice. They exemplify the ways that roles can be managed or changed to meet

the demands of the situation. Tammy is Arneice's daughter and works full time during

odd hours. She is often unable to predict her schedule and at other times her schedule

directly conflicts with her son Shomar's school routine. For this and other reasons,

Shomar lives with his grandmother Arneice and his maternal aunt in an apartment in the

9th ward section of Wilmington. Tammy lived alone during the time of the study and saw

herself as a backup to her mother. Tammy also discussed school involvement conflicting

with working.

> DT: What interaction do you have with [Shomar's] school? Do you go to…?
> Tammy: No I don't. I can't be takin' off from my job like that, I just can't.
> DT: I asked your mom if she though that [going to conferences] was beneficial?
> Tammy: Well- we always have someone there to talk with the teachers. I can't do it, so she do.

Arneice, grandmother of Shomar saw family as one of Shomar's assets. In this way this

family is a lot alike the other families presented here in the theme of primacy of family.

In fact, the first strength that Arneice mentioned was his family, followed by a list of

others.

> DT: What do you thin will make it happen? –What will help Shomar finish school- whatever level that is?
> Arneice what do you mean?
> DT: What strengths do you see within him or within the family that may help him succeed in education?
> Arneice: His family. He got grandparents, aunts who are willing to help him. He has a caring family that wants to see him do well. He loves school; he has a mentor who is like his family.
> DT: He has a mentor?

Arneice: Mhm. Been comin' to see him since he was in first grade. He is a doctor of Chemistry.

DT: what does he do?

Arneice: He can go on trips with him, call him, visit, help with homework, concerts. He [referring to Shomar] is also intelligent.

The investigator asked Arneice about her special responsibilities with Shomar due to their unique situation. From our dialogue it is clear that the family roles were reversed as a way to meet the needs of the unit.

DT: What is the grandparent's role in a child's education success?

Arneice: Do you mean just any grandparent or me?

DT: You. Your role. What is your responsibility?

Arneice: well, you know that grandparents are often the parents of the grandkids. Because parents are in jail sometimes, or maybe they are unavailable if it is a drug situation.

DT: Okay

Arneice: I am….I am completely responsible. I am the parent.

DT: Why is that?

Arneice: His mom is at work trying to support him.

The role strain discussed above dealt primarily with the difficulty of meeting demands to raise children and work outside the home and a reliance on grandparents, specifically grandmothers to ease this tension by having the grandparent act as a fill in. A different example of role strain within the families comes from grandmothers who were still involved in raising their own minor children when they entered grandparenthood. As the family chart illustrates, three of eight grandmothers had minor children in their homes at the time of the study. These women coupled their child rearing with providing help to their children and grandchildren. For Andje, balancing responsibilities to her teen aged children and to her granddaughter Jeslyn became a struggle at times. Andje coached her daughter Vikki about school choice while at the same time tackling the difficulties her

own adolescent son was having in school. Consider the following excerpt from the

transcript interview with Andje and Vikki:

> DT: What do you think about monitoring Jeslyn's friends?
> A: I monitor all friends. They (referring to her children and Jeslyn) can't take it! But I love it.
> DT: Is it difficult to do?
> A: No it's not difficult for me, but it does get overwhelming at times, between my two teens and Jeslyn. It does get overwhelming, but I don't give up on that shit! [Laughter] .....Its not difficult…its overwhelming because you have to stay encouraged or else you wont be any good to the grand's. It becomes overwhelming dealing with your own issues and then trying to be a strength for the whole family. It can be overwhelming. Certainly, you don't just throw in the towel; you have to keep being their encourager, their supplier…

Grandmother Desiree was raising a school aged son at the time of the study and was the

grandmother of study child Rodney. She mentioned the difficulty of being involved with

Rodney's school due to her own work commitments and commitments to her own son.

> DT: What interaction do you have with Rodney's school?
> D: None. They don't reach out to the family. Plus, I got my own son to worry about.
> DT: How old is your son?
> D: Twelve
> DT: Wow--- they are close [in age].
> D: Yeah, and they are close in other ways too.
> DT: Well, would you go to his school if you knew about events or meetings, or even if LaTecia asked you?
> D: It depends. If she couldn't do it and I knew it had to be done I would go. It's hard tryin' to get off work to go to Brice's [her son] things. I have met Rodney out there at the school before when she couldn't go. I do what I can, ya know?

The final grandmother with a child living at home was Anne, grandmother of

Jesse. Anne's youngest daughter lived at home at the time of the study because she had

recently graduated high school and was mentally disabled. There was no indication that

her daughter was moving out anytime soon. Anne didn't directly say that she experienced

difficulty in meeting the demands of caring for her disabled daughter and working while fulfilling other family responsibilities, but it appears to have caused some struggle. I base this conclusion on the observation that she operates a busy home daycare, maintains her daughter's appointments and is active with her grandson Jesse to the point that she is involved in his discipline and daily education. In addition, Anne's husband committed suicide in the late 1990's, and her mother died shortly after.

Theme one discussed the ways that families behave and organize themselves in order to meet the needs of members. Mothers share child rearing responsibilities and substitute the grandmother for work traditionally reserved for the parents. The participants repeatedly stated that this substitution was necessitated by their role in the labor force. The mothers relied heavily on their own mothers for things like babysitting, obtaining transportation, financial help, and for school intervention and communication. Role strain was a reality of life for both mothers and grandmothers. Recall that many of the grandmothers were employed at the time of the study and several were still parenting their own children.

Beyond the role strain and the necessity of helping family was the idea that the family is paramount. The idea of love for the children and meeting the physical, emotional and academic needs of the children was evident in participant comments.

TABLE: 5

Frequency of Utterances about Family

	*Family of Origin	*Number of Participants Commenting	**Extended Family	**Number of Participants Commenting
Mothers	31	8	21	8
Grandmothers	25	7	11	4

* Participant comment about how participant was raised or the need for family help/ advice from family
** Participant made any comment about participant's extended family

Theme Two: Valuation of Education & Varying Definitions of Success

The second theme revealed during the research is that low income urban Black family's value education highly, but they do not base success wholly on education, careers and income. Many participant comments illustrate that success may be defined in terms of having values and morals and in helping others.

Interestingly, families' responses to the questions designed to elicit answers about the importance of getting an education in contemporary U.S. society yielded both unexpected and predicted replies. Both mothers and grandmothers noted that education is inextricably tied to middle class status. However, many comments made about success in contemporary American society had more to do with being a well functioning person that treats others well than about careers or college. Among the unexpected responses given were mothers and grandmothers that identified helping others, being with family, having morals and becoming self sufficient as evidence of life success. Predicted responses

included those such as pursuing education, getting a well paying job and continuing at the same job in order to advance. Both predicted and unexpected answers were discussed in some form by all participants.

Predicted Responses: High Valuation of Education

The writer has called predicted responses those that center on education and career as a response to questions abut success in contemporary American society. The predicted responses are typical in that most mothers espoused ideas that their child should continue their educations through at least high school and complete college. In direct opposition to the Culture of Poverty Theory- all participants clearly valued education and the pursuit of knowledge. This statement is based on the fact that *each* mother and *each* grandmother discussed the usefulness of doing well in school and in securing at least a high school diploma. In fact, the majority of participants directly cited the college degree as their ambition for the study child. Only one participant mother, Tammy, stated that her goal was for her son Shomar to earn at least a GED. But, even Tammy demonstrated through her comments that she valued education.

The predicted responses to valuation of data can be classified into two distinct subtypes. Type one are those families that specifically talked about having the child go beyond what they had accomplished. They were passionate about education for the child now and in the future. These mothers were similar in that they each had mothers (the grandmother's in this study) that were exceptionally articulate regarding race, current events, and history. The second subtype can described as those that are interested in ensuring that the child gets all that they are due in school and are also interested in the

81

child pursuing college. This group understands the promise that education holds, but perhaps doesn't see this as a possibility for the child. In addition, this subtype while still valuing education, are united in having children which display more difficult behaviors. The following excerpts exemplify low income inner city Black families high valuation of education. This first passage is from Karla's interview regarding her son Jesse.

> K : For Jesse, I want him to finish high school, I want him to go past high school, go past what I did…..and to a point, I cheated myself because I didn't apply,   I didn't challenge myself to go to college…Not to say that it's too late
> DT: Yes, you can still go, you are very young
> K: I can still go, but I have a family, I do have to work….I want Jesse to make sure that he gets everything. He is very smart- he is in talented and gifted and I tell him to not cheat himself, even though we sometimes think that the racism and stereotypes are behind us, its still there and with him being a Black male, its always going to be there…

Sincere, like Karla wants her child to accomplish more than she did in her life thus far. Her comments below are similar to Karla's and illustrate her desire for her child to finish college.

> DT: Okay, what are your goals for Jadavan with respect to school, long term goals and short term goals? Like, this coming school year what do you hope she accomplishes and 15-20 years from now what do you hope that she accomplishes?
> S: This year I hope she does a little bit better [laughs] in her subjects, pays more attention, I want her to go to college in 15 years. I want them all to go to college
> S: What's that?
> Mom: Actually I want them all to go to college, to be able do the type of things like go to college that I wasn't able to do

Other parent responses to inquiries about the interest that they had in their children going beyond high school were similar to the comments above but lacked the emphasis on going beyond the parent's accomplishments. This subset is unique in that

they are equally as passionate and invested in the child's continuing education, but they do not frame the child's accomplishments in reference to their own. They also tended to be more abrupt in answering the questions pertaining to achievement. Liz, mother of Ryan and Rochelle, mother of Keith fit into this category. Their comments below, Liz, then Rochelle's, are very to-the-point. They know what they want for their sons and spoke in a frank, matter of fact way as though the decision has been made and their plans will be carried out.

> DT: What do you hope that Ryan will accomplish in school…for the future. What are your long range goals…?
> L: Ryan is [going] to go to a four year college.
> DT: What? Why is that?
> L: Because he can go further in life with a four year degree, that's a fact. He needs to study harder and pay more attention. Get a better grip on what is going on right now. But he is going to college. Oh yeah, he is going to college.
> DT: What are your goals for Keith with respect to school?
> R: I want him to at least complete a four year college and then after that, do something else…..

Later in the interview with Rochelle:

> DT: Okay, so you said that you want Keith to complete a four year college?
> R: Right.
> DT: And after that, it's up to him what he does as far as education. Why do you choose a four year degree as opposed to, um, a two year degree or military or some sort of vo-tech?
> R: The way things are going these days without a four year degree you're not gonna to get very far. You're not gonna be the next millionaire. Unless you come up with some big great idea that nobody's ever thought of. You just have a better chance with a four year, I think. On average, the person without a, with a high school diploma is not making more than $10.00 an hour. Even with an associate's degree they're not making more than $15.00.so, you definitely need more education.
>
> R: Anything less [than the four year degree] is going to be unacceptable, number one.

The following excerpts form the interviews with LaTecia, Crystyn, Vikki and

Tammy respectively, illustrate that they want their children to finish high school and

most specifically state that they want the child to continue to college.

> DT: What are your goals for Rodney's education? Along with the first
> question   that I asked, how important is education to success in
> American society?
> L: It (education) is very important to success. School is very important,
> you need it to succeed.
> DT: Then what are your long term and short term goals for Rodney? This
> coming school year, what do you hope he accomplishes and in the future?
> L: This year I just want him to do good in school. Bring up his grades a
> little bit, focus on his readin'. In the future, I, in the future, I'm not sure.
> What you mean?
> DT: Well, when you think about his future lets say, he is 9 now, in ten
> years…
> L: I do want him to go to college. Go to school now and work hard so that
> he can go to college. It's a lot of things that has to happen before he can
> go to college, but, yeah, go to college, four years.

From the interview with Crystyn:

> DT: What are some of the ways that people can become successfully in
> American society?
> C: um, through an education
> DT: Are there any other ways?
> C: If they plan [inaudible/Tape Garbled]
> DT: Okay, so, um, which is the main one, do you think?
> C: I feel education is the most important, the main way to be come
> successful. Because, with anything else you have to have knowledge
> unless you are one of the lucky ones where stuff is just passed down to
> you.
> DT: Okay, so some people are just lucky?
> C: Yeah, they might inherit [inaudible/tape garbled]. The majority rely on
> education
>
> DT: What are your goals for Ethan in respect to education?
> C: My goals for him? I know that he is gifted in math. I want him to be
> able to [inaudible] do good in school and in life. I want him to do the best
> he can, as far as achieving goals [inaudible] I want him be self sufficient.
> Where he can hold a job and have a career.

C: Well, my long term goal is that he finishes high school and go to college.

DT: Finish high school and go to college? Okay.

C: And even if it's a trade school, I mean something; have some kind of profession where if something happened to me, Ethan is able to take care of Ethan.

C: I find that most of the time, if you go to college you have a better chance at a better job…most of the time. That's not always saying that you go to college and you get a better job. I've seen people that just go to work and work so many years and do well.

This excerpt is from the interview with Vikki. Like the other mothers from this category, Vikki states that she wants her daughter to do well in her current schooling in order to go on to college.

DT: How important is formal education to becoming successful?

V: It is very important. Without that education, you won't be successful.

DT: What are your hopes or goals for Jeslyn's education? Current and in the future?

V: Like I said before, she wants to be a doctor, and I want her to do whatever she wants.

DT: That would require a lot of formal education… [Vikki interrupts]

V: Yeah it do and that's what I want. If that's what she wants [to be a doctor] she has a lot of school ahead of herself. So, like I said I would want her to be whatever she wants and she would have to go to a lot of school to be a doctor so that would be my goal for her.

Tammy is unlike any of the previous mothers that directly stated that they value education to the point of continuing beyond what is compulsory. Tammy is the only mother that did *not* directly state that education beyond high school is the goal for her son. Based on her interview and the researcher's observations, Tammy concluded that college was not an option for her son and she was not altogether convinced that a college education brings success and that one cannot be successful college.

DT: What are some of the ways that people can become successful in American society?

T: Education, going, to school, working

DT: What do you think about knowing people- some people say that to get a good job you have to know people- is that true?

T: That is true, in some cases- not all cases. You can have a high school diploma and can get a good job; you can go to school, to college and still come out and can't get a job for what you got that degree in. So, different things…

DT: In general for Americans, what would you say that the number one way is to become successful- like, it's probably not inheritance, or family business?

T: Some education-a, at least a GED. I know too many people who go to college and are still not successful- they can't get a job, the job they want.

DT: So, the current goal for him is to finish high school?

T: Yes.

Grandmothers did not differ from mothers in their valuation of education. Like their daughters, grandmothers valued education for a myriad of reasons including its usefulness in leading to work and as an exemplifier of Black pride. Overall, grandmothers tended to focus on the here and now of education and on doing well in school this school year. They clearly value education beyond the immediate as their comments below reflect. These excerpts illustrate that Black, low income urban grandmother's value education.

Gertrude is the grandmother of Jadavan and succinctly states what her goals are for Jadavan's education. The second excerpt indicates that the family has communicated about their hopes for the child's educational career.

DT: (to Gertrude) Long term goals [for Jadavan's education]?

G: I think that she should go to college if she qualifies-- her grades or even down to just simply getting a decent job to maintain herself, ya know? I look at it like this- you certainly want everyone to go to college, but we know realistically everyone is not going

DT: (to Gertrude) And what would you say that your goals are for Jadavan long term and short term goals?

G: Actually they are just about the same because we have discussed them, which way she should pursue, and hopefully if the plan works this coming school year we will have a better result and she probably wont be in summer school next year

Like Gertrude, Arniece is one of many grandmothers in the study that want their grandchild to go to college. Arniece has no plan on how to get Shomar to college, as no one in the immediate family has went to college before.

DT: What are your long term goals for Shomar's education?

A: I want him to go as far as her can go.

DT: What do you mean?

A: He wants to go to college, that's something that he has talked about. I would like him to go to college. I do, I really do. The level he goes on to depends on what he wants to do. He says right now that he wants to be an engineer.

DT: Do you talk about that with him?

A: Of course. But he changes his mind; last week he wanted to go to college to be an artist, a wrestler…so who knows?

Jody is Ethan's grandmother and like the grandmothers discussed above – she specifically states that she wants Ethan to do well in school this year, maintain his grades and his behavior and eventually graduate from college. Ethan is one of two study children who have been identified as having ADHD. Jody talked a lot in the interview about how he has improved in school and that she thinks that college is a real option for him. Ethan's mother, Crystyn, wasn't certain that college was an option- she saw it as more of a dream that she had for her son.

DT: Jody, What would you say that your goals are for Ethan's schooling?

J: The way things are going….well, uh… let me say this, you need college even to enter a low level job. Things have changed in the world—I, I hate

to say it but when I was comin' up things really were different. So what do I want for Ethan's schooling? I would like to see Ethan maintain his behavior and his grades and eventually go to college and graduate. He needs to keep away from peer pressure, stay occupied, stay out of trouble. It doesn't even matter what he studies so long as he has that degree.
DT: Why is that?
J: Just to get a good job, to support himself. But it's important that he learns along the way and doesn't just get pushed through.

Anne discussed how she values educations by saying that she wanted Jesse to receive "the best education possible". Anne and Desiree were two of a small group that spoke about the quality of the education received, not just the longevity. Desiree further indicated that she wants her grandson to at least complete high school, but she was hoping that he would show interest in continuing through college. Her comments fit with other grandmothers in that they value education and focus on the present to some extent. Overall, Desiree's comments fit both this theme of valuation of education and with the next theme of child self determination.

DT: What are your goals with regards to Rodney's education?
D: I hope he succeed and I will help him any way I can.
DT: When you think about his education, do you think about him going to college, completing high school, joining the military?
D: Uh, at least completing high school.
DT: Mhm, Do you think that college is an option for Rodney?
D: I don't know, I think he would like to continue.
DT: Is that something that you want for him?
D: Yes I would like that. It has to come from him, though.
DT: Okay
D: Help him in any way that I can. That what you go t to do today is help these kids go to school. I always tell them "finish school try to go to college, you wont have a messed up job like I do."

Later in the interview Desiree gives her reasoning as to why a college degree is a valuable investment:

88

DT: Do you think that completing college will help someone excel further than just completing high school alone?

D: Yes!

DT: Can you tell me more about that? I just want to understand why people feel that way? In your experience have you seen that?

D: Yeah I think people who finish college gets better jobs.

DT: Okay, okay

D: and it seems like their employer will have more respect for them if they have a degree in something

DT: Mhm

D: Nowadays it all about a degree. A high school diploma they laugh at it, its not nuthin' no more you know you really need some kind of degree

DT: so a high school diploma is nothing

D: Its not

Several of the grandmothers talked about placing a high value on education specifically for the sake of education, meaning, not to lead to a career or advancement but rather for cultural reasons. As the literature review indicated, Blacks in America have had a long and difficult history regarding obtaining an education. The following statements made by grandmothers Anne and Gertrude speak directly to the valuation of education among older low income Black people. After Anne discussed the importance of situating current educational concerns squarely within the context of Black history, her daughter Karla did as well.

DT: I think that both of you answered my next question- which is why this (college) was the goal as opposed to something else? And you said that it will be more difficult if you don't have the basic level of education…

A: Not only that, not to be racist or to take it back around race, but, that was something that our ancestors was beat for- to learn to read and write. If they can sustain everything that happened to them, we as a group of people- that should be the first thing that we want to accomplish. It wasn't given to us, we had to take it, it wasn't pleasurable for us.

K: People don't know their history. A lot of kids don't have parents that will not sit down and talk to them and explain to them. Jesse told me at one point that he did not want to read I had to break it down for him that

hundreds of years ago- we were not allowed to read and write. So I taught him about slavery and segregation through "A Time to Kill" with Samuel L. Jackson. It's a lot of things that people don't want to take ownership for what is going on with their child.

Arniece, Shomar's grandmother also talked about education in terms of Black history:

DT: has Shomar experienced racism at school that you know of, to your knowledge?
A: well, not that I can directly say "that happened because he is Black". I don't know I would have to think on that. But, Black people have had to struggle for their education and Shomar is Black so he will fit right in there with 'em. It hasn't been a problem for Shomar- but it has for the whole Black race. And, you know what? There's no way to shield him from that.

The following passages are united in that they express the participant families' nontraditional views of success. The reader must keep in mind that families cited *both* predicted and unexpected answers having to do with success. For the purposes of this research, varying definitions of success include any reference to aspects of life that do not have to do with education, career or class status. Participants cited things like self reliance, happiness, morals and values, and staying out of jail or keeping from being harmed as forms of success.

The first excerpt is from the dyad interview with Andje and Vikki. Andje states that educating family members about their ancestry and about family values is not only educational, but also is the very definition of success. Karla talked about success in terms of values and self sufficiency. Further below, mothers Karla and Rochelle were well spoken and aware of the dangers that their Black male child faced as a city resident.

DT: What are some of the ways that people can become successful in the US?
A: Family Values is first, second would be education, good education

90

DT: what do you mean by family values?
A: To make sure that the children know their self values, family history, to know   about their culture so that they can have a foundation
DT: make sure they lean their family history, their culture
A: Self values. Also how to give respect how to be honorable, trustworthy
DT: Mhm. Do you feel that honoring yourself and your family, is that the foundation for education?
A: Well, that is education---ha ha ha ha

These passages from Karla and Anne's interview further demonstrate the sub-theme of

varying definitions of success:

K: Um, education is basically the key to them becoming successful. But also   having a strong family background, you know, ethics, morals, stuff that is basically not taught at home, it's taught at school is a way of children becoming successful. They are a product of their environment so if they see that there parents are doing well, they will do well also they wanna follow in their footsteps.

K: I think that being successful isn't just about the amount of money that you   make because you can make a large amount of money and be very unhappy and   not be successful. Success is about how you go there, how you felt about how you got there; it's not necessarily about the money-although we know that money makes the world go round.
DT: MHM
K: But at the end of the day, can you say that I helped someone changed someone's life, and I didn't compromise myself in the meantime…that's success

K: me as a parent, I feel as though when, my children are grown and they have   jobs and they can support themselves, then I was successful at being a parent. If I can keep my son out of jail and not let him fall to the streets, then I was successful, if I can keep them in school and make them apply themselves—don't cheat yourself. They can take all of your material things, but they can never take your mind, and what you have learned……
It's not about just being book smart- you have to have common sense- the ways of the street. No I don't want him to be in the streets, but I don't want him to be dumb to what's going on in the streets. So, that's a different type of success- I want to see both of my children grown and they are off and they are doing what I taught them to do everyday. That education at home goes way past what is taught in school.

Rochelle is like Karla in that she is keenly aware of the dangers and lure of the city life for Black males. Rochelle also talked about success in an unexpected way saying that "Success for me is keeping my son away from rap, away from slang, away from the dance. All that [rap, slang and dance] does is take him away from school."

Karla's mother Anne had the same views as her daughter concerning success, helping others and education. Anne also considered worldly success at any cost to be useless. The following statements illustrate that point.

> DT: Anne, what are your views on what you would like for Jesse to accomplish?
> A: The best education possible. He needs to remember that his foundation started out on morals. Respect, honesty…we have many people that have an education, but was the thing that they compromised to get there…I don't want him believe that he has to lie, cheat or steal to be successful or to do good in school. I also want him to remember that if you are successful in school, you need to come back and help somebody that is less fortunate because he was very blessed that you had his mother, father, grandparents, aunts, uncles… These people will all step out and do for him when his mother can't. He has to remember the foundation that got him there- always extend the hand back to someone unfortunate.

Like Anne, grandmother Donetta expressed that success can be found in helping others simply saying that one form of success is to "touch people's lives by helping them because a lot of people need help these days….so supporting others". Other unexpected answers to questions about success included grandmother Celestine stating that success can be found in "being close to God".

The second theme yielded both predicted and unexpected responses. The predicted responses to questions about success in the U.S. yielded answers having to do with high achievement in school. Participants stated that their goal for the study child was

that the child not only did well in their current academic program- but the hoped that the child would pursue education beyond high school. Families were interested in higher education primarily for the sake of obtaining a living wage, but there was also a desire for education as a way of paying homage to Black ancestors. Unexpected responses about being a successful adult included responses focused on having high morals and values and helping others. According to the participants, this was the pinnacle of success.

TABLE: 6

*Frequency of Utterances about Educational Goals

	Four Year College Degree as Goal	Two Year College Degree as the Goal	High School Diploma as the Goal	Child Determination of Goals	Number of Participants Commenting
Mother	51	11	12	18	8
Grandmother	39	9	9	20	8

* Not all categories are mutually exclusive

TABLE: 7

Frequency of Utterances about Definition of Success

	Success Defined as Helping Others or as Values/ Morals	Success Defined as Income or Education	Number of Participants Commenting on Success
Mother	9	27	8
Grandmother	16	15	8

Theme Three: Use of Strategies

The third theme discusses strategies that participants employ to help the study child stay focused on education. The question that was designed to elicit responses about use of strategies was "how do you show [child's name] that education is important"? The researcher then used examples to get the participant talking. Many of the participants discussed the strategies in terms of keeping the child out of trouble and into school. There were grandmothers that were active in using the strategies or in helping the mother use the strategy, but for the most part mothers were responsible for devising and implementing ways to maintain the child's interest in school and ensure their safety from crime. Generally, participants viewed these strategies as useful for current school success and future achievement.

The strategies were an active way that adult participants displayed their value of education. The strategies or tactics that participants used to stress the importance of education include many techniques such as various behaviors around helping with homework, monitoring friends, advocating in the school for the child through involvement, enlisting the assistance of professionals, turning to family members for assistance, talking about education and future careers, physically showing the child different neighborhoods, exposure to various careers, reading with the child, visiting the child's school or library, involvement in extra curricular activities and by modeling or using negative self examples. Grandmothers, in particular discussed involving the child in church as a way direct children away from the street life and into school. Since

mothers' and grandmothers' strategies are identical except for the amount of

implementation, they will be discussed here together.

All of the mothers (n=8) and some of the grandmothers (n=6) discussed behaviors

associated with homework. Participants aided in the completion of homework, checked

homework, provided a place and supplies to complete homework, and provided a regular

schedule for homework completion. Donetta, Keith's grandmother briefly discussed

helping her grandson with homework and how she gets excited by working with him.

> D: He's very good at reading and reporting. Um, I let him do his homework on the computer and do print it out, and we do graphs to go with it and color charts…That was a really nice job. I said "What is your grade? What's your grade?" [Laughs] I was more excited about it, like, ok, "what did you get"?
> DT: Is there a specific time for homework?
> D: Yes, he has a time for homework.
> DT: He's helped with homework?
> D: Yes. That why he does so well. He has help with his homework and somebody to go over it with him

Rochelle, Keith's mother also talked about the homework routine as a way to show her

son that education is important:

> R: My friend's mother was telling me "Don't make them do homework when they first come home, let them eat dinner because they should have a break". But as far as I'm concerned, they go to daycare [Inaudible] they're playing and watching TV and everything else. So they already have a break. So as soon as they walk in that door which, a lot of times isn't until 6:00, they need to get crackin' immediately and be done by 7-7:30 so that they can get showered and everything like that. I'm actually hard on them all because I think that if you don't make kids do anything, they won't do anything. If you allow them to be lazy, they are going to be lazy; if you allow them to be spoiled they are not going to do what they have to do.

Participants exposed the child to different careers or lifestyles in order to influence the child's decision to do well in school and continue their education. For example Crystyn and Vikki stated that they teach their child about different professions by allowing them to talk with people in those professions. Both stated that in the future they plan to allow their child to shadow professionals to get a better idea of that career.

> DT: Is there any way that, um, that those goals can be the same [parents goal for child and child's goal for self], how can parent influence their children?
> C: Well, you can give them, like; I give Ethan opportunities to see people [inaudible], Like, the best thing for a child, mainly when they are in middle school is that take them to different professionals and let them see what other people do, or possibly want to do. Then there's children that thinks that "I wanna be a nurse". And all they life they want to be a nurse and that what they think. But for him, to influence him is to let him see what other people do. You know, there's other professions. And also let him realize that there is opportunities out there, and don't let your limitation keep you from doing what you wanna do.

Vikki's daughter Jeslyn has told her family that when she grows up she wants to be a doctor or nurse. Vikki said "I want her [Jeslyn] to go on different trips, and visit different doctor offices, like that so she knows what she really wants to do" Later Vikki said that she plans for Jeslyn to "visit nursing homes and doctor offices to volunteer" and that Jeslyn likes to help people already by taking food to the homeless lady in their neighborhood.

All participants stated that they talk with the target child about the way that education increases their opportunities to earn an income in which they can support themselves and have the material things that American culture displays through the media- like big homes and expensive cars. Several participants also discussed the respect and admiration that are part of having an education and the associated things.

Participants used the promise of material items and respect to strategize and talk about education leading to the good life. The following examples speak to this strategy; the first example is from the interview with mother Rochelle, the next from grandmother Donetta. Both talk about the ways that they influence the target child in their family, Keith.

> R: I want him to be somewhere where he can see that learning is a great thing. If he goes somewhere where he sees people pulling up in Mercedes Benz or Hummers, and he likes it so much. [I tell him] "Oh, you have to do this work and learn this and the other thing if you want one of those". Because he has no concept of money. And her has no concept of how he is gonna get the things that he needs for the future, and personally I think that that is because of the school he is going to. He is so mature to some things and immature to others. "Oh, when I grow up, I'm gonna have me a big gold chain, corn rows…" What's that gonna get you? [Inaudible] It's not like we are the most conservative people or anything, but I know he's not learning that at home.

Donetta described another tactic that she and her daughter use to stress the importance of education. They show Keith and the family's other children different parts of the city where people live that likely have varying levels of education as evinced by the housing that they live in and the neighborhood that they live in. Donetta says that Keith is "exposed to different neighborhoods" and "sees people hanging out on the corner in his neighborhood, but not in others".

In addition to talking about the material things that are associated with increased salaries stemming from advanced education, some of the participants talked with the children in their families about the reverence that others pay to an educated person.

> Arniece: Kids these days are always hollerin' about respect. They want to be respected, but they don't know how to show others respect. But I tell him [Shomar] that he will be respected once he has his education. It will allow him to get his foot in the door and then to rise up through the ranks. And it won't just come from work- we will respect him more too.

97

> LaTecia: The ones that are getting' the good jobs are the ones with the education those are the ones that people look up to, you know, like "that can be me if only I would …" you know, do whatever, go back to school.

Another strategy which many mothers (n=7) and grandmothers (n=4) discussed at length is modeling and providing negative self examples. Modeling refers to displaying behavior as an adult with the intent of having that behavior emulated by the child. For the purposes of this study, a negative self example refers to an adult using his or her life story to teach the child to do the opposite of what the adult has done. Throughout this project, participants had examples of both modeling and providing negative self examples, some of those are provided here for example. Karla and Crystyn provide examples of modeling. Grandmothers Anne, Jody and Andje provide negative self examples as a strategy to teach grandchildren the importance of education.

> Karla: I haven't gone to college, but I went trade school. Two years ago I became a CNA; he asked me 'what are you doing?' I said, 'Well, I'm studying, yes, I have to study. We would do our homework together. That's what I mean a product of your environment, he sees that I read, therefore, he reads, I write, he writes…I lead by example. I do plan to go back to school because it will be hard for me to tell him to go to college and I haven't. He sees that I haven't gone to college and I am doing fine…I don't want him to just get by; he doesn't have to be rich… I don't want him to be ducking bill collectors, to the point that if he decides to go buy something it won't take away from one of his bills.

> Crystyn: I explain to him, keep telling him "Look, you have to have an education, Ethan to do things". And I remind him- "You know how mommy used to go to school? Drive all the way to the Dover air Force Base every two days?" Because it is important. "I don't do those things 'cause I like 'em. I do it because it has to be done.

Participants conversed about how they taught the children from their negative life events by giving a negative self example in the hopes that the child would learn from

his/her mistakes. Grandmothers were frank in their discussion about the mistakes that

they had made in their lives that impeded their educations. They each said that they

talked just as honestly with their grandchildren about how early or unplanned pregnancy

can impact the entire life and in some cases, the lives of the next family generation.

Andje and Jody both became pregnant in high school and both dropped out of high

school in order to care for their babies. Jody was able to tell her grandson Ethan about the

difficulty of taking night classes to graduate high school. Unfortunately, Andje was never

able to complete high school, though she stated that "this last year I have decided that I

am going to do it [complete GED]. In September- I am going to take my test. It's a done

deal; I got college plans at Springfield College." Anne is similar to Andje and Jody

concerning the early pregnancy. Her comments below reveal how she struggled with

school due to the family situation. Anne eventually completed high school and went on to

further training in early childhood care to open a home daycare.

> Anne: I talked to Jesse on education about how important education is and I use myself as an example, because for one, I don't lie to him- Nana only had an eight grade education when she had your mother, two, there is different circumstances why Nana didn't finish her education., As I explained to him, my mother took real ill and my youngest brother was a baby- and there was no one to take care of her baby- my little brother. So, my youngest sister was too young to come out of school and my oldest sister had started to college. I looked at as that I was pregnant and they had shipped me off to DAPI, the work that they was giving me was like that I was sittin' back in second grade. I didn't mind dropping out of school to come home and take care of my little brother. Um, all of the sacrifices that my mother has made for me- this was one thing that I could do for her. Even though that made her really, really sad and hurt that one of her children had dropped out of school when I explained it to her that way I promised her that I would go back and get my education because that is something that she believed and that was the foundation that she been givin' me all my life.
> DT: Mhm

Anne: like I told him- I went out on a medical leave- but it hurted Nana for a lot of years because jobs that Nana would apply for Nana couldn't get because Nana didn't have the high school diploma behind her. Nana could do the job, but no body was willing to take the chance on Nana because there was no high school diploma. Then Nana had to help mommy figure out, and Nana only had a eighth grade education- so Nana had to depend on Aunt T., Aunt S., Uncle L. to Mommy get through high school years, So he understands that that is a very, very, important decision that he has to make and he has to keep goin'…

Involvement in extra curricular activities or in church and church activities was also mentioned many times by participants as a way to keep the child away from the streets and as a way to keep higher grades in school. Several participants (n=3) also commented on meeting various people in church that might spark a child's interest in their line of work. Desiree and Andje, both grandmothers of study children reported that involvement in wholesome pastimes would positively impact the grandchild both now and in the future. Most mothers and grandmothers felt that involvement in sports or hobbies would be imperative for the child's teenaged years. Desiree had this to say about involvement in extra curricular activities:

D: He likes football and basketball.
DT: Do you think that things like that may help him accomplish educational goals?
D: Yes, because, it's something that he likes, me, I don't care about sports, I don't like them. [Laughs] But he do. In high school he will have to keep a certain grade point average in order to play. That may help him keep his grades up.

Andje and Vikki discussed Jeslyn's involvement in the church's dance team.

DT: Where does she [Jeslyn] go for dance?
V: Ezion MT Caramel
A: she been doing that two years, her mother would wake her up on Sundays, but she don't have to. She gets herself up, bathed, dresses and on time for services
DT: She sounds very motivated

V: she is
DT: Do you think that that will change over the year? Do you think it will be more important to her in the future?
V: No- I don't think it will change, because she loves it. Staying motivated will be important in the future as she gets into them teenage years

V: my daughter can sing she loves to sing, she loves to dance
A: she got a little theatre in her, singin' she got it all. Financially, it can be heavy to get your child into certain things. I want to get her in some thing like theatre, if we can get her in theatre she will be awesome, like her dancing, I used to think it was too exotic, but then I see other dancing in the African style, it is not sexual, it is the dance of our culture

Crystyn used church as an opportunity to introduce her children to a variety of occupations. She also had a chance to talk with Ethan, the study child about careers due to their exposures in church.

C: Well, for me, um, my children go to church. But for me, I think that is good, too. It plays a part because they get to see people that are in other fields in church, somebody might be an accountant, a lawyer, we had a member and her son was a judge. My kids were real impressed that, you know, somebody from the hood can be a judge. You know, so for them they get to see different people, different occupations in church. As they got older they noticed that [inaudible] we had one member that always had money. And he would give kids money. So they was like- they called him Uncle E. ---and they was like "what does Uncle E. do?" So it makes them realize that there are things that you have to do to achieve your goals.

Other examples of the strategy of involvement in extra curricular activities as strategies can be seen in LaTecia and Arniece's families. LaTecia stated that Rodney's involvement in Sunday school and in football will be of more help to his education as he gets older saying "He goes to Sunday school, not every Sunday but often enough that he is gettin' something out of it. And yeah, it will mean more to him later on then now because his difficult times are ahead of him." Rochelle and Arniece's statement below

provide insight into many of the comments that participants made about these activities

being more crucial in the child's teenaged years:

> Rochelle: I do agree that keeping children busy is the best way to keep them out of trouble. However, right now, as a child with the simple fact that he's so young that he has to go wherever I go. If I'm leaving the house, he is leaving the house. As he gets older, then if I'm leaving the house, he may not be going out I might be working or he is getting out of school or something. So maybe having to be at football practice at 4:00 is a good thing. Like, and having something more to do and more to be interested in than girls or rap or anything else. That's a good thing.

> Arniece: Oh, yeah. We keeps him busy. He has done it all- football, wrestlin', karate.
> DT: Why's involvement in these sports helpful [to Shomar]?
> A: It teaches him how to deal with peers, to protect himself, teaches him respect. Plus, it keeps him off of the girls. There are no girls in those sports. Ya know?
> DT: Off of the girls? [Laughs]
> A: Off the girls- for now anyway… [Laughs]
> DT: But does it help him with school?
> A: I think so because he's learnin' more than just how to throw a ball. He's learnin' to get along better with people- so there's less fightin', cursin'. When he is there or at camp, he is not in the street. He is comfortable at camp, good in camp and he loves school.

Monitoring the child's friends, whereabouts and acquaintances while seemingly

obvious is of great importance for low income urban families. Although a minority of

participants talked out monitoring the child closely, they spoke about it in such a robust

and fervent way that would make the researcher remiss if it was not mentioned.

Participants realize that friends influence children in a way that families are sometimes

unable to. They want their children to be surrounded by the children of like minded

friends and families that are committed to the child's appropriate behavior and

educational success. These same participants had concerns beyond the child's friends to

the very neighborhood in which they resided. They were worried about their children's

safety when playing outdoors or going to and from school. Mothers were keenly aware

that the neighborhood had an impact on the child's self esteem. Consider Donetta's

comments as evidence:

> DT: Does Keith have everything within him and within the family that he
> needs to meet the educational and occupational goals that the family has
> identified?
> D: No
> DT: Why, what's lacking?
> D: Um, well one thing is, that he does need is – it will happen with his
> schoolwork is –they live in an apartment in a not so nice area, its small
> with four children there. They'll have a brand new house maybe in a
> couple of weeks.
> DT: Oh Good!
> D: He'll have a different room and setting and that's gonna be real nice for
> him. And he'll see what it is what it takes to get the things and get to this
> point.
> DT: So in the larger home, being able to spread out- you think that this
> will help him educationally?
> D: Educationally- he will feel good about himself when he feels good
> about himself- he will do better in other areas. When you feel good about
> yourself you do things.

Vikki and Andje talk about the danger in their urban neighborhood as well as the

company that Jeslyn keeps.

> V: That's the one that turned on her. We live in XXX town homes on
> eastside. If there is a situation with kids and Jeslyn is involved, they will
> bring the entire east side to your door. They like to see fights….
> A: They still do that?
> V: They don't do it any more because I have to keep her in the house all
> the time. Jeslyn come to the house telling me something is wrong. They
> come knocking on the door and I open the door and there is about fifty
> kids standing outside, her best friend, S is with them, cheering the group
> on to fight her.

Karla is like Vikki in that she worries for her child's safety because of where they are

forced to live based on their income. These families do not have free range when

selecting housing and end up in neighborhoods which are ridden with violence. Karla

made many comments throughout the interview about Jesse's safety. Some of the

comments are in other sections of this paper. Her remarks here are comparable to the

others.

> K: With Jesse, I try to keep him busy as possible- the more that he is doing the less focused he is on what's outside and and what's runnin' and what he can get into. At 10 years old- a corrupted mind will look at him and saying "Oh, I can put him on the corner and have him husslin' and this and that".
>
> K: Right now he is always with one of us.

Sincere, Jadavan's mother was also somewhat concerns about her child's friends

and the impact that they might have on her education and future success. She said that

although her daughter is too young to go visit friends at their homes, she wonders what

influence her friends will have on her in the future. Sincere stated "If she plays with any

kids- its family. I don't let her go around other people's houses because I don't know

what they are teaching their kids and what they might try to get mine involved in".

Gertrude was leery about the future affects that friendships would have on Jadavan as

well. She said "You have to see who they are associating with, or else they [friends] will

be more important than school and family".

The last stratagem that participants cited as showing their children that education

is important were simply involvement with the children's learning or schooling. This

took the form of visiting the school, or being involved with the school in some other way,

going to the library together and reading etc. Several participants talked about developing

a love of learning with the target child outside of school- through museums, walks in

104

nature, or working on computers. For these participants, it was important to show the child that education takes place even outside of the classroom. Crystyn said that she encourages her son Ethan to continue to explore animals and insects through hands on activity rather than through a book. Ethan is one of two study children identified as having ADHD. Celestine and Desiree stated that they take their grandchildren to the library frequently and to the bookstore when they can afford it. They then read the books together and talk about them. Desiree said that "reading is most important, that's what they say at school, so that's what I like to do with my grandson and my son"

Of the participants who use the strategy of involvement in learning to stress the importance of education, those that did things formally within the school had one major commonality: they though that the child's outcome would be better for their involvement. LaTecia stated that she calls the school almost daily to check on Rodney's behavior and to see if he has any homework. She does this "to show him that I care how he is doing in school and so that he won't be overlooked". Crystyn was like LaTecia in that she left that her son would be treated better by the teacher if she made herself known to the school. Crystyn was involved on and off wit the PTA when she had childcare for her children and when she wasn't working.

> DT: Do you think that teachers treat kids differently when their parents are involved?
> C: Uh, I think they do in a way. The children's parents don't come and I've heard teachers say that. Their parents don't ever come so what are you gonna do?
> DT: Mhm
> C: You know, call 'em, they don't show up, so it kinda discourages the teacher because they're trying to help the child and you don't show up and they have parents who just don't care. I think that with those children they don't even bother pushing them as much because parents act like they

don't care. When parents do come- they know they are more interested and [teachers] are more prone to to call them more so.

Theme three listed and expounded upon actions or strategies that participants thought would help keep the study child focused on school and help the child to excel in school. The strategies that participants discussed included things like reading together, helping with homework, going to school conferences, modeling behaviors and others. At times, it seemed as if the strategies were also a way to keep the child safe or off of the street. Participants expect that implementing these strategies will become more difficult and more important as the child enters adolescence.

Theme Four: Child Self Determination

Theme four is a result of participants talking about the child making his or her own goals for their lives. Many of the families indicated that although they felt strongly about education and wanted the children to continue with formal schooling, the decision had to come from the children themselves. The mothers and grandmothers were clear that they would do their best to steer the child toward education by using the strategies discussed above, but in the end the child would make the choice about his/her future.

The strongest example of the theme child self determination is illustrated by mother Tammy. This example was the researchers first dealing with child self determination and the transcript and field notes reveal that the researcher was somewhat shocked with Tammy's bluntness.

> DT: OK. What are your goals with respect to Shomar's education?
> T: Well it is up to him if he wants to go to college or got to work I am not gonna I am not gonna make him go to school if that is not want he wants to do. And I am not financially stable anyway to send him to college at this time.

From field notes: [CHILD ENTERS THE ROOM AND INDIACTES THAT HE DOESN'T WANT ANYBODY TAKING ABOUT HIM…PARENT T. AND AUNT TELL HIM TO GO THE HELL OUTSIDE. HE MUMBLES UNDER HIS BREATH AND SLAMS DOOR OPEN, CHARGES DOWN THE STAIRS]

DT: Ok- so you say that some people can become successful by getting an education- and for some they still won't be successful. If you had to choose, if it were completely up to you, what would your goal for him be?
T: He would go to work. Because I am not paying for him to go to no college.
DT: What if there were another way for him to go to college? Other than for you to have to pay?
T: That would be up to him if he got a loan.
DT: So you would want him to go to college if he wants to…
T: If he wants to and if he can get a grant or a scholarship or somethin'.
DT: So it depends on money…
T: and him
DT: And him? So would your goal for him be for him to finish high school? If college is not an option?
T: Oh yeah. It depend on him mostly, what he want.
DT: And why s that the goal instead of something else? Like military…
T: It is important at least to get that education. Either that or the other school, either or.
DT: What do mean by the other school?
T: You said military.
DT: So do you feel that military is an option?
T: I don't know too much about it…..

Later in the interview with Tammy she states that child Shommar sees the value of work

and she sees this is a benefit and a unique strength that will help him succeed in the work

world. At this point in the interview the discussion was strictly about paid work as

opposed to educational work.

DT: What strengths do you see in him that will allow him to finish high school?
T: Well he wants to work Um, artistic. Computer oriented
DT: Mhm. Okay. So when you say that he wants to work- do you mean he wants to do school work and is good or he wants to get a job?
T: He wants to get a job.

Arniece shared Tammy's opinion stating that "these children will make their own decision about their life including college after we have done our best to instill good in them".

Other examples of child self determination include mother Vikki's brief mention of her daughter Jeslyn and grandmother Andje discussing how she encourages self determination in child Jeslyn. These excerpts are from different parts in the same dyad interview.

> DT: What are your goals as far as educational goals, like, what would you like to see happening for her over her high school years?
> V: I would like to see her achieve whatever she wants to do, like, uh, she wants to be a doctor. So I want her to go on different trips and just visit doctors offices, like that, so she know that this is really what she wants to do.
>
> A: Make sure the children know about self planning at an early age, I believe that if they are old enough to put a puzzle together they are old enough to put a plan together, to set goals, we can set goals that are achievable- you know incentives- if you do this for a whole week- hang all the dresses, put all the toys, fold the shirts, make sure they are in the number two drawer- other wise there is no order
> DT: So it sounds like there is responsibility in that also
> A: Yes- showing them how to be responsible...

Grandmother Donetta is a seamstress. Early in the interview she talked about her business and skills and the f act that none of her children or grandchildren were interested in learning her profession and that is fine with her. She was clear that children need to determine their own futures. The following two excerpts illustrate that point:

> D: I have a business and my children or grandchildren are not interested at all.
> DT: What is your business?
> D: I'm a designer.
> DT: Oh, nice.

D: And they're not interested. They're into computers. And everybody wants to work in the office. But somebody needs to keep up the skills.
DT: Right

Later in the interview:

DT: What is your goal for him [Keith]?
D: I want him to be whatever he wants to be. Whatever he wants. You know, just excel…..do something. And do more than one thing. Because a lot of times in life people they will just take one type of training and and when that door closes, they're bewildered. They have nothing, no place else to go. So I always tried to teach these children to take up more than one thing. You know? Study something else, have more than one choice.

Donetta's daughter Rochelle also discussed that children need to determine their own academic and career goals. Donetta and Rochelle were interviewed separately, but shared many of the same ideas regarding education for nine year old Keith.

DT: So, what kinds of careers have you talked about with Keith?
R: um. Right now, I'm not really pushing the career factor. Because he is going as far as "Yeah, I'm going to get married and have kids and I'm gonna…"
DT: he has his whole life planned out…
R: Yeah, and I'm like "School, school, school!" and then we will worry about all of that. I really don't push him into anything that is more my idea than his.
D: Okay. At what age or what point do you think that they'll start to come up with their own ideas about goals?
R: It varies from one child to another. I knew from the time that I was maybe five that I wanted to be a lawyer. But by the time that I hit high school, I wasn't able to do that. Over time I started to believe it was more other people's ideas than mine because I said it at a young age and kept saying it. Maybe by high school he can start taking classes geared to whatever he chooses for his career.

Theme four, child self determination, discussed the participants' view that the study child was ultimately the master of his or her own life decisions. Adult participants'

acknowledgement that they could not author the child's educational decisions coupled with their active use of strategies and their understanding of contemporary educational politics made for a challenging situation for the adults to emotionally navigate. All in all, mothers and grandmothers wavered in their belief that they could have an effect on the educational decision making and outcome of the study child.

TABLE: 8

Utterances about Child Self Determination

	Number of Comments	Number of Participants Commenting
Mother	36	8
Grandmother	24	6

Theme Five: Concerns with Inequality

Theme five grew out of the participants' awareness of social issues such as poverty and racism. They evidenced a keen awareness of how today's class stratification is based in part on our history of slavery. They also discussed the oppression that unbridled capitalism creates. Families, grandmothers in particular expressed deep concerns with power based on wealth and race. However, when asked if race or gender has been a problem for the study child at school all mothers said that it had not been a concern. Several participants said that racism or sexism could be a concern for the child currently- but that they are unaware if it is going on.

110

Based on the participants' responses to questions about gender and race, it was inferred that the type of sexism that the participants worried that their child would face was a reverse sexism- one that would impact their Black male child. *All* of these mothers and grandmothers indicated that race and/ or gender will absolutely be a problem for their children in the future. Their evidence is in the way that they were treated in school and based on the fact that racism is in the world- it has certainly infiltrated the school system. Participants were especially concerned about the fate of their Black male child. Most participants were able to recall a negative event regarding racism or sexism while in school. A unique cohort effect was shown in that grandmothers specifically discussed the racism of segregated schools. Participants perceived that the racism that they faced while a student had the effect of dampening their aspirations and achievements. Similarly, participants feared that stereotypes about the innate inferiority of Blacks' intelligence would harden their children and make them turn away from academia. The following excerpts are meant to illustrate the participants' concerns with racism, sexism and other forms of inequality. Note that from the participants' viewpoint the idea of sexism deals particularly with their Black male child being treated unfairly, which is not the conventional view of sexism which favors males.

Participants voiced their concerns that Black students experience racism through covert means such as exclusion, stereotyping, and denying access to quality instruction and by ignoring the child. Anne and Andrea said that poor Black children are stereotyped before they get in the classroom based solely on their zip codes. Grandmothers fear that the children will be "forgotten about or written off" as a result of stereotyping children's

111

abilities based on race or parental income. Mothers Karla and Rochelle provided examples of how their children were allowed to display inappropriate behaviors and allowed to fail to turn in school assignments. Both argued that this is because the teachers "don't expect anything from a Black boy" and "they don't think the parent will care". They felt that their children were not being held accountable and that they weren't being "pushed" to their potential. Both women were understandably angry that failed assignments and rude behavior was not reported to them sooner. Liz remembered being largely ignored in elementary school in favor of catering to White students; she says that she "wasn't pushed". Liz also recounted a narrative from her college years concerning what she perceived to be favoritism based on race and gender.

> DT: Do you think that race or gender will be an issue for being at school?
> Liz: I think, I would like to say that it's not a problem….But as far as the selection; it's harder for the Black man to get into certain programs. I mean, insociety we have just been programmed to see the Black man as negative. I've seen it. When I went to Widener.
> DT: Okay, can you tell me about the racism that you saw at Widener.
> Liz: Well, at their admissions there was a White guy that I knew from class who couldn't pay- but the the head let him in. No sooner did a Black girl and her   grandmother come in and he wouldn't allow that girl to sign up for classes. The grandmother asked to pay in installments, but he wasn't having no parts of that….You know we hate to say it, we figure maybe we've gotten beyond racism, but they do that. But I always tell my children "you have to be determined"

Rochelle, Claudine and Gertrude consider the quality of education that low income Black student's receive to be paramount. Participants largely focused discussions of quality on education on teachers' qualifications and their interactions with and treatment of students. Claudine said that "good teachers don't want to work in the city, they can't pay 'em enough to get 'em in here. They're sacred of us and for no good

112

reason other than their own ignorance". Gertrude made similar comments about the

quality of the teachers and their disdain for coming into Wilmington.

> Gertrude: A lot of these teachers are there because they need a job, that's all, just like we need a job- that is number 1. A lot of them live in Newark, and they have to come to Wilmington to teach? Some of them resent that.
> DT: Yeah, possibly…
> G: they already have a chip on their shoulder. Some of the teachers are truly glad to be there. The others- they are there getting there salary- they will do the minimum- no more no less.
> DT: what is it about coming to the city that people resent? What is the big deal?
> G: I can't figure it out. They act like it is a real big strain to come to Wilmington. Why would they come to an environment, any job, that they can't function in to the best of there ability? They just need to get up out of there, regardless of the money. Work is work, we all gotta work…

Rochelle is like Gertrude and Claudine with her concerns about low income Black

children receiving a quality education. Rochelle thinks that her children are unprepared

academically for the private schools she would send them to if she had the money.

> Rochelle: A lot of us aren't equipped with what it takes and that isn't necessarily   our fault that we are not equipped to be accepted [into better schools and colleges]. We are not coming from the same schools in order to be successful [in college or challenging schools]. It like, uh, the pattern. Our parents are unequipped so they can't equip us and it goes on and on.
> DT: okay
> Rochelle: ….Say we're low income, went to public school, even they dropped out   or had a baby when they were 14 or 15, so they don't have an education. They're more than likely not going to have a good enough job where they can give their kids the education that they need. Say the same things happens to their child, or even if it doesn't- but they are living in the inner city going to a an inner city low income school where they're not learning what they need. Not that they're not smart enough – not that they're not trying hard enough. They are not being taught well enough. So when they go to take that entrance exam, they are not going to do as well as the kid who has had the parents with the money.

As opposed to being ignored or otherwise shut out of education participants felt that low income Black children were targeted for special education and educational diagnoses such as ADHD or ADD. Jody said that "they always lookin' to Black children to label them [and] put them on medication". Vikki was also worried about the focus on Black children's inabilities stating that "because they talk different, speak slang and because their clothes are different all of a sudden they want to put them in special Ed."

Gertrude discussed her concerns with contemporary power issues as they relate to low income families and their education. Gertrude was vehement that bussing students to out of neighborhood schools has created a situation that is harmful for low income Black students' education.

> G: when they started bussing these children out they took the parent influence out of it. If you are in Wilmington and your child goes to Newark with no means to get out there what good is it doing you and your child? We have mothers that don't drive, everywhere she goes [referring to her daughter] somebody has to take her so that handicaps her, unless she relies on the public transportation, and them schools aren't on the bus line, so what doe she do if she wants to go to a PTA, or a conference, or go look and see what her kids are doing, she comes asking if I can take her out to [Suburban School] and cant because I'm busy. Then they say the PTA is low and the Black ones are not participating, well they took that away from us. The auditorium was full of parents at [City School], mothers and fathers, Black. Not anymore, they are full of White parents because they are the only ones that can get there with their big SUV's, you know what I mean? That's how I look at it. We just don't have the means to get there. A lot of time they have functions going on and they don't do a good communication of home and school, they lost it somewhere.

The last theme explored participant views on contemporary inequality. Although none of the participants could specifically cite an incident of racism or sexism- all believed that it was happening without their knowledge or that it was most certainly

going to be a problem in the future. Participants felt that racism is covert and in its most insidious form it is lowering standards for low income students. Participants own experiences with racism in school shaped the way that they discussed the study child's probability of facing racism and maybe shaped their thinking about education in general.

Chapter 5

DISCUSSION

The discussion section is divided into six sections for ease of understanding. The first section will examine the findings and their relation to the literature review. The next section will discuss how the findings relate to the theories introduced in chapter one. The third section will acknowledge the limitations of this project. The forth section discusses future research and the fifth section address policy implications. The final section serves as a conclusion to the research.

The Findings and their Relationship to the Literature

The findings of this research reinforce many key findings of previous research in educational and family studies. This research also has findings which are in opposition to parts of previous research findings.

This research supports previous research that low income inner city black families value education highly (Hill, 1999; Kao & Tienda, 1998; Mau, 1995; Singer & Saldana, 2001). Like many studies which examine similar populations these families idealize education and see education as a legitimate way to join the ranks of the middle class (Delgado- Gaitan, 1992; Goldenberg and Galimore, 1995; Scott- Jones, 1995). For the most part, participants believed that they could have an effect on the child's educational

116

success and goals. They did however, worry about their ability keep the child focused on education as the child matures. According to the literature, parents who believe that they are able to affect change and try to do so are successful in their ability to affect the child's decision making (Duncan, Fetherman & Duncan, 1972; Honora, 2002; Hotchkiss & Borow, 1984; Reynolds & Gill, 1994; Sewell & Hauser, 1980; Sewell, Hauser & Wolf, 1980; Sewell and Shah, 1967; Teachman & Paasch, 1998; Wilson and Wilson, 1992).

The literature review also indicated that the Black family is unique in that the base of the family is not just traditional members- but also includes grandparents, aunts, uncles, and fictive kin (Wilson, 1986); this was true of this sample as well. Participants commented numerous times about the centrality of their family in their lives. Many Black grandparents are very involved in the lives or their grandchildren, as compared to other groups who are less involved (Cherlin & Furstenberg, 1986; Strom, Collinsworth, Strom and Griswold, 1985; Watson & Koblinski, 2001). This group of grandmothers was very involved with their grandchildren even to the point of disciplining them. This involvement was facilitated by the grandmother's close proximity to the grandchildren. While mothers did not directly say that they stayed close to family for needed support, it was implied. Previous research has found that proximity to grandchildren and involvement with grandchildren is related (Barer, 2001; Cherlin & Furstenberg, 1986; Kivett, 1993; Mueller & Elder, 2003; Timberlake, 1980).

While second to mothers, grandmothers helped implement educational strategies designed to keep children focused on school. Like previous literature, this research found that families used strategies such as helping with homework, attending school

117

conferences or special events, monitoring friends, involving in extra curricular activities and others to maintain the child's motivation and focus on education (Brown-Rosier, 2000; Christenson, Rounds & Gorney, 1992). The grandparent literature also reveals that grandparents are very concerned about teaching grandchildren morals and a sense of right and wrong (Cherlin & Furstenberg, 1985). The idea of morals/values as vital came through in this research repeatedly as both mother and grandmothers talked about success as treating others well, helping others and having high values. Another important similarity between the pre-existing literature and this research is that families experience role strain as a result of juggling work and family demands (Cherlin & Furstenberg, 1985; Watson & Koblinsky, 2001).

Participants were worried about the futures of their Black male child. They were concerned about the way that widely held stereotypes and violence in their neighborhoods would play out in the Black male child's academic life. The literature suggests that they have good reason to worry. In school, Black males are treated differently than Black girls and others in terms of discipline, disability status and other factors (Lopez, 2003; Meir, Stewart & England, 1989; Hilliard, 1991; Herrera, 1998). Most troubling, participants seemed to think that they may loose hold of their Black male child regarding education and goals. Black males have the most unstable educational and vocational goals (Kao & Tienda, 1998).

The findings of this research do not support key parts of previous research related to academic behaviors or perceptions in low income inner city Black families. Mickelson's attitude achievement paradox typology enables a partial understanding of the

118

perceptions and actions of low income inner city Black families regarding education. According to Mickelson's research, low income Black families score high on measures of education as an abstract concept, but low on measures of concrete actions.

For instance, Mickelson might argue that Black people see the importance of education for future success but also identify with the family narrative that discrimination exists and Black people aren't paid as well for the same work (1990). This previous statement would in fact be supported by this research, but, the Attitude Achievement Paradox's tenet that a lack of action by these families' and students' is not supported by this research.

Unlike Mickelson's typology, the participants verbalized their valuation *and acted* on behalf of their valuation of education. Since all of the participants believed that racism, sexism or classism would negatively impact their child, and they had experienced discrimination themselves it is possible that they passed these messages on to their children. Several participants (Tammy, Gertrude & Andje) mentioned only briefly that education might not pay off in the same way for Blacks as for other groups. If adults are telling children that education is good for them and can lead to secure futures coupled with a message that they will be discriminated against in school and on the job- children are faced with a difficult predicament. This is especially true for those participants whose main selling point on the value of education was the societal standing, material items and financial gain involved (Rochelle, Donetta, LaTecia).

Recall that families' envision a very difficult road ahead of them related to maintaining their strategies to keep children interested in education. It is possible that the

active strategizing and follow through ends in late elementary school or middle school and that only words or ideals remain and no action in later childhood and adolescence.

Some parts of John Ogbu's research fit with this research while a main concept of his research is not supported. Ogbu's work focuses on minority rejection of education as a means of upward mobility. Ogbu has argued that caste like minorities including Blacks reject that which they do not see themselves as successful in or capable of, primarily education (1991). Rejection of education is in a way a means to thwart the system, a way to fight. Under the theory it is unclear whether these minority groups might excel academically if barriers were removed to their future achievement. Much of the theory focuses on the interplay between Black students when those who excel are viewed as race traitors and are labeled as acting White (Ogbu, 1994). It would be interesting to know if this practice of labeling high achieving Black students as "acting White" continues into the college years.

Ogbu's theory fits with this research in that it expounds upon Mickelson's idea of Black students thinking that they are unable to excel in the mainstream activities of school and vocational endeavors. Because Black students are aware of stereotypes as early as first grade that claim they are academically inferior (McKown & Weinstein, 2003), they may be faced this may be a source of inner turmoil. As discussed in preceding paragraphs, Black students must balance messages from both home and society about the importance of education with those that tell them that they will not earn the same income or respect as White professionals, no matter their achievements. This conflict in messages coupled with knowledge of stereotypes may indeed cause student to

reject a system in which they cannot win. The fourth grade syndrome (Hilliard, 1991; Noguera, 2003) may be a result of young Black students faced with these inconsistencies and realizations of race and class in America. This focus on the future because it is filled with difficulties fits well with families' preoccupations with strategizing as the child ages.

Ogbu's thinking on the concept of acting White was not supported; this may be because the participants were not school aged and were not specifically asked about acting White. Also, participants discussed the history of Black people's struggle for literacy and linked education, especially literacy, with freedom. Another reason that the concept of Acting white was not supported is because participants saw having an education as a way of uniting Black people, honoring Black ancestors and fighting against oppression. There is no way to act white while using the history of slavery to motivate for higher education.

The Findings and their Relationship to Theory

The theories introduced at the beginning of this manuscript were chosen based on their ability to aid in understanding this complex subject which spans individual, family, community, institutional, societal and historical issues. The ecological approach guided the research in combination with other theories which served to examine each of the ecological approach's systems or layers. Each of the theories will be discussed here along with how they were applied to this research effort.

121

Micro-System: Family Systems Theory

Both the family systems theory and the micro level of the ecological approach ask the researcher to examine the roles and the relations of individuals within a family unit (Bronfenbrener, 1976; White & Klein, 2002). In some ways, the participants had overlapping or blurred roles in the family. Grandparents were used as a stand in for parents at schools and at home. The demands on the adult members were so great that they relied heavily on one another by trading childcare, housework, and public appearances to negotiate their lives. It should be noted that this trading was reciprocal between grandmothers, mothers and in some cases aunts.

The second tenet of the theory is that all members are interconnected and the third is that understanding is possible only be viewing the whole. There was a lot of evidence in support of these tenets. The families literally functioned as a machine to accomplish their activities. For the most part they were organized, they communicated and they strategize together. Even with all of this trading of chores the adult participants were drained emotionally, financially and physically. They regarded helping each other as a responsibility but not as a burden.

There much support for the final tenet of the theory which is that the family impacts the environment and the environment impacts the family. Families were aware of the political milieu that decision making occurs in, but felt that they had no affect on that milieu. So- these participants might feel that the environment affects them, but they are unable to affect change in the environment.

Meso-System: Conflict Theory

The meso-system is the interaction point between the micro systems. The conflict theory was applied to this level and was helpful in understanding the families and their circumstances. Since adult participants were aware of the political, social and historical atmosphere that shaped their schools and neighborhoods, there was a sense of conflict between the family and other societal institutions, specifically the school, neighborhood and parents' work obligations.

The conflict theory asserts that conflict is endemic and will occur over a scarcity of resources, among other things (White and Klein, 2002). The scarcity of resources that families experienced were lack of resources such as money, safe and stable housing, access to excellent teachers and schools, and time. Conflict as an idea was also prevalent in discussions about the neighborhood and peers. Families did not always feel safe in their neighborhoods and worried about how peers would influence their children. The perception and reality of the scarcity of resources had the affect of adding to families' feeling overwhelmed.

Exo-System: Life Course Theory

Both the exo-system and the Life Course theory acknowledge that societal factors that the family may not participate in directly or indirectly shape an individual's life path (White & Klein, 2002) (Elder, 1998; Hareven, 1996). This shared concept is particularly poignant to these participants' experiences as low income inner city Black people. An example of the exo-system at work can be seen in Wilmington's unique approach to bussing children from the suburbs into the city and children from the city into the suburbs

for school. Participants commented negatively on bussing their children to surrounding suburban areas, but felt powerless to have their voice heard in making changes to the bussing system. Participants commented that they would like to be more involved in the child's schooling but the distance to the school is a hindering factor given that they did not private transportation.

Other concepts of the Life Course theory which fit well with the lives of these participants were the cohort effect and the concept of linked lives. The cohort affect discussed in the life course theory was evidenced in grandmothers and mothers slightly differing ideas and experiences with racism. Both mothers and grandmothers experienced off time events such as early transition into parent and grandparenthood. Their lives are linked in that mothers rely heavily on grandmothers due in part to the early transition. The research did not examine to what extent was a purposeful decision designed to ensure that grandmothers would be young enough to provide support with children. The concept of linked lives also states that life events of a previous generation, such as the grandmothers, have impacts on the lives of the next generation and so on (Harevan, 1996). Mothers made comments on the intergenerational transmission of poverty and that their parents were not well equipped to help them educationally – this speaks to the concept of liked lives.

Macro- System: Symbolic Interactionism

The macro level of the ecological theory was used in conjunction with ideas from symbolic interactionism. The macro-system consists partly of the stereotypes that exist in society, while symbolic interactionism looks at the meaning that people make of these

mores, laws, stereotypes, values and customs (Bronfenbrenner, 1976; White & Klein, 2002).

Symbolic interactionism asserts that individuals are able to act and able to be acted upon all while knowing that others make meaning of their actions (White & Klein, 2002). This idea has important ramifications for understanding the experiences of these participants. Symbolic Interactionism is interested in the meanings that people make of phenomenon (White & Klein, 2002). These low income inner city Black families participate in and believe in the idea that education leads to success. Participants also talked with children about the respect that they would gain as an educated person with a middle class career. According to Symbolic Interactionism this is an example of being aware that an individual's actions have meaning for others. In this research, the symbol is education and the participants argue that the meaning that society makes of the symbol is one which respect or deference is owed.

Socialization is another key concept for both symbolic interactionism and the macro- system. Grandmothers and mothers actively socialize their children to believe that education is useful to them attaining middle class careers and lifestyles. Although families had many concerns around the child's future actions and around the child being acted upon by broadly held stereotypes. Families were unclear about the ways that they attempted to combat these negative messages with the study child.

Limitations

The two types of limitations in this study are researcher novice limitations and general limitations associated with the inquiry method. Because the researcher is a

student researcher the inherent problem that arises is lack of experience or lack of technical skill in the complicated data collection method (Seidman, 1998). In addition, the interview process stretched over approximately 1.5 years due to logistical difficulty with finding qualified participants and technical difficulties such as inaudible tapes and other computer hardware annoyances. These are presented as limitations in that they delayed study and reporting of the data. To compensate for this, the researcher reviewed transcriptions and field notes. Seidman argues that this is an effective strategy for research which is analyzed and reported many months after data collection (1998). It was difficult to refrain from analyzing the completed transcribed interviews while securing new sources of data. It should be noted, however, that there are several alternative views on the necessity of maintaining a separate collection and analyzing phase (Seidman, 1998).

The second type of limitation in this study is shared by those of other studies which employ the qualitative method. These limitations include an inability to examine a large sample and the use of a snowball or purposeful sample. While the intent of this project and many other qualitative studies is not to generalize to larger groups, the use of a snowball sample can be limiting. This is because participants know each other and may have similar ideas on important subject- which is why they are acquaintances. It is quite possible that with a larger more diverse sample different themes would have emerged. This is why it is of the utmost importance to remember that this work is exploratory and like other qualitative research only seeks to deepen knowledge of the subset, not the whole.

Future Directions in Research

Given the findings of this research coupled with those of countless other research studies, future research should focus on discovering the reasons why low income inner city minority children don't perform as well as other children educationally as well as when and how this divide occurs. Attention needs to be directed to what can be done about this divide. Additionally, more research is required to learn the ways that families can be supported in implementing their strategies as youth age.

It is important that this research be grounded in the lived experiences of the group at hand. Methodologies which are attempts to gather volumes of data cheaply and quickly for swaying administrations may miss the mark. This is because of the intimacy and the history of Blacks and education. Research must be participant focused and approach the subject with great competence understanding the embeddedness of poverty, history, race, and politics.

Concerning the family, research should specifically focus on learning more about the ways that parents and grandparents interface with the schools and ways to support that relationship. Longitudinal studies with grandparents and others as participants would yield a great deal of rich and useful information. How in fact do families' views about the educability of their child change over time? What methods of instructing a child in the importance of education do families employ over time as the child ages and/or other methods fail? What are the roles of changes in government or educational fads or school leadership on families' aspirations over the child's educational career? These are but a

smattering of the subjects left to be explored if guided by Bronfenbrenner's ecological theory.

Policy Implications

Throughout American history the poor have been thought to be responsible for their own pauperism, to some degree. Their issues of with being without enough food, clothes, adequate housing, and healthcare have been looked upon as their fault, and possibly as a problem with their work ethic, sexual morals, and commitment to education (Katz, 1983). When these thoughts have been challenged by either social science research, religious charity work or by the poor themselves, policy has followed (Katz, 1983). Aid has come in the form of a combination of public and private sources. Historically private charities have been expected to step in where government leaves off. Government welfare reform has been popular throughout history and Katz notes that reform has always been spurred on by a desire to cut government spending (1983).

Studies cited in the literature review demonstrate that the poor are similar to the non poor population in terms of work ethic, sexual mores, and valuation of education. Yet the idea that the poor are poor only because they behave differently is alive and well. It is difficult to account for the differences in research on the values of the poor and popular opinion on such values. Perhaps citizens are unwilling to recognize their part in perpetuating inequality and how close they are to slipping from their current class status. It is easier to blame an individual or a group of individuals than to recognize the flaws of our unchecked capitalist system and to perhaps share power and wealth.

The policy implications of research which deals with the *real lives* of the impoverished seem to go largely ignored by policymakers and citizens at large. Wide access to sound social science research should be a major concern for the authors of the research and to the potential consumers of the research. The popular media needs to aid in making research findings more accessible and understandable to laypeople.

With that said, this research when tied together with research from the literature review, and even standing alone present a compelling argument that low income inner city Black families place a high value on current and future education for their children. As such, policymakers and educational systems truly need to address racial and class disparities in performance and outcome.

No Child Left Behind was designed to bridge the gap between achievements of Black and other students. Educational leaders may find that NCLB's blanket approach using standardized testing and teacher accountability as a means of needs to be reworked. Attention has been paid to involvement of parents in children's educations as a method of closing the achievement gap; perhaps policymakers need to broaden their focus to include other family members' involvement as well. School administration and teachers need to be trained or retrained to work with the low income Black family and see the value and tradition in involvement of extended families rather than viewing reliance on family as a flaw or an indication of irresponsibility.

If school leaders and policymakers truly want to see more involvement on the part of low income inner-city Black families- they must seek to remove the obstacles which make greater involvement difficult of impossible. Real and tangible efforts to aid in such

involvement might take the form of transporting family members to the school for conferences, meetings, and volunteer work or providing babysitting so that adults can focus on the school aged child during a meeting without facing the strain of caring for younger siblings at the same time. Many school meetings or activities are notoriously scheduled during dinner hours- providing a light meal would help families negotiate their schedule. Training low income families about the ways that they can help their child succeed in school as well as where to turn for additional help may be beneficial. Other efforts may be as simple as inviting and welcoming parents and/or other interested adults to school open houses, progress meetings, concerts and the like.

Programs like Upward Bound and Educational Talent Search at the high school level, Families and Schools Together at the elementary level and Head Start at the preschool level should be expanded to accommodate more of the children who qualify for these services. These programs must be thoroughly evaluated to ensure that they are meeting the ever changing needs of low income students. In addition, current school resources such as counselors can be trained more thoroughly in working with and assisting low income students and their families.

Conclusion

To summarize, the findings demonstrate low income inner city Black families high valuation of education. Families used strategies to promote their children's success in school. These strategies include an overall focus on school by helping with homework, talking about the importance of school, getting involved with the school, reading together, and others. These strategies were paired with a general future orientation. Each

and every participant recognized the importance of education to future success and took measures to point this relationship out to their children.

This research fits well with previous research that discusses the high valuation of education among this group and with the assertions of the attitude achievement paradox theory. By using the ecological theory to approach this topic, research has come closer to understanding the impacts of various systems on low income inner city families' perceptions of education. The participants presented here challenge an important part of the new Culture of Poverty theory that claims that low income inner city minorities are responsible for their own poverty because they don't care to do well in school. While it is quite clear that low income inner city Black families do indeed care about education and see it as means to future success, it is uncertain what can be done to aid families in getting there. It is my hope that through efforts like this research, attitudes and beliefs about the poor and about the causes of poverty will shift away from individual's failings in extreme circumstances to the systems that create and maintain those circumstances.

APPENDIX A:

Federal Poverty Levels

Federal Poverty Levels

In gross 2005 Dollars

Number in Household	100% of the Poverty Level in the Contiguous States	200% of the Poverty Level in the Contiguous States
1	$9,800	$19,600
2	$13,200	$26,400
3	$16,600	$33,200
4	$20,000	$40,000
5	$23,400	$46,800
6	$26,800	$53,600
7	$30,200	$60,400
8	$33,600	$67,200

Adapted from: Division of Health and Social Services Website. Retrieved 06-25-06

http://www.dhss.delaware.gov/dhss/dss/fpl.html

APPENDIX B:

Map City of Wilmington

Wilmington Neighborhoods

APPENDIX C:

Stipend Receipt

Stipend Receipt

I, _____ received twenty dollars cash as an incentive

to participate in a research study being conducted by student Deianna Tyree. I understand

that this is a one time payment.

_____   _____

Signature of Participant   Date

_____   _____

Signature of Witness   Date

APPENDIX D:

Research Protocol

Research Protocol

Participant Name_____

Parent of   _____

Grandparent of   _____

Date   _____

- Demographic Information

What is the yearly household income?

Less than $10,000	Between $25,000 and $30,000
Between $10,000 and $15,000	Between $30,000 and $35,000
Between $15,000 and $20,000	Between $35,000 and $40,000
Between $20,000 and $25,000	More than $40,000

How many people live in your home? _____

What is your age?   _____

What is your marital status?   Single   Married   Divorced   Cohabitating
                                                   Remarried Widowed

Self—Male/Female   Child—Male/Female

What is your highest level of education? _____

- Research Questions

    1. What are some ways that people can become successful in American society?

        How important is education in that process?

    2. What are your goals for (child's name) with respect to school?

        Long term goals/Short term goals

    3. Why is this the goal as opposed to [something else]?

        Two year college, military , high school only…

        Why is the short term goal so important?

    4. What opportunities may allow (child's name) to reach that goal?

Relationships with mentors, learning style, enrollment in charter school,

tutoring, involvement in extra curricular activities, member of religious

organization, monitoring child's friends…

5. What barriers do you think may make it difficult for (child's name) to reach

   that goal? Lack of confidence related to school, financial, unsure of process,

   lack of access to models….

6. Is gender or race an issue for your child at school?

   Why/ Why not?

   Have you experienced race or gender related issues while a student?

7. How do you show (child's name) that education is important?

   Talk about it, provide examples, make school a priority, emphasizing

   learning, modeling, reading together….

8. What interaction do you have with the school?

   Attend meetings, volunteer, phone conferences…

   Do you feel that this is beneficial to your child?

9. Who is primarily responsible for (child's name) educational success?

   The school, the family, other

   What makes them responsible?

10. Are the expectations that the school holds for your child the same as yours?

   Do the teachers know what the family's plans are for your child?

11. In an ideal world, what would help your child reach the educational goal?

APPENDIX E:

Informed Consent

Informed Consent Form

The University of Delaware requires that students design and implement a research study to partially fulfill the requirements for a graduate degree. The purpose of this study is to understand the hopes and expectations that low income families have for their children. The study involves one interview with a parent of a child between the ages of eight and eleven and one interview with that child's grandparent. The study examines several generations of a family to understand the educational goals that families have.

You have been chosen based on such factors as income, race and availability of grandparents. The research study that you are being asked to participate in is voluntary. Approximately eight families will participate in the study. Participation in the study requires that you answer demographic questions and questions related to educational goals and perceived barriers. The interview is a one time meeting that will last for about an hour.

The interview will be audio taped to ensure accuracy on the part of the researcher. You can refuse to answer any question and you can withdraw from the study at any time. Withdrawal from the study will not result in any negative consequences for you or your family. The audiotape and transcription will be destroyed if you choose not to continue participation in the study. The audiotapes will be stored in a locked drawer. If you agree to be audio taped please initial here _____. Your answers will be kept confidential and your name will not be associated with any reports or papers.

There are no risks involved in participation in the study. Potential benefits include becoming more aware of educational goals, barriers and the educational system at large. For your participation you will be given either twenty dollars cash or a twenty dollar gift card. Participation will not cost you any money.

If you have questions about the project you may contact the principal investigator, Deianna Tyree at 302-345-9606. The faculty member who is leading the research effort is Dr. Michael Gamel-McCormick; he may be contacted at 302-831-6974. If you have questions regarding your rights as a participant, you may contact Dr. T. Fraser Russell, Vice Provost for Research, University of Delaware at 302-831-2136. You may contact Dr. Russell by mail at 210 Hullihen Hall, University of Delaware, Newark Delaware, 19716.

Your signature below reflects your willingness to participate in the study. You will be given a copy of this form.

_____   _____
Participant Signature   Date

_____   _____
Interviewer Signature   Date

APPENDIX F:

Coding Sheet

Participant Coding Sheet

MOTHER REAL NAME	MOTHER CODED NAME	GRANDMOTHER REAL NAME	GRANDMOTHER CODED NAME	CHILD REAL NAME	CHILD CODED NAME

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Babbie, E. (2004). *The Practice of Social Research*. Belmont: Thompson-Wadsworth.

Bali, V. and Alvarez, M. (2004). The Race Gap in Student Achievement Scores:
longitudinal evidence from a racially diverse school district. *Policy Studies Journal,
32.3,* 393-416.

Banfield, E. (1968). *The Unheavenly City.* Boston: Little Brown and Company

Barer, B. (2001). The Grand's and Greats of Very Old Black Grandmothers. *Journal of
Aging Studies, 15,* 1-11).

Bankston, C. and Caldas, S. (1996). Majority African-American Schools and Social
Injustice: The influence of de-facto segregation on academic achievement. *Social
Forces, 75,* 535-555.

Bell- Kaplan, E. (1997). *Not Our Kind of Girl.* Berkeley: University of California Press**.**

Bordieu, P. and Passeron, J. (1977). *Reproduction in Education, Society and Culture.*
Beverly Hills: Sage.

Bowles, S. and Gintis, H. (1976). *Schooling in Capitalist America: Education reform and
the contradictions of economic life.* New York: Basic Books.

Bowen, W. and Bok, D. (1998). *The Shape of the River.* New Jersey: Princeton
University Press.

Brown-Rosier, K. (2000). *Mothering Inner-City Children: The Early School Years*. New

Brunswick: Rutgers University Press.

Bronfenbrenner, U. (1976). The Experimental Ecology of Education. *Educational Researcher, 5,* 9, 5-15.

Bronfenbrenner, U. (1977). Toward an Experimental Ecology of Human Development. *American Psychologist, 32*, 7, 513-531.

Bronfenbrenner, U. (1979). *The Ecology of Human Development: Experiments by Nature and Design.* Cambridge: Harvard University Press.

Buchmann, C. and Dalton, B. (2002).Interpersonal Influences and Education Aspiration in 12 Countries: The importance of Institutional Context. *Sociology of Education, 75*, 2, 99-122.

Bullock, H. and Limbert, W. (2003). Scaling the Socioeconomic Ladder: Low Income Women's Perception of Class Status and Opportunity. *Journal of Social Issues, 59,* 4, 693-710.

Burton, L. & Bengston, V. (1985). "Black Grandmothers: Issues of Timing and Continuity of Roles", in L. Burton and V. Bengston's (Eds.) *Grandparenthood.* Beverly Hills: Sage Publications.

Cassanova, U. (1996). Parent Involvement: A Call for Prudence. *Educational Researcher, 25,* 30-32.

Centers for Disease Control & Prevention. (2000). Metropolitan Area of Residence at AIDS Diagnosis among Adults and Adolescents Ranked by Number and Rate of AIDS Cases. [Online]. Retrieved 01-02-07. http://www.cdc.gov/hiv/topics

Chavous, T. et.al (2003). Racial Identity and Academic Attainment Among African

American Adolescents. *Child Development, 74*, 4, 1076-1090.

Cheng-Mau, W. & Bikos, L. (2000). Educational and Vocational Aspirations of Minority

and Female Students: A longitudinal study. *Journal of Counseling and Development,*

78, 186-194.

Cheng, S. & Starks, B. (2002). Racial Differences in the Effects of Significant Others on

Students' Educational Expectations. *Sociology of Education, 75,* 306-327.

Cherlin, A. & Furstenberg, F. (1985). "Styles and Strategies of Grandparenting" in V.

Bengston and J. Robertson's (Eds.) *Grandparenthood.* Beverly Hills: Sage

Publications.

Cherlin, A. & Furstenberg, F. (1986). The New American Grandparents: A place in the

family, a life apart. New York: Basic Books.

Chew, C. (2004). Minority Test takers Make Significant Gains on SAT. *Black Issues in*

Higher Education, Sept., 8-10.

Christenson, S., Rounds, T., & Gorney, D. (1992). Family Factors and Student

Achievement: An avenue to increase student's success. *School Psychology Quarterly,*

7, 178-206.

Cohen, J. (1987). Parents as Educational Definers. *Journal of Marriage and the Family,*

49, 2, 339-351.

Crosnoe, Mistry and Elder. (2002). Economic Disadvantage, Family Dynamics and

Adolescent Enrollment in Higher Education. *Journal of Marriage and Family, 64*,

690-702.

Cook, T. et al. (1996). The Development of Occupational Aspirations and Expectations

among Inner City Boys. *Child Development, 67,* 3368-3385.

Delgado-Gaitan, C. (1992). School Matters in the Mexican-American Home: Socializing Children to Education. *American Educational Research Journal, 29,* 495-513.

Digest of Education Statistics. (2003). Post Secondary Education. National Center for Education Statistics.

Division of Health and Social Services. [Online]. Retrieved June 25, 2006, from: http://www.dhss.delaware.gov/dhss/dss/fpl.html

Drummond, K., and Stipek, D. (2006). Low Income Parents' Beliefs about their Role in Children's Academic Learning. *The Elementary School Journal, 104,* 3, 197-213.

Eccles, J., Vida, M, & Barber, B. (2004). The Relation of Early Adolescents' College Plans and Both Academic Ability and Task-Value Beliefs to Subsequent College Enrollment. *Journal of Early Adolescents, 24*,1, 63-78.

Economic Policy Institute. Women's Real Hourly Wages by Education, 1973-1996. [Online Source]. Retrieved 2-17-04.

Edin, K. & Lein, L. (1997). *Making ends Meet: How Single Mothers Survive Welfare and Low Wage Work.* New York: Russell Sage Foundation.

Elder, G. (1998). The Life Course as Developmental Theory. *Child Development, 69*, 1, 1-12.

Franklin, C. (1996). Learning to Teach Qualitative Research in M. Sussman and J. Gilgun's (eds.) The Methods and Methodologies of Qualitative Family Research. New York: The Haworth Press, Inc.

Fryer, R. and Levitt, S. (2004). Achievement. *Education Next, fall,* 65-71.

Gans, H. (1997). Fighting the Biases Embedded in Social Concepts of the Poor. In C.

Hartman's (Ed.), *Double Exposure: Poverty and Race in America.* New York: M.E.

Sharp.

Geronimus, A. (1991). Teenage Childbearing and Social Reproduction Disadvantage:

The evolution of complex questions and the demise of simple answers. *Family*

Relations, 40, 463-471.

Gestwicki, C. (2000). *Home, school, and community relations: A guide to working with*

families. Africa: Delmar Thomson Learning.

Gilby, R. and Pederson, D. (1982). The development of the Child's Concept of the

Family. Canadian Journal of Behavioral Sciences, 14, 110-121.

Gilder, G. (1981). *Wealth and Poverty.* New York: Basic Books.

Gilder, G. (1989). The Nature of Poverty in I.C. Colby's (ed.) *Social Welfare Policy:*

Perspectives Patterns and Insights. Chicago: Dorsey Press.

Gilgun, J., Daly, K. & Handel, G. (eds.) *Qualitative Methods in Family Research*.

Newbury Park: Sage Publications

Graham, B. & Paul, C. Does Higher Education Really Lead to Higher Employability

and Wages in the RMI? [Online]. Retrieved February 7, 2004, from:

www.pacificweb.org/rmi/pdf/Education%20

Goldenberg, C. and Gallimore, R. (1995). Immigrant Latino Parents' Values and Beliefs

about their Children's Education: Continuities and Discontinuities across Cultures and

Generations. In M. Maehr & P. Pintrich (Es), *Advances in Motivation and*

Achievement. (Vol. 9, pp. 183-228). Greenwich, CT: JAI.

Hareven, T. (1996). Life Course. *Encyclopedia of Gerontology, 2*, 31-40.

Harris, D. and Herrington, C. (2006). Accountability, Standards, and the Growing

Achievement Gap: Lessons from the past half century. *American Journal of*

Education, 112, 209-238.

Hauser-Cram, P., Sirin, S., and Stipek, D. (2003). When Teachers' and Parents' Values

Differ: Teachers' Ratings of Academic Competence in Children from Low

Income Families. *Journal of Educational Psychology, 95,* 4, 813-820.

Hellenga, K., Aber, M, & Rhodes, J. (2002). African American Adolescent Mothers'

Vocational Aspiration-Expectation Gap: Individual, Social and Environmental

Influences. *Psychology of Women Quarterly, 26,* 200-212.

Herrara, J. (1998). *The Disproportionate Placement of African Americans in Special*

Education: An analysis of ten cities. (Report No. 423324). National

Center for Research on Teacher Learning. ERIC Document Reproduction

Service No. 032-524.

Hill, R. (1971). *The Strengths of Black Families*. New York: Emerson Hall Publishers

Hill, S. (1999). *African American Children: Socialization and Development in Families*.

Thousand Oaks: Sage Publications.

Hill, S. (2002). Teaching and Doing Gender in African American Families. *Sex Roles: A*

Journal of Research, Dec., 493-507.

Hilliard, A. (1991). Do We Have the Will to Educate All Children? *Educational*

Leadership, 49, 1, 31-36.

Honora, D. (2002). The Relationship of Gender and Achievement to Future Outlook

Among African American Youth. *Adolescence. 37,* 146.

Horvat, E. and Lewis, K. (2003). Reassessing the "Burden of Acting White": The Importance of Peer Groups in Managing Academic Success. *Sociology of Education, 76,* 265-280.

Hosler, D. & Vesper, N. (1993). An Exploratory Study of the Factors Associated with Parental Saving for Postsecondary Education. *The Journal of Higher Education, 64,* 2, 140-165.

Hotchkiss, L. & Borow, H. (1984). Sociological Perspectives on Work and Career Development in D. Brown and L. Brooks' et al (Eds.), *Career choice and development, applying contemporary theories to practice.* San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

Jackson, J.J. (1970). Kinship Relations among Older Negro Americans. *Journal of Social and Behavioral Sciences, 16,* 1-13.

Jacobson, J. et al. (2001). Educational Achievement and Black - White Inequality. National Center for Education Statistics. [Online]. Retrieved May, 07, 2004, from: http://nces.ed.gov/programs/quarterly/vol_3/3_3/q6-1.asp#H5.

Jaynes, G. and Williams, R. (1989). *A Common Destiny: Black s and American Society.* National Academy Press: Washington, DC.

Jennings, J. (1999). Persistent Poverty in the United States: Review of Theories and Explanations in J. Jennings and L. Kushnick's (Eds.) A New Introduction to Poverty: The Role of Race, Power and Politics. New York: New York University Press.

Jung, J. and Khalsa, H. (1989). The Relationship of Daily Hassles, Social Support, and

Coping to Depression in Black and White Students. *Journal of General Psychology, 4,* 116, 407-417.

Kahuna, E. & Kahuna, B. (1971). Theoretical and Research Perspectives on Grandparenthood. *Aging and Human Development, 2,* 261-268.

Kardiner, A. and Oversey L. (1951). *The Mark of Oppression: A psychosocial study of the American Negro*. New York: Norton.

Kao, G. and Tienda, M. (1998). Educational Aspirations of Minority Youth. *American Journal of Education, 106,* 3, 349-375.

Katz, M. (1983). *Poverty and Policy in American History.* New York: Academic Press.

Keith, P. and Wacker, R.(2002). Grandparent Visitation Rights: An Inappropriate Intrusion or Appropriate Protection? *International Journal of Aging and Human Development, 54,* (3), 191-204.

Kerckhoff, A. and Campbell, R. (1977). Black –White Differences in the Educational Attainment Process. *Sociology of Education, 50,* 15-27.

Kids Count in Delaware/Families Count in Delaware: Fact book 2006 (2006). Center for Community Research and Service. University of Delaware.

Kivett, V. (1993). Racial Comparisons of the Grandmother Role: Implications for Strengthening the Family Support System of Older Black Women. *Family Relations, 42,* 165-172.

Kivnick, H. (1985). "Grandparenthood and Mental Health", in V. Bengston and J. Robertson's (Eds.) *Grandparenthood*. Beverly Hills: Sage Publications.

Kozol, J. (1991). *Savage Inequalities*. New York: Harper Perennial.

Lareau, A. (1987). Social Class Differences in Family- School Relationships: the importance of Cultural Capital. *Sociology of Education, 60,* 73-85.

Lareau, A. (1994). Parent Involvement in Schooling: A Dissenting View. In C. Fagnano & B. Werber's (Eds.), *School, family, and community interaction: A view from the firing lines* (pp. 61-73). Boulder, Westview.

Lareau, A. and Shumar, W. (1996). The Problem of Individualism in Family-School Policies. *Sociology of Education* (Special Edition) 24-39.

Lee, J. (2002). Racial ands Ethnic Achievement Gap Trends: Reversing the progress toward equity? *Educational Researcher, 31,* 1, 3-12.

Leland, M. (1990). The Politics of Hunger among Black s. *Black Scholar, 21,* 1, 2-5.

Lewis, A. (2001). There is no 'Race" in the Schoolyard: Color blind ideology in an (almost) All White Neighborhood. *American Education Research Journal, 38*, 4, 781-811.

Lewis, O. (1959). *Five Families: Mexican Case Studies in the Culture of Poverty*. New York: Basic Books.

Lewis, O. (1968). The Culture of Poverty. In D. Moynihan's (Ed.), On *Understanding Poverty: Perspectives from the Social Sciences.* New York: Basic Books.

Lott, B. (2001). Low Income parents and the public schools. *Journal of Social Issues, 57,* (2), 247(1).

Lopez, N. (2003). *Hopeful Girls, Troubled Boys*. Routledge: New York.

MacLeod, J. (1995). *Aint No Makin' It: Aspirations & Attainment in a Low Income Neighborhood.* Boulder: Westview Press.

154

Massey, D. & Denton, N. (1993). Trends in the Residential Segregation of Black s, Hispanics, and Asians: 1970-1980. *American Social Review, 52*, 802-825.

Matthews, S. and Spey, J. (1985). Adolescents Relationships with Grandparents: An Empirical Contribution to Conceptual Framework. *Journal of Gerontology, 40,* 621-626.

Mau, W. (1995). Educational Planning and Academic Achievement of Middle School Students: A racial and cultural comparison. *Journal of Counseling and Development, 73,* 518-526.

McClafferty, K., Torres, C., and Mitchell, T. (2000). Challenges of the New Sociology of Urban Education. In K. McClafferty, C. Torres, and T. Mitchell's (Eds.), *Challenges of Urban Education.* Albany: State University of New York Press.

McKown, C. and Weinstein, R. (2003). The Development and Consequence of Stereotype Consciousness in Middle Childhood. *Child Development, 74,* 2, 498-515.

McMillan, M. (2003). Is No Child Left Behind 'Wise Schooling' for African American Male Students? *The Hough School Journal, Dec.03/Jan.04*, 25-33.

Meir, K., Stewart, J. and England, R. (1989). *Race, Class and Education: The Politics of Second Generation Discrimination*. Madison: University of Wisconsin Press.

Mickelson, R. (1990). The Attitude Achievement Paradox Among Black Adolescents. *Sociology of Education, 63,* 44-6.

Miles, M. and Huberman, A. (1984). Qualitative Data Analysis: A Sourcebook of New Methods.

Miller, W. and Crabtree, B. (2004). Depth Interviewing. In S. Hesse-Biber and P.

Leavy's (Eds.), *Approaches to Qualitative Research: A reader on theory and practice*. New York: Oxford Press.

Monk, D. (1981). Toward a Multilevel Perspective on the Allocation of Educational Resources. *Review of Educational Research, 51,* 215-236.

Moynihan, D. (1965). *The Negro Family: The case for national action.* Washington D.C. U.S. Department of Labor, Office of Planning and Research.

Mueller, M. & Elder, G. (2003). Family Contingencies Across the Generations: Grandparent-grandchild relationships in holistic perspective. *Journal of Marriage and the Family, 65*, May, 404-417.

Murray, C. (1984). *Losing Ground*. New York: Basic Books.

National Center for Children in Poverty. (2003). The Effect of Parental Education on Income.

National Center for Education Statistics. (2001). High School Dropouts and Completers from the Common Core of Data: School Year 2000-2001. Retrieved April13 2004, from http://nces.ed.gov/pubs2004/dropout00-01/#4

National Center for Education Statistics. (2004). Outcomes of Education. Retrieved July 9, 2006 from http://nces.ed.gov/programs/digest/d04/tables/dt04_387.asp

National Center for Education Statistics. (2005a). Indicators of School Crime and Safety. Retrieved July 9, 2006 from

http://nces.ed.gov/programs/crimeidicators/Indicators.asp?PubPageNumber=5.

National Center for Education Statistics. (2005b). Postsecondary Institutions in the United States: Fall 2003. Degrees and Other Awards Conferred 2002-2003. Retrieved

July 9, 2006 from, http://nces.ed.gov/fastfacts/display.asp?id=72

National Center for Education Statistics. (2006).The Condition of Education. Retrieved
July 9, 2006, from http://nces.ed.gov/programs/coe/

National Center for Health Statistics. (2004). "Health, United States, 2004, With
Chart book on Trends in the Health of Americans". Hyattsville, Maryland.

National Center for Health Statistics. (2005). Health, United States, 2005, With Chart
book on Trends in the Health of Americans. Retrieved July 9, 2006 from
http://www.cdc.gov/nchs/data/hus/hus05.pdf#027

Neugarten, B., Moore, J., and Lowe, J. (1965). Age Norms, Age Constraints, and Adult
Socialization. *American Journal of Sociology, 70,* 710-717.

Neugarten, B. and Weinstein, K. (1964). The Changing American Grandparent. *Journal
of Marriage and the Family, 26,* 199-204.

Noguera, P. (2001). Racial Politics and the Elusive Quest for Equity and Excellence in
Education. *Education and Urban Society, 34*, 1, 27-42.

Noguera, P. (2003). The Trouble with Black Boys: The role and influence of
environmental and cultural factors on the academic performance of African-American
males. *Urban Education, 38,* 4, 431-459.

O'Hare, W. and Mather, M. (2003). *The Growing Number of Kids in Severely Distressed
Neighborhoods: Evidence from the 2000 Census*. The Annie E. Casey Foundation and
the Population Reference Bureau.

Ogbu, J. (1991). Minority Coping Responses and School Experience. *The Journal of
Psychohistory, 18*, 4, 433-456.

Ogbu, J. (1994). Racial Stratification and Education in the United States: Why Inequality Persists. *Teachers College Record, 96*, 2, 264- 299.

Opinion Section. (2005, April). *The News Journal*, D-3**.**

Osbourne, J. (1995). Academics, Self Esteem, and Race: A look at the underlying assumptions of the disidentification hypothesis*. Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin, 21,* 449-455.

Pearson, J., Hunter, A., Ensminger, M., and Kellam, S. (1990). Black Grandmothers in Multigenerational Households: Diversity in Family Structure and Parenting Involvement in the Woodlawn Community. *Child Development, 61,* 434-442.

Pierce, D. and Brooks, J. (2003). "Self Sufficiency Standards for Delaware". Metropolitan Wilmington Urban League.

Perry, T. (2003). "Up from the Parched Earth: Toward a Theory of African American Achievement" in T. Perry, C. Steele & A. Hilliard's (Eds.) *Young, Gifted and Black* . Beacon Press: Boston.

Pettigrew, T. (1964). *A Profile of the Negro Family*. Princeton: Van Nostrand.

Quality Counts. (2000*). Education Week, XIX*, 18.

Raley, R.K. and Bumpass, L. (2003). *The Topography of the Divorce Plateau: Levels and Trend in the United States in Union Stability after 1980.* Retrieved 03-04-06 from http://www.demographic-research.org/volumes/vol8/8/8-8.pdf.

Rank, M. and Hirschl, T. (2001). Rags or Riches: Estimating the Probabilities of Poverty and Affluence across the Adult American Life Span. *Social Science Quarterly, 82*, 4, 651-669.

Reynolds, A. & Gill, S. (1994). The Role of Parental Perspectives in the School

    Adjustment of Inner City Black Children. *Journal of Youth hand Adolescence, 23*, 6,

    671-694.

Riley, M., Foner, A., Hess, B. and Toby, M. (1969). "Socialization for the Middle and

    Later Years" in D. Goslin (Ed.) *Handbook of Socialization and Theory Research.*

    Chicago: Rand McNally.

Roberto, K. and Stroes, J. (1995). "Grandchildren and Grandparents: Roles, Influences

    and Relationships", in (Ed.) J. Henrick's *The Ties of Later Life*. Amityville:

    Baywood Publishing Company.

Robertson, J. (1977). Grandmotherhood: A Study of Role Conceptions, *Journal of

    Marriage and the Family, 39,* 165-174.

Roderick, M. (2003). What's Happening to the Boys? Early High School Experiences

    and School Outcomes among African-American Male Adolescents in Chicago. *Urban

    Education, 38,* 5, 538-607.

Rouse, C., Brooks- Gunn, J., and McLanahan, S. (2005). Introducing the Issue. *The

    Future of Children, 15,*1, 5-13.

Roscigno, V. (1995). The Social Embeddedness of Racial Educational Inequality: The

    Black -white gap and the impact of racial and local political- economic contexts.

    Research in Social Stratification and Mobility, 14, 135-165.

Roscigno, V. (1998). Race and the Reproduction of Educational Disadvantage. *Social

    Forces, 76,* 3, 1033-1061.

Ruoppila, I. (1991). "The Significance of Grandparents for the Formatting of Family

Relations", in P. Smith's (Ed.) The Psychology of Grandparenthood: An International

Perspective". New York: Routledge.

Schneider, D. (1968). American Kinship: A Cultural Account. Englewood Cliffs:

Prentice-Hall.

Scott- Jones, D. (1995). Parent- child Interactions and School Achievement. In B. Ryan

& L. Hampton (Eds.), *The Family-School Connection: Theory, Research, and*

Practice. (pp. 75-107). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Seidman, I. (1998). *Interviewing as Qualitative Research*. New York: Teachers College

Press.

Selman, R. (1980).*The Growth of Interpersonal Understanding: Developmental and*

Clinical Analysis. New York: Academic Press.

Sewell, W. & Hauser, R. (1980). The Wisconsin Longitudinal Study of Social and

Psychological Factors in Aspirations and Achievements. *Research in Sociology of*

Education and Socialization, 1, 59-99.

Sewell, W., & Shah, V. (1967). Socioeconomic Status, Intelligence, and the Attainment

of Higher Education. *Sociology of Education, 40*,1,1-23.

Sewell, W., Hauser, R. and Wolf, W. (1980). Sex, Schooling, and Occupational Status.

American Journal of Sociology, 86, 551-583.

Shorter, E. (1975). The Making of the Modern Family. New York: Basic Books.

Singer, B. & Saldana, D. (2001). Educational and Career Aspirations of High School

Students and Race, Gender and Class Differences. *Race, Gender and Class, 8,*1, 22-

34.

Small, M. and Newman, K. (2001). Urban Poverty after 'The Truly Disadvantaged': The

    rediscovery of the family, the neighborhood and the culture. *Annual Review of*

    Sociology, 27, 23-45.

Smith, D. and Smith, B. (2006). Perceptions of Violence: The views of teachers who left

    urban schools. *The High School Journal,* Feb/Mar, 34-42.

Smith, M.S. (1991). "An Evolutionary Perspective on Grandparent-Grandchild

    Relationships". In Peter Smith's (Ed.) *The Psychology of Grandparenthood: An*

    international perspective. New York: Routledge.

Smith- Maddox, R. (2000). Educational Aspirations of African American Eighth Graders.

    Race, Gender and Class, 7, 3, 58-80.

Somers, P., Cofer, J. & VanderPutten, J. (2002). The Early Bird Goes to College: the

    Link Between Early College Aspirations and Postsecondary matriculation. *Journal of*

    *College Student Development, 43,*1, 93-107.

Strom, R., Collinsworth, P., Strom, S. & Griswold, D. (1995). "The Strengths and Needs

    of Black Grandparents", in J. Hendricks (ed.) *The Ties of Later Life*. Amityville:

    Baywood Publishing Company.

Sutton, R. (1991). Equity and Computers in the Schools: A decade of research. *Review of*

    Educational Research, 61, 472-503.

Szinovacz, M. (1998). *Handbook on Grandparenthood*. Westport: Greenwood Press.

Teachman, J. and Paasch, K. (1998). The Family and Educational Aspirations. *Journal of*

    Marriage and the Family, 60, 3, 704-714.

Thomas, J. (1995). "Gender and Perceptions of Grandparenthood", in Jon Hendricks

(Ed.) *The Ties of Later Life.* Amityville: Baywood Publishing Company.

Thompson, G. (2002). *African American Teens Discuss Their Schooling Experiences.* Westport: Bergin and Garvey/Greenwood.

The Disaster Center. (2006). "U.S. Crime Rate 2004-2005, Crimes per 100,000 and Ranking." [Online]. Retrieved November 19, 2006 from: http://www.disastercenter.com/crime/US_States_Rate_Ranking.html

Timberlake, E. (1980). The Value of Grandchildren to Grandmothers. *Journal of Gerontological Social Work, 3,* 63-76.

Tyson, K. Notes from the Back of the Classroom: Problems and paradoxes in the schooling of young Black students. *Sociology of Education, 73,* (October), 326-343.

Von Hentig, H. (1945). The Sociological Function of the Grandmother. *Social Forces, 24,* 2, 389-392.

Wanker, W. and Christie, J. (2005). State Implementation of the No Child Left Behind Act. *Peabody Journal of Education, 80,* 2, 57-72.

Warburton, E. et al. (2001). Bridging the Gap: Academic Preparation and Post secondary Success of First Generation College Students. National Center for Education Statistics, U.S. Department of Education, Office of Educational Research and Improvement.

Watson, J. and Koblinsky, S. (2001). Strengths and Needs of African American and European American Grandmothers in the Working and Middle Classes. *Journal of Negro Education, 69,* 3, 199-214.

Weinstein, R., Madison, S., & Kuklisnki, M. (1995). Raising Expectations in Schooling:

Obstacles and opportunity for change. *American Educational Research Journal, 32,* 1, 121-159.

Werner, E. (1991). Grandparent-Grandchild Relationships amongst US Ethnic Groups. In P. Smith's (Ed.), *The Psychology of Grandparenthood*. New York: Routledge.

White, J. and Klein, D. (2002). *Family Theories.* Thousand Oaks: Sage Publications.

Wilson, M. (1986).The Black Extended Family: An Analytical Consideration. *Developmental Psychology, 22,* 2, 246-258.

Wilson, P. & Wilson, J. (1992). Environmental Influences on Adolescent Educational Aspirations: a Logistic Transform Model. *Youth and Society, 24,*1, 52-69.

Wilson, W.J. (1987). *The Truly Disadvantaged: The inner city, the underclass and public policy.* Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Wise, A. & Gendler, T. (1989). Rich Schools, Poor Schools: The persistence of unequal education. *College Board Review, 151,* 12-17.

U.S. Census Bureau. (1998). Median Incomes of Full Time Year Round Worker by Selected Characteristic. [Online]. Retrieved May 7, 2004, from: http://www.census.gov/hhes/income/income98/in98ern.html.

U.S. Census Bureau. (2000). Fact Sheet: Wilmington City, Delaware. [Online]. Retrieved June 25, 2006, from: http://www.census.gov/

U.S. Department of Education. (2001). Fact Sheet on the Major Provisions of the Conference Report to H.R. 1, The No Child Left Behind Act. [Online]. Retrieved July 15, 2006, from: http://www.ed.gov/nclb/overview/intro/factsheet.html

U.S. Department of Education. (2005). The Nation's Report Card. NAEP 2004 Trends in

Academic Progress: Three decades of student performance in reading and

mathematics.

U.S. Department of Labor. (2004). Employment Standards Administration Wage and

Hour Division. [Online]. Retrieved April 15, 2004, from:

http://www.dol.gov/esa/minwage/america.htm#Delaware

U.S. Department of Labor. (2002). Characteristics of Minimum Wage Workers. [Online

Source]. Retrieved 4-15-04. http://www.bls.gov/cps/minwage2002pdf.pdf

U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. (2000). Office of Applied Studies. Illicit

Drug Use: Total Population aged 12 and Over. [Online Source]. Retrieved 01-02-07.

www./oas.samhsa.gov/stateMaps.htm#Total.

Uzoka, A. (1979). The Myth of the Nuclear Family. *American Psychologist,*

34, 1075-1106.