THE HARD ROAD: THE EDUCATIONAL PURSUITS AND PARTICIPATION OF

SOCIOECONOMICALLY DISADVANTAGED AFRICAN AMERICAN ADULTS

by

TENNILLE J. LASKER-SCOTT

(Under the Direction of JUANITA JOHNSON-BAILEY)

ABSTRACT

The purpose of this qualitative research study was to examine the impact of class and race on the perceptions of formal education and participation of socioeconomically disadvantaged adult African Americans. The study was guided by two research questions:

1) How do class and race membership affect the beliefs of socioeconomically disadvantaged African American adults towards educational participation?

2) What culturally based concepts or values do socioeconomically disadvantaged African Americans have regarding the significance/importance of education?

Twelve participants in the South, Southwest, Southeast, and Midwest United States participated in the study. Each person fit the following criteria: low-income; 25 years of age or older; self-identified as being Black or African American; and first-generation students or potential students. The semi-structured interviews were in face-to face and in-depth.

Six major themes emerged from this study: participants did not strive towards educational success because of the absence of role models from their lives; the

participants in this study did not believe that education has a correlation to success; family expectations impact participant's tenure in school; the participants' goals and dreams of an education were limited by their socioeconomic status; the participants' experiences were negatively impacted by their race and class membership; and the culture of the African American community had a complex and often conflicting relationship with the significance of education for Blacks.

The three conclusions derived from the study were: 1) the race and class membership of socioeconomically disadvantaged African American adults fosters a worldview of hopelessness regarding the importance/significance of education ; 2) the socioeconomically disadvantaged African American adults in this study believe that education is for Whites and that obtaining an education will separate them from their community; and 3) the socioeconomically disadvantaged African Americans in this study do not accept that there is a link between education and success but instead feel that any life success is made random and chaotic by the forces of racism and classism.

INDEX WORDS: Adult Education; Black Adult Learners; First-Generation Students; Low-Income Students; Adult Participation

THE HARD ROAD: THE EDUCATIONAL PURSUITS AND PARTICIPATION OF

SOCIOECONOMICALLY DISADVANTAGED AFRICAN AMERICAN ADULTS

by

TENNILLE J. LASKER-SCOTT

B.B.A, University of Arkansas at Little Rock, 2006

M.Ed, University of Arkansas at Little Rock, 2009

A Dissertation Submitted to the Graduate Faculty of The University of Georgia in Partial

Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

ATHENS, GEORGIA

2015

THE HARD ROAD: THE EDUCATIONAL PURSUITS AND PARTICIPATION OF

SOCIOECONOMICALLY DISADVANTAGED AFRICAN AMERICAN ADULTS

by

TENNILLE J. LASKER-SCOTT

Major Professor: Juanita Johnson-Bailey
Committee: Rosemary E. Phelps
    Kecia M. Thomas

Electronic Version Approved:

Suzanne Barbour
Dean of the Graduate School
The University of Georgia
August 2015

DEDICATION

This dissertation is dedicated to my parents, Lloyd Eddie Lasker, Sr. & Janie Lee Stubbs-

Lasker, who sacrificed so much for their children's dreams to come true. You are an

inspiration to us all.

Daddy, I know that you're smiling down on me from heaven. "Baby Sweets" finally did

it. I hope you're proud.

Lloyd E. Lasker, Sr.

(1948-2012)

Forever

It is so inconceivable and complicated
How my forever was so drastically
miscalculated

Hated, Saddened...words that
are so understated
Waiting, Still not understanding

How my statements of seeing you soon
were vacated

Wondering why me, us, you
Lord, why now
Is this a response to a sin I committed?
Punishment from a broken vow?

Hearing your voice, crying out
waking up in darkness
Realizing that the images before me
were dreams...nightmares

How do I disregard the feelings
from my breaking heart
Hearing that later days will be better,
but that's too far

My hero, my idol, my example
of all...

Though you are not physically here
you can't wipe this sudden rush of tears
You will remain where you have always
been...my heart...forever

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

First I must acknowledge how it was only through God's grace and mercy that I was able to endure this journey. I am continually amazed at the goodness of the Lord and I am so thankful that even in times of sorrow and grief I was able to feel his presence.

While this study only has my name listed, there are countless others who offered their support during my tenure here at the university. First and foremost, I would like to acknowledge my mentor, Dr. Juanita Johnson-Bailey. I can sincerely say that I would not have made it through this program without your support for me and my family. Mere words will never be able to describe the level of love and admiration I have for you. Thank you for your encouragement, especially in the midst of my feeling overwhelmed and having thoughts of self-doubt. Also in thanking you, I must also recognize and thank your family, Mr. Marvin Bailey and Brandice Bailey, for sharing you with me through this journey. Brandice, you're finally getting your "Mommy" back from me. Now you only have to worry about the ones behind me.

Secondly, I would like to thank my committee members, Dr. Rosemary E. Phelps for your advice and your ability to "calm" my spirit, and Dr. Kecia M. Thomas for your talks and friendship. Thank you both for your time and patience.

A special thanks to Dr. Carrie Boden-McGill for believing in my capabilities long before I even imagined it possible. I appreciate you so much.

Also, a BIG "thank you" to the twelve participants of this study. I learned so much from each of you. I appreciate all of you for welcoming into your homes and lives.

sis. I love you. Tanzetta and Terina, thank you both for allowing me to be your big sister, and for showing me that I could never be too selfish because I had two little sisters who required to be spoiled. My brothers Nick, Dalian, and Lloyd Jr., thank you for being the "rocks" of our family. We need you. We love you. We appreciate you. Tamela, thank you for your love and support and Dr. Karen Billingsley-Lasker, thank you for the pep talks and eye rolls, I enjoyed them both. Aunt Lois, thank you for always thinking of me and the boys. We love you. Molly, Jordan, and Taylor, thank you so much for welcoming us to Georgia and for taking such good care of my boys. Allison (Nikki), Jeff, and Tanner, thank you for allowing me to stay with you and treating me so well.

Much love and many thanks to my best friends, April Stubbs and William Churchill. I literally would have lost my mind if it wasn't for your love, laughs and absolutely questionable, yet hilarious, behavior. My girls: Adrienne, Cala, Davaga, Dawn, Jackie B., Kyasha, Laura, and Seleeka – Thank you all for the love and support that you've shown and for keeping me encouraged. I appreciate and love you all so much. To Laron Lasker and Jermaine & Delma Credit, I didn't forget you. I love you guys to the moon and back!

To my nieces and nephews: Demetris, Alfred-Lloyd, Lauren, Taylor, Tierra, Tristen, Tori, Kania, Victoria, Talyssa, Trinity, Demetris Jr., and Tatum - Thank you for being my entertainment and giving me the best laughs. To my first angel, "Trey-Trey", Lloyd Lasker III: Thank you for being the first one to melt my heart! There is nothing that I won't do for you. I love you so much and I'm so proud of you.

To my sons, Dalian and Amaan: My Pooh-Bear and Pooh-Pooh, I love you both so much! Thank you for believing in me and understanding the sacrifices that I made in

an effort to provide you both with a better life. I know that you thought I was crazy for moving us from Conway, AR to Athens, GA but thank you for coming along for the ride and being the most awesome, amazing, talented, and funny sons that I could have ever wanted. You make me so proud. You are going to do great things. GREAT THINGS!!! I'm just here to watch and applaud.

Cory JaMal: We have twenty years of laughing, love, and tears. Thank you for trying and for loving me in your own special way. Thank you for the many times that you acted as my chauffeur, my proofreader and most definitely, my chef! Your contributions never went unnoticed. Cheers to our future!

To my heart, my mother, Janie Lee Lasker, thank you for loving me through it all. Your patience, kindness, and wisdom carried me when I felt like I could not go any further. Mom, you may not ever know how much simply hearing your voice made my day. You are strong, resilient, and so humble. I am in awe of your grace. I hope that my sons will one day love me the way that we all love you. You are simply Janie Lee and as daddy used to say, "And it can't get no better than her!" Love you forever.

Most importantly, I thank God almighty! You've brought me a might long way! I never imagined the test and trials that I had to overcome but I thank you for guiding my steps!

To all those who have given us support, I salute you. I love you.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

LIST OF TABLES

Page

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

African Americans have a unique history in this country. African Americans were physically enslaved, bought, sold, and tortured, only to be "freed" into a world where they were denied an education or deliberately uneducated. During slavery, many slave owners had a fear that educating the slaves would lead them to rebel and turn against their masters and other Whites (Whiteaker, 1990) and some believed educating slaves would result in slaves becoming dissatisfied with their positions (Peterson, 1996).

For more than 300 years (1619 to 1868), it was illegal to educate Blacks in this country (Woodson, 1915; Peterson, 1996). While laws against educating slaves in southern states increased, abolitionists were striving to educate both freed and slaved Blacks.

African Americans and Higher Education

After centuries of fighting for social and educational freedoms, African Americans are still striving to "catch up" economically and educationally (Rury & Hill, 2012). Despite the circumstances of under-education there is no question that African-Americans have recently made great strides as the numbers of high school graduates increased, rising from 59.2% in 2006 to 66.1% in 2010 ("Diverse: Issues in Higher Education," 2013). Data from the National Center for Education Statistics assessed the high school dropout rates from 2007 to 2009. The dropout rate for Blacks were never under 20% until 1977. The rate has stayed under 20%, and steadily decreased since 1980

(Chapman, Larid, Ifill, & KewalRamani, 2011). The lowest recorded year was 2010, at 8.4% (Aud et al., 2012).

Within the last decades, participation of African Americans at institutions in higher education have also increased, rising from 20% in 1980 to 32% in 2008 (Aud, Fox, & KewalRamani, 2010). However, the 2010 National Center for Education Statistics study reports that only 13% of African American adults, those 25 years of age and older, have at least a bachelor's degree. Educational attainment is important to examine as studies show that financial earnings are directly attributed to the achievement of higher education degrees (Carnevale, Rose, & Cheah, 2011; Crosby, 2000; James, 2012; 'Presidency," 2011). For example, median income in 2007 differed drastically according to education: White males with a bachelor's degree had a median income of $71,000 and Black males with a bachelor's degree had a median income of $55,000; the median income for Black females with a bachelor's degree was $45,000 and White females with a bachelor's degree ranked higher slightly higher with $54,000 (Aud, Fox, & KewalRamani, 2010).

Another assessment on the link between education and potential earnings show that in 2008 the unemployment rate was higher for Blacks at nine percent than it was for Whites at four percent. Additionally, lower unemployment rates are correlated with higher levels of education, especially by racial groups. The unemployment rate for Blacks without a high school diploma or equivalent was 22%, compared with 11% for those who have graduated from high school and four percent for those with at least a bachelor's degree (Aud, Fox, & KewalRamani, 2010).

As disparaging as these statistics are, they are a vast improvement from the statistics of beginning history of Black in secondary, post-secondary, and adult education. Those historical deficits are among the reasons why Black adult educators, such as W. E. B. Du Bois, Fanny Coppin, Mary Shad Cary, Booker T. Washington, Alain Locke, and Septima Poinsette Clark felt that education was key in the survival and success of Blacks in America.

<div align="center">Overview of African Americans and Adult Education</div>

The foundation for African American adult education was set in the late 1700s, though formal adult education opportunities for Blacks are viewed as "largely a nineteenth-century phenomenon," (Ihle, 1990, p. 11). One of the earliest forms of adult education for Blacks was created by the Free African Society, the first Negro organization in the country and founded in 1787.

Discounting the South, there was an increase in opportunities in adult education for African Americans through church and social groups, Black newspapers, and literary societies (Ihle, 1990). Fraternal orders, such as the Masons, also contributed to the education of adults during the late 18th and early 19th centuries. Many of these organizations stressed the importance of education among the Black youth as well as the adults, creating programs to fit the needs of both groups. An emphasis was placed on teaching Black adults how to read.

Education was often seen as necessary to gain acceptance, if not advancement, in White society (Peterson, 1996; Woodson, 1915). The underlining premise behind White Americans educating minorities seemed to be about the control of African Americans rather than the cultural advancement of the group. Many of the Whites who supported

adult education felt that minorities needed to be able to read in order to become Christians and productive citizens. For the African Americans who pursued literacy, the major emphases were placed not only on reading the Bible, but also on learning a trade.

Adult education was an important part in the mobility of the Black race (Woodson, 1915). Johnson-Bailey's (2006) research observed that three themes emerged from the archival search on the historical involvement of African Americans in adult education: education for assimilation, education for cultural survival and education for resistance.

Class in Adult Education

Public Library usage and newspaper circulation served as a way to educate the working class, who could not afford a formal education. The 1890s saw the emergence of public libraries to serve the needs of the working class. However, Blacks were not readily welcome in public libraries (Whiteaker, 1990).

During the 18th and 19th centuries, it was widely accepted by immigrants and African Americans that education alone could lift them to positions of equality. The problem, in previous decades and currently, is that African-Americans who are born into families within the lowest socioeconomic status are more than likely to stay in that socioeconomic level. Compared to their White peers, African Americans do not gain academic success at the same rate (Conley, 1999). There has been little research done on the connection between African American educational pursuits and class. However, there are many studies that indicate that the lack of educational opportunities is a component of oppressing ethnic minorities and socio-economically disadvantaged people (Bhatti, 2006; Comer, 1968; Diamond & Gomez, 2004; Foley, 2004; Hoberman, 2000;

Ogbu, 2003; Walpole, 2003, 2008). The reason for this treatment cannot be explained nor is caused only because the dominant class would benefit economically with the mistreatment of the oppressed. He cautions that the psychological and philosophical advantage the majority has obtained with mistreatment of the minority and lowest class cannot be discounted (Brookfield, 2005; Hayes & Colin III, 1994).

The subjects of race and class have intersected in adult education from the beginning. The radical and humanistic philosophy of the adult education field is intended to enhance personal growth and development, to facilitate self-actualization, and to reform society, culturally, politically, and economically (Rubenson, 2005). There are important interconnections that exist between class and race (Brookfield, 2005; Sheared, 2006). As the literature indicates, early efforts to educate minorities were attempts to "socialize" the disenfranchised African Americans and impoverished immigrant class. It seemed apparent that the goal was not to treat the marginalized races and social classes as equals but rather to teach them to believe in a way of life that White America considered the best way of life.

<div align="center">Statement of the Problem</div>

While adult education has a long history of promoting social justice for those in the lowest economic status, there is little to no research that explores the dynamics of how class has influenced adult education in the past or how class continues to impact the practice of adult education. Blacks, especially socio-economically disadvantaged Blacks, participate in adult education at a lower rate than Whites. However, the lack of participation is not adequately examined in the adult education literature. Hoberman's (2000) suggests that in part Blacks, lower income Blacks specifically, do not do well

academically because of "the influence of this stylized 'ghetto' Blackness…creating adolescent 'wannabes'." Hoberman (2000) also notes Black psychiatrist James Comer's 1968 comment that young Blacks "mistakenly associate Black identity with what is most self-destructive about the behavior of Blacks with lower income." Research on discrimination by race and class found that race was more salient than class in the aspect of discrimination (Jud & Walker, 1977).

     Ogbu (1981, 1982, 1992), believes that cultural differences affect the competence, motivation, and achievement of Black students more than White students. While these differences, which are attributed to the parent's child rearing, discuss the "ghetto theory" of success that is reportedly regarded throughout the urban Black community, there are no relevant studies that examine how that parental involvement or lack thereof affects the adult's perception and pursuit of education. Additionally, race has a larger impact on aspirations and achievement than both class and gender, according to Mickleson (2008).

     Overall, research indicates that educational disenfranchisement is passed from generation to generation among working class and socio-economically disadvantaged groups (Lareau, 2002). In addition, Lareau's (2002) study showed that working class and poor adults' concepts of adulthood and childhood appeared to be closer connected to their lived experiences than that of the middle class, and that the strategies of parents when rearing their children were influenced by the parent's education…thus, funneling and continuing a cycle of disenfranchisement.

Statement of Purpose and Research Questions

The purpose of this qualitative research study is to examine the impact of class and race on the perceptions of formal education and participation of socio-economically disadvantaged adult African Americans. The study is guided by two research questions:

1. How do class and race membership affect the beliefs of socioeconomically disadvantaged African American adults towards educational participation?

2. What culturally based concepts or values do socioeconomically disadvantaged African Americans have regarding the significance/importance of education?

Significance of the Study

The study seeks to add to the dearth of literature examining the education of African American adults in addition to the literature on socio-economically disadvantaged students and their participation in high school, high school equivalency, college, and post-secondary institution education. This study explored how the constructs of class and race affect socio-economically disadvantaged adult African Americans on their educational participation and their educational pursuits.

This study will add a dimension to the existing literature on the education of African Americans as the current literature primarily focuses on children, adolescents and traditional age college students (Aronson, 2009: Bloom, 2007; Brooks-Terry, 1998; Diamond & Gomez, 2004; Engle & Tinto, 2008; Lareau, 1987, 2002; Mickelson, 1990; Nunez & Cuccaro-Alamin, 1998; Walpole, 2003, 2007, 2008). While some studies have examined the plight of low-income and first generation students, recognizing the barriers they face from childhood until they first enter college (Bloom, 2007; Coffman, 2011; Cooke, Barkham, Audin, Bradley, & Davy, 2004; Hochschild, 2003; Lynch &

O'Riordan, 1998; Terenzini, Pascarella, & Blimling, 1996; Terenzini & Rendon, 1994), other research has revealed how social class affects college choice (Paulsen & St. John, 2002). The goal of this study was to broaden the discussion on African American adults who pursue higher education by examining the participation of socio-economically disadvantaged African Americans by examining their lived experiences.

Definition of Terms

The following definitions are provided to clarify terms and the manner in which they are used in this study.

Black/African American: Identifying as a decedent of African lineage, current US citizen.

First Generation: Students from families where neither parent attained any education beyond high school (Chen, 2005; Nuñez & Cuccaro-Alamin 1998; Horn & Nuñez 2000; Warburton, Bugarin, &Nuñez 2001).

Formal Education: Education that takes place in an educational or training institution that curriculum leads to the attainment of recognized diplomas or degrees (i.e. high school diploma, General Education Development (GED) diploma, or degree of higher education).

Disenfranchised: A person or group of people who do not receive equal treatment; deprived of equal treatment.

Low-Income/Socioeconomically Disadvantaged/Working Class: For this study low-income will be considered by two separate figures, mandated by the US Department of Health & Human Services and US Department of Education: those who are not currently enrolled in a formal educational institution (Table 1) and those who are currently enrolled in a formal educational institution (Table 2). The term low-income individual" means an individual whose family's taxable income for the preceding year did not exceed 150 percent of the poverty level amount (U.S. Department of Health & Human Services-http://aspe.hhs.gov/poverty/13poverty.cfm#thresholds, 2013;

U.S. Department of Education -

http://www2.ed.gov/about/offices/list/ope/trio/incomelevels.html, 2013).

Table 1

Federal Low-Income Guidelines

Size of Family Unit	48 Contiguous States, D.C., and Outlying Jurisdiction	Alaska	Hawaii
1	$11,490	$14,350	$13,230
2	$15,510	$19,380	$17,850
3	$19,530	$24,410	$22,470
4	$23,550	$29,440	$27,090
5	$27,570	$34,470	$31,710
6	$31,590	$39,500	$36,330
7	$35,610	$44,530	$40,950
8	$39,630	$49,560	$45,570

Figures effective January 24, 2013

Note. For family units with more than eight members, add the following amount

for each additional family member: $4,020 for the 48 contiguous states, the

District of Columbia and outlying jurisdictions; $5,030 for Alaska; and $4,620 for

Hawaii.

Source: U.S. Department of Health & Human Services, *Federal Register*, Vol. 78,

No. 16, January 24, 2013, pp. 5182-5183

http://aspe.hhs.gov/poverty/13poverty.cfm#thresholds

Table 2

Federal TRIO Programs: Current-Year Low-Income Levels

Size of Family Unit	48 Contiguous States, D.C., and Outlying Jurisdiction	Alaska	Hawaii
1	$17,235	$21,525	$19,845
2	$23,265	$29,070	$26,775
3	$29,295	$36,615	$33,705
4	$35,325	$44,160	$40,635
5	$41,355	$51,705	$47,565
6	$47,385	$59,250	$54,495
7	$53,415	$66,795	$61,425
8	$59,445	$74,340	$68,355

Figures effective January 24, 2013

Note. For family units with more than eight members, add the following amount

for each additional family member: $6,030 for the 48 contiguous states, the

District of Columbia and outlying jurisdictions; $7,545 for Alaska; and $6,930 for

Hawaii.

Source: U.S. Department of Education - Office of Postsecondary Education

http://www2.ed.gov/about/offices/list/ope/trio/incomelevels.html

CHAPTER TWO

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

The purpose of this qualitative research study was to examine the issues of class and race on the formal education experiences of working-class and lower socioeconomic status African American adult learners. The two research questions guiding this study are:

1) How do class and race membership affect the beliefs of socioeconomically disadvantaged African American adults towards educational participation?

2) What culturally based concepts or values do socioeconomically disadvantaged African Americans have regarding the significance/importance of education?

In this chapter, to provide a background for this study, five areas of literature are reviewed. I examined the historical perspective African American education, providing an overview of the historical struggles that African Americans have faced in the pursuit of education. This assessment begins with the enslavement of African Americans to the contemporary educational pursuits of African Americans. Secondly, I reviewed the historical perspective of African American adult education, providing information on African Americans who have made significant contributions to the field of adult education. In the third section, I assessed the current research to determine how race and social class affect education. In the fourth section I provided an analysis from the literature on first-generation and low-income students. Finally, I reviewed adult education participation literature to illustrate why adults choose to participate in education.

Historical Perspective of the African American Educational Experience

The education of Blacks in the United States is a history of struggle, sacrifice and triumphs (Willie, Garibaldi, & Reed, 1991). Most African Americans in the U.S. are the descendants of slaves, who were imported from West Africa (Schneider & Schneider, 2007; Wood, 2005). The system of slavery, which began in North America in 1619 (Bennett, 1993; Van Deburg, 1994; Wood, 2005), included prohibitions on educating slaves. However, some clergy were noted to have attempted to teach African slaves, viewing them as heathens who needed to be saved and led to Christianity.   In some circumstances there were slaveholders who believed that teaching the Bible to slaves made the act of enslaving them a Christian act (Woodson, 1915). This principle was documented as early as 1634, in the writings of a Jesuit missionary, who recorded teaching a Negro the alphabet (Woodson, 1915). Similar accounts of teaching were made with French and Spanish settlers. However, prior to the Civil War, which began in 1861, the Quaker sects were renowned for educating slaves and leading the abolitionist movement by producing pamphlets against slavery, building slave schools and in some cases, teaching slaves alongside their White children (Jones-Wilson, 1996; Wood, 2005; Woodson, 1915).

Starting in the mid 1700's until the beginning of the Civil War in 1861, education was regarded as a privilege and not a right to which every person was entitled. Well-known people, such as philosopher, John Locke, and politician, William Pinkney, moralized that education was part of liberty and that slaves had the right to be elevated through schooling. It was during this time that the first school for newly freed Blacks, New York African Free School, was founded in 1787 (Rury, 1983).

According to the U.S. Census' (n.d.) report, in the early1800s approximately 95% of the 893,602 enslaved Blacks lived in the Southern United States. In Georgia and South Carolina it was illegal to teach or to pay slaves a wage, with strict penalties attached for violations. Many Southern U.S. states followed their lead (Rodriguez, 1997; Woodson, 1915).

By the beginning of the Civil War, which was fought in part over the issue of slavery, the number of slaves had risen to approximately with 99% of them living in the Southern states (U.S. Census, n.d.). When the war ended in 1865, the Northern victors, who struggled against Southern states to self-govern and to own and slaves, found themselves with millions of newly freed, mostly illiterate, Blacks (Ballard, 1993).

Shortly after the war, during the period of Reconstruction, in an effort to address the challenge of educating the freed Black populace, the Freedmen's Bureau was created by President Lincoln. One of the purposes was to help provide education to these new freedmen.   The period after Reconstruction, 1877-1965, was marked by continued violence and impoverishment for African Americans. In part, still outraged by the outcome of the Civil War and subsequent freedoms given to Blacks, many Southern White citizens continued to relegate African Americans to second-class citizens through a system of laws and customs that became known as Jim Crow (Kennedy, 1959, 1990; Myrdal, 1944). One example of the Jim Crow Laws regarding education was the separate but equal doctrine on schools that set forth that children of African descent were to be educated separately from White children; there were also severe disparities concerning school supplies and related resources, such as libraries and facilities. In some instances, teachers were punished if they attempted to establish any form of parity for Black

students. For example, in Oklahoma any person teaching at a school where both Whites and Negroes were pupils was guilty of a misdemeanor and fined between ten to fifty dollars for each offense (Kennedy, 1959, 1990; Myrdal, 1944). Rury and Hill (2012) note that Plessy v. Ferguson, the case ruled by the U.S. Supreme Court that separate facilities for Blacks and Whites were constitutional as long as they were "equal", only intensified and legitimized the so-called "separate but equal" laws that affected the majority of Blacks within the United States with more than three-quarter of the African American population living in the Jim Crow South. Over 4,700 lynchings occurred during the years of 1882-1968 (Myrdal, 1994; Raper, 1933). These atrocious acts were used as a warning and punishment, especially for Blacks who preached for equality in life, education and politics.

The eras of Jim Crow Era and desegregation intersect, as exampled by the landmark case ruling of Brown v. Board of Education that took place on May 17, 1954. The Unites States Supreme Court ruled that the Jim Crow laws that proposed racial segregation violated the Constitution's Fourteenth Amendment, also noting that the conditions of these laws denied equal protection and that the mandated separate educational institutions were not treated or funded equally. This ruling reversed the earlier 1896 ruling in Plessy v. Ferguson. Under the 1964 Civil Rights Act and the direction of the President, using the force of the National Guard, Southern states began to integrate but not without trepidation and violence (Rury & Hill, 2012). By 1972, more than a third of the Black students in the Southern states attended predominately-White schools.

The current state of African American education is directed by desegregation and influenced by the legacy of slavery, Reconstruction, and Jim Crow. This legacy resulted in the undereducated, uneducated, poorly skilled, and unskilled Black being unprepared for a society predicated upon educational and financial attainment (Myrdal, 1944). The decades of disparities in education between the African American and White races are just one of the results from centuries of inequalities. These disparities are prevalent in the comparisons of high school completion and obtaining degrees in higher education.

High school completion rates for African Americans, 25 years old or older, have made tremendous improvements from the first reported rate of 7.7% in 1940. During the 1950's, Blacks, 25 years and over, had graduated high school at one-third of the rate of White students in the U.S., 13.7% and 36.4%, respectively. During the Desegregation Era, Blacks who were 25 years and over had a graduation rate of 21.7% in 1960 and 36.1% in 1970. Whites during that same period, graduated at 43.2% and 57.4%, respectively. Blacks did not reach a graduation rate of 50% or above, for those 25 years and older, until 1980 (Chapman, Laird, Ifill, & KewalRamani, 2011; Rury & Hill, 2012). The highest reported rate came in 2011, with 84.8% of those 25 years and older having graduated high school. Whites had graduated 92.4% of the same group. Though these numbers are impressive, African Americans still have a significant gap compared to their White counterparts (Snyder & Dillow, 2012). Just as African American completion rates for high school are low when compared to Whites, the rate of degree attainment in higher education for African Americans also lags behind their White peers.

African Americans in Higher Education

The percentage of bachelor's degrees awarded to Black students increased in recent years to 20.2% (Snyder & Dillow, 2012). However, Black students, who attend four-year colleges and universities, continue to be underrepresented. The underrepresentation continues in graduate, profession and doctoral degree programs (Chen, 2005; Walpole, 2008).

African American students at predominately-White institutions, which enroll the majority of Black students, have lower GPAs than students at Historically Black Colleges and Universities (Allen & Haniff, 1991). Research shows that the African American students who attend predominately-White institutions are less satisfied, experience social isolation, and more likely to drop out than those who attend Historically Black Colleges and Universities (Pascarella & Terenzini, 2005; Thompson & Fretz, 1991; White 1998). However, Kim and Conrad (2006) found that Black students who attend Historically Black Colleges and Universities are no less likely to graduate than those who attend predominately-White institutions. African Americans at predominately-White institutions reported having high educational and career goals (Allen & Haniff, 1991; Jackson & Swan, 1991) and Black students who do graduate from predominately-White institution have higher incomes and access to more networks (Braddock & McPartland, 1988; Bowen & Bok, 1998).

The topic of social class and higher education and its importance within the African American community is a topic of contention, as the middle class continues to grow and separate themselves from the lower income and less educated community (Conley, 1999). Studies have found that aspirations of attaining middle-class

membership, lead many African American students to pursue post-secondary degrees. African American students are reported to having higher aspirations for graduate degrees than their White peers, although those aspirations diminish during college (Carter, 1999; Pascarella, Wolniak, Flowers, & Pierson, 2004). Attending a Historically Black College and University also increased the likelihood that a Black student would aspire to obtain a graduate degree; however, working while in college, as many low-income and first-generation students do, lowered African American students' aspirations (Pascarella et al., 2004). Additionally, Black students were more likely to enroll in a masters or first professional degree program than White students, and being African American increased a woman's odds of enrolling in a professional degree program (Perna, 2004).

Cultural, social and economic factors affect how we pursue and perceive education. As noted by Nesbit (2006), the economic stranglehold of being low-income greatly shapes our education; often times negatively. However, the low rate in high school graduation and higher education degree attainment is not due to Blacks being unconcerned with education. Studies have found that even when their academic performance is unsatisfactory, Black youth and adults still express a great respect for education (Lareau, 2002; Lareau & McNamara-Horvat, 1999; Mickelson, 1990). This respect has played a large part in the history of African American adults' participation in education.

Historical Perspective of African Americans' Adult Education

The topics in adult education in many ways are all-inclusive. The disenfranchisement of people, no matter the reasons for the exclusion, is addressed

throughout adult education literature. Adult education has long played a part in the emancipation of the marginalized groups.

Whiteaker (1990) and Woodson (1915) regard the education of African American adults starting as soon as they landed in America. The slaves were skilled workers, who participated in the informal education of other slaves by teaching one another the skills that they had learned in their mother countries of Africa. It did not take the slave owners long to recognize the advantage of having skilled workers and the owners began to train them in various trades that would benefit the plantation, such as carpenter, blacksmiths and butcher. Slave women were treated in the same regard being trained to be weavers, tailors, cooks and countless other occupations.

Not everyone was happy about the training. White craftsmen, just as White seamstresses and other Whites, who held skilled labor positions, feared the competition of the newly capable slave. Whiteaker (1990) also states that these types of trainings began as early as 1649. Some owners saw the benefit of educating their slaves. In most of those cases, the slave would receive an informal education taught outside of a classroom. Those owners understood that a slave who understood farming was more help on the farm. Slaves who were taught the skill of carpentry would be more profitable to the owner, or the same as with a slave taught how to be a black smith. Some owners felt that slaves who could read and do simple math, could help with the administrative necessities of a business. This would negate the slave owner having to go outside of the plantation to employ persons for that trade. Some slaves were also taught to read so they could run errands for the owners (Whiteaker, 1990; Woodson, 1915). Whiteaker (1990) also notes that although some owners overcame their fears of educating the slave, the best

estimate is that at no time in the history of American slavery did more than 5% of the slaves fit into the skilled worker category.

Free Blacks began to form organizations before the start of the Civil War. Some established through church membership others through similar trades. As Ihle (1990) states, many of these organizations were confined to Northern states due to the Southern states' laws restricting the association of free Blacks with slaves. Many of these organizations assisted in helping free Blacks move into trades, such the Agricultural and Mechanical Association of Pennsylvania and New Jersey, established in 1839. Yet others were formed to assist the sick and the poor. This time period also saw the growth in Black literary organizations, forming and beginning discussion groups, literary lecture series, and reading rooms. By 1865, approximately 50 Black newspapers were created. One of the more famous publications was Frederick Douglass' 'North Star.' These organizations provided a foundation for the Black adult educator and for the adult education organizations of the future (Ihle, 1990).

Although free, Northern Blacks had limited access to formal institutions of higher education. Significant to the educational efforts of free Blacks was the African Methodist Episcopal (AME) Church which was heralded for providing education for free Blacks. Lincoln University, Wilberforce University and Oberlin University are noted as being the few institutions that admitted and matriculated Blacks before the Civil War (Lovett, 1990). Remarkably, before the end of the Civil War, 40 Blacks were able to graduate from institutes of higher education, according to the 'Key Events in Black Higher Education' listed on the website of the Journal of Blacks in Higher Education (2013); all of the institutions were in the Northern United States. However, it should be noted that by

1900, just 35 years after the Civil War, over 2,000 Blacks had graduated from higher education institutions and more than 700 Black were in college at that time (Franklin, 1990).

Starting in 1900, the North became the new home of many Southerners looking for jobs in the industrialized cities, These Southern Blacks were seduced by the thoughts of "making it big" (Franklin, 1990, p. 113). Those dreams were quickly halted as the influx of European immigrants competed with Blacks for jobs. Southern Blacks soon found that they had not entirely left behind the issues of racism and discrimination, as Southern Whites, who had also migrated, and European immigrants were chosen for prominent or high paying jobs while Blacks were relegated to working in service occupations; Southern Blacks were fortunate if they obtained an industrial, transportation or trade job, even in the lower positions.

The U.S. economy was strained and many of these Black migrants from the South did not find jobs, becoming homeless or living in the poorest of conditions. During this time, the adult educational programs for African Americans were financed through Black institutions, such as churches or charity institutions (Franklin, 1990). The Black churches became strong supporters of educating Blacks, starting kindergartens, forming social groups for Black youth and creating clubs for Black men and women for the betterment of the race. National organizations and movements for the improvement of Black health and education increased. Booker T. Washington started National Negro Health Week, which was eventually sponsored by the U.S. Public Health Service. The National Urban League (NUL) and the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) created and sponsored many adult programs, both organizations stressing the

importance of racial integration for the importance of assisting Blacks in finding jobs and

housing (Franklin, 1990; Heningburg, 1945). The National Urban League began a

campaign to inform businesses that Blacks were capable workers and that they served in

varying positions in the industry field. The NUL also maintained projects toward the

education of adults by creating the Vocational Opportunity Campaigns, preparing the

youth and adults for future jobs. The NUL's Community Relations Project was created

to lessen racial tensions in cities before they reached riot level and the Department of

Public Education was created to gain a more favorable racial attitude towards the

organization and the Black workers (Heninburg, 1945).

Local branches of the national Young Women's Christian Association (YWCA)

and Young Men's Christian Association (YMCA) also sponsored adult education for

Blacks. The YWCA organization, receiving funds from the Julius Rosenwald Fund and

donations from local Black churches, taught specialized classes in trade education, Black

history, sewing, Black womanhood and religion (Franklin, 1990). YMCA branches for

Blacks were established in major metropolitan cities, such as New York, Detroit,

Chicago, Buffalo, Los Angeles and Washington, D.C. These YMCA branches provided

young men with physical educational programs, a place to meet newcomers and more

importantly kept the young Black men off of the crime-ridden streets in the larger cities.

The YWCA branches started in the same cities of the YMCA branches with some of the

YWCA branches offering nursing programs and conducting workshop for new mothers.

Williams (1990) states that Black women first felt excluded from the process of planning

and offering courses at the YWCA, saying that the needs of their community included

migrant women and that their needs were not being met. Their voices were eventually

heard and a committee was created to have more Black women involved in the development of the organization's curriculum.

Fraternal organizations advocated education and participation, offering adult education through their lectures, public forums and through their business. They encouraged Blacks to be wise in finances by opening bank accounts and saving money. They also offered business education programs and reinforced the importance of Blacks having political knowledge (Williams, 1990).

In 1918, Marcus Garvey established the Universal Negro Improvement Association-African Communities League (UNIA-ACL). It was founded for the sole purpose of developing programs for and disseminating knowledge to the self-reliant Black. The organization offered adult education courses in literacy, community development, vocational education and cultural education (Colin, 1996). Garvey believed that in order for the Black race to achieve any amount of success they had to be independent of White people. The courses offered and programs created through the UNIA-ACL were meant to also increase racial pride and solidarity.

The American Association of Adult Education (AAAE) was founded and funded through the Carnegie Foundation in 1926. The initial idea of the association was to provide many adult educational opportunities covering a variety of issues. Serving under such a broad mission, the organization produced numerous reports and studies in an effort to give a more distinct definition of adult education in America (Guy, 1996). Prior to 1930, Franklin (1990) states that the minutes from the annual meeting revealed there was limited to no concern on offering specialized educational opportunities for African American adults. However, that changed with the financial assistance of the Julius

Rosenwald fund (Franklin, 1990; Guy, 1996). Two experimental projects for Black

adults were started in Harlem and Atlanta. The Harlem project operated out of the 135th

Street branch New York City Library, later the Schomburg Center for Research in Black

Culture, and the Atlanta project operated out of the Auburn branch of the Atlanta Public

Library (Franklin, 1990; Guy, 1996). The Atlanta experiment began in October 1931 and

the Harlem experiment began January 1932. The advisory board for the Harlem

experiment decided against offering courses to only the educated few but rather to the

masses of Black adults in the community. The most successful programs were those that

focused on racial issues. Courses offered were unique in delivery and included "lectures

in the park, an outdoor forum, a community chorus, discussion groups, and library study"

(Guy, 1996, p. 95). The programs of the Atlanta experiment were focused on specific

groups within the community. Programs included a study group for women from

different church affiliations and a group discussion for public school teachers to express

their concerns about issues in education. The Atlanta experiment also attempted to start

other programs to provide adult education services to the community; they included

mobile book fairs with Black writers, courses concerning financial management and

classes in citizenship and responsibility (Guy, 1996). Alain Locke was asked by the

AAAE to evaluate the programs. Locke reported things such as the small staff,

inadequately trained volunteers and lack of participation as some of the negatives of the

programs but that the overall purpose of the programs were minimally met. Locke

believed that the programs should be part of a larger adult education program that met the

needs of the entire community (Guy, 1996).

During the Great Depression, the U.S. felt the strain of a national 25% unemployment rate and higher rates among the Black community. Hoping to avoid the societal crisis and subsequent riots of the past, the U.S. government introduced programs under President Roosevelt's New Deal. The Federal Emergency Relief Administration (FERA), started in 1933, and the Works Project Administration (WPA), started in 1935, were created to provide specialized adult education programs. Through these federally funded programs it was reported that from January 1934 to January 1937, "300,000 Black adults were taught how to read and write; 40,000 Black adults were trained in industrial skills; 10,000 Black men and women enrolled in workers' education classes and 5, 000 Blacks were employed as teachers in the adult education programs" (Grant, 1990, p.125).

Several decades after World War II the federal government again took action due to the rising national unemployment rate. The Area Redevelopment Act of 1961 was created to encourage companies to locate or expand their business in depressed areas of the country by offering federal incentives. The $10 million funded program also involved a separate training project for the employers (Hamilton, 1990). The Manpower Development Training Act of 1962 was created to provide on-the-job training for the unemployed in occupations where there was a chance or reasonable expectation of being employed. The Economic Opportunity Act of 1964 was created to help end poverty by removing the factors that caused it. Originally funded for approximately $1 billion dollars, the Act provided consistent work trainings and opportunities for employment targeting groups of the unemployed and low-income. There were a number of legislative acts that promoted on-the-job training, vocational training, new jobs and adult education

programs. Many of these acts provided programs for the education of Black adults and youth (Hamilton, 1990).

The Black Church, private organizations and the government played a large part in the education of African American adults. However, there were significant African American adult educators and supporters who participated in and shaped the structure of adult education. The following is a biographical sketch of a few influential leaders and how they motived the participation in and shape of adult education.

Portrait of Pioneers in African American Adult Education

Mary Ann Shadd Cary (1823-1893), born a free Black, was active in the abolitionist movement and an active participant in the Underground Railroad (Yee; 1997). She served as a representative for the state of Delaware at the National Convention for the Improvement of Free People of Color (Peterson, 1996; Yee, 1997). She became a schoolteacher and taught from her belief that full integration was need for the Black race to succeed. Her stance, unpopular at the time, was criticized by many Black leaders. She started and published her own newspaper, Provincial Freeman, in 1853, making her the first African American female news editor in the U.S. She entered Howard Law School at the age of forty-six. After graduating, she also became a strong supporter of the women's suffrage movement. She spoke at the National Women's Suffrage Association after her failed attempt to vote became widely known (Peterson, 1996).

Booker T. Washington (1856-1915), was the founder and Principal (President) of Tuskegee Institute and was noted for his stance on the success of Blacks primarily being tied to self-help. He believed that with hard work and education, African Americans

could overcome racism (Colin & Guy, 1998; Potts, 1996; Rowland, 2000). He embraced the philosophy that if African Americans became more educated it would lead to their financial independence and power in the political arena. Because of that philosophy, Washington felt that education should meet the needs of the masses. He is acknowledged as the first educator to encourage the teaching of Black masses outside of the confines of the classroom (James, 1990). Washington sponsored the Tuskegee Negro Conference that was held for skilled workers in farming and mechanics, teaching, and ministering. There was a substantial number of men and women who were former slaves attending the conference of 500 people (James, 1990). The conference was a way for these workers to discuss the trials and successes of their field, offering each other advice and assistance on the issues concerning them. In an effort to reach and educate more Blacks, Washington created of "A Movable School," recognized as one of the first extension programs in adult education.

W. E. B. Du Bois (1868-1963), born into a middle-class family that had been free for many years, was an educator and philosopher and known to be the polar opposite of Booker T. Washington. The Fisk University graduate and cum laude graduate of Harvard University never held his tongue when speaking about any issue concerning Blacks. Considered among most to be an intellectual and philosophical genius, Du Bois wrote over 20 books and introduced the philosophy of the "Talented Tenth" and the theory of double consciousness (Guy & Brookfield, 2009). Du Bois believed that the most significant problem for Blacks was not just that of being illiterate but of not knowing the ways of the world, being ignorant of experiences. Because of that, he believed that only a tenth of the African American population had the intelligence and character to help lead

the race from the boundaries of slavery to the freedom of being independent from the White race (Dunn, 1993). Du Bois' contribution to adult education, as noted by Potts (1996), was not "intended to be adult education research" (p. 34). However, the scholar recognized and emphasized the need for adult education and "laboring" for Blacks that did not have the necessary skills to provide a life for themselves due to slavery and discrimination.

Anna Julia Cooper (1858-1964), attended Oberlin University and considered adult education to be necessary in the uplifting and continued education of African Americans (Johnson, 2009). She was involved with many adult education movements, such as the settlement house movement, the YWCA and the Black women's club movement (Johnson, 2009; Richardson Keller, 1999). Cooper began teaching adult students in 1868, when she was only eight years old. She received her doctorate from the Sorbonne in 1925 and after retiring from teaching, she became president of Frelinghuysen University, in Washington, DC. Frelinghuysen University was unique in that it was established in the home of its founder, Jesse Lawson. Keeping with the uniqueness and in an effort to broaden education, the university would hold adult education classes often in instructor's homes or at other satellite locations (Johnson, 2009). This was especially helpful to the students, who were previously denied the opportunity of education. The adult education programs had were varied and extensive courses, including courses in math, banking, bookkeeping, English and business law for the continued education of working adults. The university also sought to offer courses to introduce the subjects of art and philosophy. Those courses included art, sociology, science, and theology (Gyant, 1996). Cooper, recognized as an authority on the issues of

gender, race, and education and for her efforts of uplifting the poor was a prominent speaker at national and international conferences.

Alain Leroy Locke (1886-1954) was the son of two educated parents. His father was a lawyer who graduated from Howard University and his mother was a schoolteacher. Locke himself was quite the intellectual, graduating from Harvard with a degree in philosophy, a member of Phi Beta Kappa, and was the first Black Rhodes Scholar. He remained at Oxford until 1910 acquiring his fourth baccalaureate, then began studying, simultaneously at The Universities of Berlin and Paris, attending lectures that would help shape his philosophical beliefs (Cain, 1995; Gyant, 1996). Returning to the U.S. in 1912, he decided to take a six month tour of the Southern states, firming his belief that education was the key for "racial solidarity and becoming functionally literate" (Gyant, 1996, p.69). Locke received his doctorate in philosophy from Harvard University in 1918. He was a staunch supporter of African Americans learning about Africa, Du Bois' philosophy of the "Talented Tenth," and largely recognized for his participation and support of the arts during the Harlem Renaissance (Cain, 1995). Locke had a keen interest in adult education, believing that the only way a Black man could free himself from the oppression of racism and overcome the inequality of education was through lifelong learning. He felt that adult education served two purposes for African Americans; educate the "talented" and to increase literacy. Locke served on many governmental and educational appointments, such as: consultant to the Carnegie Foundation, studying the needs of African America adults; forming the American Association of Adult Education, assisting in the formation of Associates in Negro Folk Education that was responsible for the Bronze Books program and for publishing works

directed toward the use of adult education programs for African Americans (Cain, 1995; Gyant, 1996).

Septima Poinsette Clark (1898-1987), born in Charleston, SC, was the child of a Haitian mother and a father who was a former slave. Growing up while segregation laws were being passed, her elementary school teachers were White. She would later attend a private school that was run by a Black woman out of her home. Clark spent her high school years at Charleston's first Black high school, Burke Institute, and later at Avery Normal Institute, one of the most influential and oldest private high schools in South Carolina (Easter, 1996). After graduating from high school, she began teaching on Johns Island. Her students were descendants of African slaves who worked the cotton plantations and spoke the language Gullah, a mixture of English and African words. Most of the 2,700 people inhabiting the island were poor, uneducated or undereducated Blacks (Brown-Nagin, 1999). Clark served as a teacher for grades 5 through 8 and as the principal. She left Johns Island after three years and moved back to Charleston to take a teaching position at her former high school, Avery Normal Institute. She was also working with the President of the NAACP to gain signatures in support of allowing Black teachers to teach public schools for Black students (Easter, 1996). She later moved to Columbia, SC and through her relationship with fellow educator, Wil Lou Gray, she began tutoring semi-literate Black soldiers to become functional readers. It was during this time that her understanding of how knowledge translated to power began to grow (Brown-Nagin, 1999). In 1942, she earned a bachelor's degree from Columbia and earned her master's degree from Hampton Institute in 1946 (Easter, 1996; Brown-Nagin, 1999).

She helped present the case of equal pay for Black teachers to the NAACP attorney, Thurgood Marshall. Attorney Marshall took the case and won in 1945. South Carolina passed a law in 1955 that made it illegal for any local or state employee to belong to the NAACP. Mrs. Clark was the sitting vice-president of the local Charleston chapter. Irate at the state's attempt to disband the organization, Clark attempted to rouse up support to fight against the law; her attempt proved unsuccessful and her teaching contract was not renewed for the following year (Easter, 1999). Disappointed but not deterred, Clark joined the staff at Highland Folk School becoming the director of the adult summer programs. These workshops were for Civil Rights and community leaders. She encouraged the residents of Johns Island to attend. She helped establish The Citizenship School on Johns Island. Clark continued her work in Civil Rights by becoming the director of education and training for the Southern Christian Leadership Conference (SCLC) (Easter, 1999; Brown-Nagin, 1999). Under Mrs. Clark's tenure, from 1961 through 1969, the SCLC was able to register 700,000 southern African-American voters (Brown-Nagin, 1999). In 1975, Clark was the first African American elected to the Charleston School Board, 20 years after it had refused to renew her teaching contract (Easter, 1996).

Many African American adult educators worked toward having equality in education, the economy, the field of skilled labor, opportunities in professional occupations, property ownership and politics. Throughout their decades of leadership they stressed the importance of education leading to one becoming self-dependent. This subject was not limited to the African American population; it was examined throughout

adult education. Adult education has been at the forefront of social movements concerning the immigrant minority, the working class and women's suffrage.

Social Issues and Movements in Adult Education

The Chautauqua Movement: Chautauquas were founded, in 1874, by and started for the middle class. John Vincent, one of the founders, believed that one of best times to self-improve was during adulthood and believed that an effective way to this self-improvement was through self-education. He started the Chautauqua Literary and Scientific Circle, which promoted reading groups and issued an expensive periodical that served as a platform for discussion (Kett, 1994). Through the planning for book clubs and study circles for local communities, the ideas quickly spread to the smaller communities and villages.   Independent chautauquas were created in these smaller communities and eventually chautauquas became a source of community pride. The idea behind the smaller chautauquas were to provide improvement to the poor and immigrant culture of the communities through the uplifting of morals (Stubblefield & Keane, 1994). The libraries started carrying books in the native language of the immigrants and even offered the services of teaching them English.

Settlement House and Immigrant Education Movement: At the end of the 1800s, hundreds of thousands of immigrants were coming to America, most of them poor and uneducated. The settlement houses provided basic education, including reading, writing, and English-language training. Some provided health care that the immigrants could not find anywhere else (Friedman & Friedman, 2006). Settlement houses became the "one-stop shop" for immigrants. The Hull House provided a kindergarten for the children of working mothers, social clubs for boys and girls, a coffee house, an art gallery, a movie

theatre, and the nation's first indoor gymnasium. The staff also encouraged immigrant workers to unionize and seek better working conditions, although this was not a popular standpoint within all of the community. Settlement houses also made a way for easier assimilation into the American culture. Many of the classes offered in the houses were catered to the immigrants learning the "American" way of life (Clinton & Lunardini, 2000).

The immigrant class, especially those in New York City, took advantage of the introduction to free public lectures. Leipziger (1916) attributes this to an act passed by the State of New York legislature that stated that "The Board of Education is authorized and empowered to provide for the employment of competent lecturers to deliver lectures on the natural sciences and kindred subjects in the public schools of said city in the evenings for the benefit of working men and working women" (p. 212). The public lecture system aimed to reach specific immigrant populations by conducting the lectures in their native language, in an effort to prepare them for "American" life. Due to the success in providing those lectures, ethnicity-specific, adult education lectures began to form in the communities (Leipziger, 1916).

The Farming and Working Class Movement: The farming community also had a significant influence on adult education. With the new technologies in farming, like equipment and farming methods, came the need for the farmers to learn how to use these new methods. Oliver Hudson Kelley, along with several of his colleagues in the U.S. Department of Agriculture, believed that education was the key to advancing agriculture. They founded The National Grange of the Patrons of Husbandry in 1867. The Grange, as it was later called, contributed the farming community through both educational and

social means. The members were trained in public speaking and the organization emphasized the importance of reading. The coalitions formed through the organization helped with the low literacy levels of many farmers (Stubblefield & Keane, 1994).

The working class also had the Noble Order of the Knights of Labor. They were the urban-industrial counterpart of The Grange. The organization was a powerful source of information, education, and economic strength concerning labor unions. They mainly educated their members through lectures and media (newspapers). Unlike the organizations and coalitions for the farmers, the Knights opened membership to workers of any race and to women. Unfortunately, the group could not find any cohesiveness because the local members were from diverse backgrounds that resulted in them not having very much in common and having different agendas (McLaurin, 197).

Women Group/Women Suffrage Movement: Women had a significant impact on adult education. Women groups can be attributed with starting many programs, from kindergarten and nurses in schools, to programs for adults learning how to read and take care of the home. Black women's groups were pivotal in pushing the Black agenda of inclusion into American society. White women's groups were pivotal in the abolitionist movement and both groups of women held strong beliefs in equality for women (Jones, 1982).

The adult education of White women became an important issue when those in power, White men, felt that an educated mother would keep a better home and help raise better children, therefore making society better (Stubblefield & Keane, 1994). Women also attended the public lectures, world fairs, museums, and joined the organizations for farmers and the labor unions. This increase in participation resulted in the increase of

literacy among women and in the literacy written regarding the issues of women

(Stubblefield & Keane, 1994). The Lowell experiment birthed an increase in women

poets and writers and soon came the publications of journals that were edited by women.

Women began seeking occupations as schoolteachers, in textiles, and in the health

sciences but had to continue their education while working and knowing that they would

receive lower wages than the men (Stubblefield & Keane, 1994).

Adult education was used to promote the agenda of different women's groups.

Social conflicts such as the topic of slavery, lynching, poverty and prostitution were

issues that women's groups thought could be solved through education. A specific

group, Southern Women for the Prevention of Lynching, felt that only through the

leadership of White women could lynching be stopped and began to educate both Black

and White women in the commissions they created. The women's suffrage movement

gained momentum through these commissions. Black and White women alike worked

toward the equality of women and recognized that through adult education, they could

spread their agenda and also educate the public through teaching them how to read and

write and making them knowledgeable about the politics of the social issues. Black

(1989) conveyed that women gained experience in the empowerment of education

through participating in the suffrage movement that led to their learning about

democracy, managing their organizations, and working with men.

Black women's groups, feeling ostracized in some manner by their White peers,

began to organize. Hendricks' (1998) book detailed the establishment of Black women's

clubs in the Midwest, Hendricks conveyed that the agenda of the Black women's group

was to spread "middle-class values" to the Black race, hence the fact many of the clubs

were headed by Black socialites of the time. The groups also joined together with the Black churches to help decrease the amount of unemployed and homeless Blacks. Similar to the White women's group, they also attacked the issue of prostitution with the belief that if those young women were educated they would not return to prostitution as a means of survival.

Black women such as, Septima Poinsette Clark, Fanny Coppin, Mary Shadd Cary, and Charolotte Grimke, can be linked to the literacy education of hundreds, if not thousands, of Blacks during the 19th and 20th centuries (Peterson, 1996). Their main agenda was to emancipate their people through the empowerment of education. These women, along with the Black women's clubs, recognized the importance of the Black vote and set out to teach their community how to read and write in hopes that they would become politically active in the issues that concerned the Black community, such as homelessness, poverty and unemployment. Hendricks (1998) also suggests that through the works of the Black women's club in adult education, Blacks became more conscious of their race and that they deserved to be respected to being human beings.

The social movements within the arena of adult education are too numerous to review but all have shaped the programs and policies of the field. These movements have also contributed to the entire field of education, causing an examination of the social constructs of gender discrimination, racial inequality and the overwhelming effects of social class. These issues are not confined to adult education. Social issues of race and class also affect elementary and secondary education.

Race and Social Class in Education

The effects of race and social class on a student's education begins at the very start of the child's academic career. In fact, Feinstein, Duckworth and Sabates (2004) state that the parent's education is the best factor in determining how students will perform academically. Parents with more education share their intellectual and successful behavioral skills, along with their beliefs about education with their children, providing them with positive strategies to succeed in elementary, secondary and post-secondary education.

Parental education is not the only factor influencing academic achievement or access to post-secondary institutions. Studying the attitude of achievement among students both Black and White, Mickelson (1990) found that the schools that have a majority population of working class and minority students have lower standards on academic achievement than that of schools with the majority student population belonging to the middle class. This "handicapping" adversely affects those students in the achievement of higher education (Mickelson, 1990, p. 56). Similarly, Cooks and Evans (2000) found that schools in either poor, inner-city areas or those that have less than a 20% White population are in poorer quality than majority White schools, resulting in the gap widening in academic achievement between the two races and for the lowest socioeconomic class.

The study in which Hochschild (2003) examined how American educational policies provide a systematic disadvantage for students attending schools that are mostly low-income and minority, found that the system itself is the greatest cause for the widening gap and further separation of class. The ramifications of being in the lowest

socioeconomic income level include but are not limited to having poor health care, deprived nutrition, living in unsafe communities, and being more likely to attend schools that have limited financial resources, resulting in underpaid, less qualified and less effective teachers and also poorer quality educational resources. These students are also more likely to have profound family instability and to have parents or guardians who have little to no formal education (Hochschild, 2003).

The uneducated and poor parent's lack of parental involvement in their child's matriculation process is often viewed as not valuing education. But as Lareau's (1987) study finds, there are many factors involved, such as the amount of dispensable time the parent can invest, the parent's knowledge and ability to navigate the educational system, and the educational institution's amount of effort on welcoming and including parents. Teachers of low-income and first-generation students do not view parental involvements, such as reading to your children and helping them with their math homework as difficult responsibilities nor do they recognize the complexity of their assumptions (Lareau, 1987). Some parents do not have the educational knowledge or the financial ability to complete these tasks. The parent's possible embarrassment and shame for not being able to participate may result in the parent withdrawing entirely from school-parent relationships. More importantly, the study reports that the parental involvement level correlates to the social class of the parent. Working class parents feel that they have less influence concerning the direction of their child's education and less influence over the school their child attended. Middle-class parents, usually having previous experiences in navigating through the politics and networking of the educational system, feel that they have a say in both the education of their child and the direction of the institution.

A study by Diamond and Gomez (2004), examining the importance of social class and African American parents perceptions of education, reinforces the research findings that social class has a significant effect on parental involvement (Lareau, 1987; Ogbu, 1974; Yan, 1999). Research suggests that the relationship between an adult parent's perception of school, their educational orientation (their belief in the role they play in their child's education), and social class are interdependent (Diamond & Gomez, 2004; Gosa & Alexander, 2007; Ogbu, 1974). The cultural perspective, derived from the parent's social class, educational experience, orientation and involvement is transferred to the child, leading to the recurrence of these ideologies, whether effective or detrimental, from generation to generation (Aronson, 2008; Coffman, 2011; Diamond & Gomez, 2004; Gosa & Alexander, 2007). The influence of race should not be dismissed when discussing the issues that students face; however, Diamond and Gomez (2004) show that the parent's social status and educational orientation has a more overwhelming effect on the child's participation and achievement in education. The lessons learned from the parent's perception of and involvement in the education process follows the child from elementary and secondary schooling to their attempts of matriculation through the post-secondary institution (Walpole, 2007).

There is limited research on the effect social class and parental involvement have on the success of post-secondary education. However, a great example of Diamond and Gomez's (2004) argument that a parent's social class plays a larger part in the educational achievement of students, is the study conducted by Barnett (2004), that looked at the success of Black students in Ivy League universities. The study found that out of the 50 students interviewed, 70% of the males and 80% of the females believed

that it was the support and involvement of their parents that had the greatest effect on

their persistence in post-secondary education. More than 84% of these students' parents

attended some college, 38% of the students had both parents attending college and 14%

of the student had at least one parent with a graduate degree. All of these parents were

middle-class. The parents had previous knowledge of the post-secondary system. This

knowledge not only translated to encouragement but also preparation for the discouraging

racial depictions and depreciation of "African American values, culture, and people"

often felt by Black students in predominately-White institutions of higher education.

The experiences of race and social class linked through parental education, parental

involvement, and school quality either prepare or deter the transition from secondary to

post-secondary schools and from adolescents to adulthood. These issues persist in the

pursuit of higher education for students, especially those who are first-generation and

low-income.

<div align="center">First-Generation and Low-Income Students</div>

Pascarella and Chapman (1983) found the link between family income and the

rate of attrition among students. It was found that the higher the income the more positive

effect it had on a student's academic and social integrations. Additionally, higher income

also played a part in the student's decision to enroll in postsecondary education. The

following will be an overview of current statistics about first-generation students and

low-income students.

Statistics show that first-generation students consist of 28% of the total high

school graduates and 22% of first-time students entering postsecondary institutions for

the years of 1992-2000 (Chen, 2005). According to the Institute for Higher Education

Policy (IHEP, 2011), low-income students accounted from more than 2.3 million of the students who began college in 2008. However, when combined with the number of first-generation students, that population increases to 4.5 million (Engle & Tinto, 2008). IHEP (2011) also reports that 42% of first-year college students were either living at, near, or below poverty level.

It is generally reported in the literature that first-generation students have some family and background characteristics that are associated with attrition (Ishitani, 2006). Compared with their classmates, whose parents were college graduates, first-generation students were more likely to be Black or Hispanic and to come from low-income households. They were also less prepared academically for college, making them more likely to depart from the higher education system in each of the four years (Aronson, 2008; Pascarella, 1980; Pascarella & Chapman, 1983; Pascarella & Terenzini, 1978, 1980, 1983). Compounded with that fact, "students from family incomes ranging between $20,000 and $34,999 were 72% more likely to [dropout] than were students with family incomes of $50,000 or higher" (Ishitani, 2006, p. 873).

Choy (2001) states that among the 1992 high school graduates whose parents had not gone to college, 59% had enrolled in some form of higher education by 1994. When the parent had at least some college, the rate increased to 75% and to 93% among students who had at least one parent with a bachelor's degree (Choy, 2001). There are many reasons as to why students who belong in the first-generation and low-income category find it hard to succeed in higher education. The following are causes that interfere with first-generation and low-income student's matriculation in postsecondary institutions.

Parents who did not attend college are less likely to have the tools to inform and prepare their children for entry into college (Darling & Smith, 2007). In fact, Choy (2001) states that 49% of 1992 high school graduates, whose parents never attended college, were slightly qualified or were not qualified at all to attend college when they finished high school. In comparison, 33% of students whose parents had some college education and 15% of those who had at least one parent with a bachelor's degree were slightly qualified or not at all to attend college upon completing high school (Choy, 2001).Students whose parents did not attend college are less likely to receive help from their parents in applying to college, and more importantly, they were not more likely to receive help from their schools (Choy, 2001). Financial aid and college applications can be confusing and tedious. They are significant deterrents to students who are attempting to pursue higher education. A student survey of college-bound students reported that the Internet ranked second only to guidance counselors in their decisions about where and how to apply to college (Vargas, 2004). The students who belong to the two disenfranchised groups have less access to the Internet, thus drastically diminishing their likelihood of researching the information needed for admission into postsecondary institutions. A study on improving college access and success showed that low-income African American and Latino families are the least informed about financial aid and as a result, they tend to overestimate the cost of college tuition, making the thought of attending college an unattainable reality (The Education Resource Institute, 2004).

Due to the their lack of having family and friends who previously attended college, first-generation and low-income students are unlikely to have knowledge of time management, college finances and managing a budget, and the political operations and

networking of higher education (Thayer, 2000). First-generation and low-income students are more intimidated by the educational system and do not seem to understand what is essential in maneuvering through the system (Hsiao, 1992). Students who are first-generation and low-income are more likely to not participate in school activities (i.e. orientations, social clubs and academic organizations, meet with academic advisors) which give a sense of belonging that result in a higher possibility of returning the following year (Nunez & Cuccaro-Alamin, 1998; Thayer, 2000).

Unfortunately, another reason for their lack of preparation is due to not having family support (Thayer, 2000). Some parents and family members view college as a separation from their children. Parents who did not attend college may not deem it necessary and feel that the student's effort to attend postsecondary institutions is an attempt to distance themselves from their family, community, and culture. Parents, siblings, and friends who have no experience of college or the rewards associated with a college degree, may be non-supportive. Along with that, with no experience in college coursework, families and friends may not have a full understanding to the amount of time that is needed for a student to be successful, study, and complete assignments. This may lead to the family criticizing the student for devoting time to school rather than family responsibilities (Hsiao, 1992; Terenzini, Rendon, & Blimling, 1996).

First-generation and low-income students are also more inclined to doubt their academic abilities and they may think they are not college material. Warburton, Bugarin, and Nunez (2001) believe that first-generation and low-income students have lower educational aspirations. The researchers interviewed first-generation and low-income students who dropped out of college and asked for the students' reasons for their

departure. The students' responses ranged from, too much confusion in picking a major; to college not being a "big deal" to the family (due to many of them not attending), and their family placing an emphasis on them getting a job to make an income in the present, rather than attending college and hoping for a job in the future (Brooks-Terry, 1998; Terenzini & Pascarella, 1994; Terenzini, Rendon, & Blimling, 1996). These ideas are normally expressed by the family throughout the student's childhood, in effect instilling in them that the extrinsic rewards of working now is more beneficial than continuing their education. Similarly, Warner and Phelps (2008) research on the relationship between motivation and educational aspirations of middle school African Americans, "showed evidence of a positive correlation between the directionality of motivation and educational aspirations. In other words, extrinsically motivated students would not desire higher levels of education; whereas, intrinsically motivated students would desire higher levels of education regardless of their academic performance" (p.79).

Students who believe that they will not graduate from college or believe that they do not have the abilities to be a college student are 1.3 times more likely to depart in the first year of college than were students who expected to graduate from college (Ishitani, 2006). Striplin (1999) stresses that overcoming these internal challenges is crucial to successfully completing a four-year college or university. First-generation students are likely to receive less support from their families for attending college (Thayer, 2000). Often family participation in the education of first-generation and low-income students is limited due to lack of resources and time. These constraints then produce a lack of confidence in the first-generation and low-income student (Striplin, 1999). Striplin (1999) and Thayer (2000) note that families of first-generation students sometimes

discourage them from seeking higher education, leaving the student feeling isolated from their family and also increasing their uncertainty about being college material. Overcoming these feelings of conflict is crucial to the success of matriculating through higher education.

Characteristics of First-Generation and Low-Income Students

First-generation and low-income students have unique considerations that separate their experience from those of traditional first year college students. They share some characteristics but in large part, these characteristics are the results of or significant contributions to a student's status within one of the two aforementioned groups.

Beginning students that are also first-generation differ from non-first-generation students in age and family background. They are typically older than students attending college immediately after high school. Over 31% of first-generation students were 24 or older, only 18% of the students whose parents had some college or a bachelor's degree were 24 or older. These students also have a lower income with 42% of those who were dependent being from the lowest family income quartile (less than $25,000/year), compared to the combined 36 % of the other two groups (Choy, 2001). Being female is another characteristic in a student more than likely being a low-income and first generation student. Females are 60% of the combined groups, while they comprise approximately 55% of students who have some college or a bachelor's degree. Students who are first-generation and low-income are more likely than their counterparts to be a combination of: female, 30 or more years old (13% vs. 3%) and either African American or Hispanic (20% vs. 13%), married (18% vs. 5%), or independent either with or without dependents (37% vs. 13%), (Nunez & Cuccaro-Alamin, 1998).

Students who are first-generation students are more likely than their counterparts to: delay entering college after high school graduation (46% vs. 19%), receive financial aid (51% vs. 42%), or work full-time while enrolled (33% vs. 24%). They attend as part-time students (30% vs.13 %), live off-campus or with family/relatives (84% vs. 60%), do not attempt to attain a bachelor's degree (88% vs. 43%), (Nunez & Cuccaro-Alamin, 1998).

Postsecondary students who were first-generation were more likely than their non-first-generation counterparts to choose an institution based on cost-related reasons such as receiving financial aid (36 % vs. 25 %) and having a shorter time to finish (35 % vs. 21 %). They were also more likely to cite location-related reasons such as the ability to live at home (56 % vs. 35 %), the ability to go to school and work at the same time (53 % vs. 36 %), and the ability to get a job at school (21 % vs. 13 %) as reason for choosing their school and pursuing higher education (Nunez & Cuccaro-Alamin, 1998).

Participation in Adult Education

There are numerous reasons why adults choose to participate in educational opportunities. While courses under the umbrella of adult education are wide-ranging, the participation of minorities in these courses is limited (Johnstone & Rivera, 1965). Issues of class and race are definite influences that affect the participation of adults. Understanding who participates and why is needed by the administration of institutions that provide adult education services and also policymakers and governments that create laws and legislature concerning education.

Who Participates in Adult Education

The ground-breaking participation study sponsored by the Carnegie Corporation and conducted by Johnstone and Rivera (1965) sought to define and describe participation in the formal and informal adult educational opportunities and to evaluate the opinions and attitudes of adults toward education. Differing from today's definition of an adult learning being a person 25 years of age or older (American Council on Education, 2013), this study defined an adult as anyone either 21 years of age, married, or the head of household (Johnstone & Rivera, 1965). The study reported that although Black adults made up 12% of their study, they only made up 9% of the population who participated in adult education. White adults made up 88% of the participant sample but were 90% of those who participated in adult education. In Hill's (1987) report on the study of trends in adult education from 1969 to 1984, it was revealed that the participation of Blacks decreased from 7% in 1969 to 6% in 1984. Whites were approximately 92% of the participants in adult education. The study also supplied demographics for the participants. The study found that participants are just as likely to be a woman as a man, normally under 40 years of age, a high school graduate or more, work full time in a white-collar occupation, have an above-average income, and married with children.

Research has shown similar participation demographics for current adult learners (Kim & Creighton, 2000; Kim, Hagedorn, Williamson, & Chapman, 2001). Only slightly delineating from those studies is Valentine's (1997) study that there was no substantial difference between the participation rate of men and women. The National Center for Education Statistics' (NCES) reports show that adult education participation nationwide

increased from 10% in 1969 to 46% in 1999. More currently, the NCES report for 2005 shows that 62% of adults participate in some form of "formal" educational opportunity. Formal education for these studies is defined as educational learning sponsored by an educational institution or employer (Snyder & Tan, 2005). The report also shows that 73.5% of adults participate in some form of "informal" education. The largest participation percentages of adult learners are those who earn $75,000 or more, White women, high school graduate or more, and live in a suburban town or city (Snyder & Tan, 2005). According to the most current study, Hill's (1987) reported demographics have not changed significantly over the past near 20 years.

Why Do Adults Participate

Whether it be personal, educational, or occupational, each participant has a specific reason for choosing to participate in adult learning. Houle (1961) studied the motivations of adult learning. His study was conducted with a limited sample of twenty-two cases of men and women who were active in participating in adult educational opportunities. The participants were not questioned on the amount of motivation they had for participation but rather why they chose to participate. What Houle found was their motivations for participation could be placed into three subgroups: goal-oriented learners, activity-oriented learners, and learning oriented.

Goal-oriented learners are those who use and participate in adult learning opportunities for a specific goal, such as learning sign language for a hearing impaired friend or family member or learning how to use the computer for your business. These learners do not have a specific method that must be used to achieve their goals. They

may choose to take a class on the subject, participate in self-directed learning and read a book on the subject or join a group who wants to learn the same activity.

Activity-oriented learners are those who participate for the purpose of just performing the activity. They may seek out a learning opportunity because they want to find new friends or they are bored. They may participate in a "gender-related" course, such as a cooking class for single women, to meet a new friend or spouse.

The final group, learning oriented, are those who participate for the joy or purpose of gaining knowledge. They see educational learning as a fundamental part of growth and participate in as many opportunities to learn as possible. They are more likely to join groups, are self-directed in learning and are avid readers. They may start a blog about little known facts or join a group on a travel expedition, preparing and planning the trip and doing extensive research on the travel locations.

Taking a note from Houle's study (1961), Tough (1968) interviewed participants to gain an understanding of what motivated them to participate in self-directed learning. This excluded anyone who was motivated to learn in order to obtain an academic certificate or degree. He also required that participants have an actual or specific goal. As noted by Cross (1981), by definition this excluded all activity-oriented learners. Choosing from a listing of proposed reasons for starting and continuing learning projects, such as: satisfaction from possession, enjoyment from practicing the skill, pleasure from the activity of learning, or someone noticing their learning efforts, the participants rated which reasons they agreed with or felt the strongest about. What the report showed was that participants have many reasons that motivate them to see educational opportunities and that they enjoy learning.

Boshier (1971) created the Educational Participation Scale, which at the time was a 40 item Likert-type scale asking about learning orientation and motivation. That scale was later refined by Morstain and Smart (1974). Boshier (1971) produced a multi-item scale, derived Morstain and Smart's chart of reasons why adult participate in learning opportunities. The groups are: social relationship, a reason to make new friends, need for personal associations; external expectations, completing due to suggestion or expectation of someone with authority; social welfare, in preparation for social or community service; professional advancement, to be more competitive in profession and acquire higher career status; escape/stimulation, to break from monotony of real life; and cognitive interest, learning because the subject interest you, to satisfy personal interest. You can clearly see Houle's subgroups with these factors. In some settings these scales are still used to measure and evaluate why adults participate in adult education.

Barriers to Participation

Cross (1981) classify the barriers of participating in learning opportunities into three categories: situational, institutional, and dispositional. Situational barriers "are those arising from one's situation in life at a given time" (p.98). Examples of these barriers are related to costs of tuition, not having family support, not having child care or transportation and not having any time. Institutional barriers are ones that "exclude or discourage working adults for participating in educational activities" (p.98). Examples of these barriers include not having information about the class offerings, admission and enrollment processes and institution not being flexible on attendance. The final barriers, dispositional, are "related to the attitude and self-perception about oneself as a learner." These examples involve not being confident in your abilities, believing that you are too

old to start school again, and thoughts on past experiences with educational opportunities or institutions.

Similar to these barriers are the deterrents to participation developed by Valentine and Darkenwald (1990). Through their investigation, they found six factors in the deterrence of adults when considering beginning or continuing education. The factors were identified as: lack of confidence, lack of course relevance, time constraints, low personal priority, cost, and personal problems. These barriers (Cross, 1981; Valentine & Darkenwald, 1990) are seen throughout the literature as all being substantial reasons for the low participation and success rates of low-income, first-generation and African American adults engaging in educational opportunities.

Chapter Summary

In this chapter, I provided a background for this study and reviewed the literature relevant to the historical perspective of the education of African Americans in the United States, the historical perspective of the participation of African Americans in adult education (including biographies on influential African Americans who made significant contributions to the field of adult education), literature regarding how race and class affect education, and literature on first-generation and low-income students and the characteristics of this marginalized group. In the last section of the literature reviewed, I examined adult education participants, their motivation and the possible deterrents that impacted adult education participants.

CHAPTER THREE

METHODOLOGY

The purpose of this qualitative research study was to examine the impact of class and race on the formal education participation of socio-economically disadvantaged adult African Americans. The study is guided by two research questions:

1. How do class and race membership separately and collectively affect the beliefs of socioeconomically disadvantaged African American adults towards educational participation?

2. What culturally based concepts or values do socioeconomically disadvantaged African Americans have regarding the significance/importance of education?

Research Design

I elected to use qualitative research design for this study because this research is the study of phenomena, making it ideally suited for qualitative research. There is no definitive answer to the question "What is qualitative research?" Qualitative research is a method used to gain insight into people's behaviors, attitudes, moral beliefs, concerns, motivations, aspirations, culture and lifestyles. This form of research is directed to understanding the "why" rather than the "how many" of a proposed question (Creswell, 2009; Merriam, 1998; Patton, 2002). Qualitative research allows the researcher to uncover or make meaning of a phenomenon and illustrate the different realities that exist for the participants through using and reporting about their experiences and perceptions (Bogdan & Biklen, 1992; Merriam, 1998; Patton, 2002).

Merriam (1998) gives five specific characteristics of qualitative research. The first characteristic is that the research is used to understand the meaning people have created. Everyone has a unique experience in the world, meaning that no one has the same exact story. The purpose of qualitative research is to look into how situations are viewed through the eyes of the participant and how that view has shaped their experiences. As noted by Merriam (1998), the primary concern is gaining an understanding of the experience from the participant's perspective, not the researcher's perspective.

The second characteristic is that the researcher is the primary mechanism through which the data is collected and analyzed. Though there are many techniques to collect or obtain the data, it is the researcher who acts as the intermediary in how the data will be presented and perceived. The researcher decides whether to take the initial response of the participant, the specific act during an observation, or the single phrase found in a document "as is" or to delve deeper by asking more questions and recognizing the context in which each of those examples were applied (Merriam, 1998; Patton, 2002).

The usual involvement of fieldwork is the third characteristic. In many cases the researcher is trying to explore the behaviors or a phenomenon within a culture and that can be accomplished by becoming "intimately familiar" with the subject being studied in its natural setting (Merriam, 1998). Description, as noted by Maxwell (2005), is an immediate result of observation. However, the presentation of that description is derived from and controlled by the inferences made by the researcher.

Inductive research strategies generally being used to construct the research is the fourth characteristic (Merriam, 1998). Qualitative research is all about building and

connecting. Unlike quantitative research, that tests existing theories, qualitative research seeks to understand, through observation or inquiry, phenomenon that is yet to be explained in theory. Qualitative researchers do not search out data to support or refute hypotheses (Bogdan & Biklen, 1992).   Inductive research works from a "bottom up" approach. Rather than trying to prove a theory, qualitative researchers make an observation, discover the themes or patterns that exist, develop a hypothesis or an explanation as to why themes and patterns exist, and finally, find a theory that explains the occurrence(s). This notion is best explained by the statement that quantitative, deductive researchers "hope to find data to match a theory, inductive researchers hope to find a theory that explains their data" (Goetz & LeCompte, 1984, p. 4).

The fifth characteristic is that qualitative research's outcome is rich in description, sometimes involving pictures, music, videos and words that are all used or structured to illuminate the findings for understanding (Merriam, 1998; Patton 2002). Providing rich descriptions generally makes the research less likely to be generalized. Rich description allows for the examination of differences and similarities between the observed phenomena and other social occurrences. Rich and involved descriptions not only help in presenting or telling a story but it also adds credibility and reflexivity to the research and researcher (Patton, 2002).

A qualitative design has been chosen for this study because the study seeks to understand how the lived experiences of low-income African American adults have affected their cultural ideas regarding the pursuit and perception of formal education. The nature of this study is to analyze a specific phenomenon of the culture inhabited within the connected subjects of race and class, making it an ethnographic study. Ethnographic

studies attempt to describe or explain aspects of culture (Bogdan & Biklen, 1992).

Ethnography is a method used for researching, comprehending and interpreting the

"other" (Patton, 2002). The researcher being the primary instrument in the analysis of the

study and providing the data from in a detailed, "thickly described," process are

characteristics of qualitative research methods.

This chapter provides a description of the applied methodology used in this study

of participation with socio-economic disadvantaged adult learners. The sections of this

chapter are organized in the following order: research design, narrative inquiry, sample

selection, data collection and data analysis, theoretical framework, trustworthiness, and

researcher subjectivities.

<center>Narrative Inquiry</center>

Narrative inquiry is the collaborative effort between a researcher and participant

to understand experiences of the individual and society (Butler-Kisber, 2010; Clandinin

& Connelly, 2000; Mishler, 1991; Riessman, 2008). Butler-Kisber (2010) discusses the

importance of "living the story," which the authors states is the "beginning point of

inquiry," also noting that "narrative inquirers who live the story with their participants are

interested in improving the individual and social conditions" but not to the detriment of

the individual or the community (p. 66).

I used the narratives constructed and based on face-to-face interviews, as they

provided an understanding to the lack of participation in adult education by African

American adults. The study used participant counter-narratives to gain insight into the

adult learners' choice to participate, or not to participate in adult education. More

specifically, this research sought to understand their perceptions and experiences from

their epistemology on formal education. Kvale and Brinkmann (2009) convey that narrative interviews can provide several purposes. One of those purposes, oral history, is when the narratives go beyond the individual's report or history and the interviewee becomes an informant, supplying and covering the history of a community. The narratives, derived from these interviews, were an effective method to present the participants' definition of themselves, opposed to the defining or characterization of disenfranchised groups by the researcher or those belonging to the majority population (Johnson-Bailey, 2010). Johnson-Bailey (2004) also states that because of the familiarity and the nature of being easily understood, narratives or stories have a universal appeal.

The narrative design is recognized for its "implicit collaborative and interactive nature," which can translate into leveling the disparities of power that permeates throughout conducting research studies (Johnson-Bailey, 2004, p.124). Johnson-Bailey (2004) describes narratives as useful for revealing life stories, not only in an individual, but also societal context. Situated in a broader framework, narratives have the ability of giving voice to a community, region, nation and culture. As exampled in Johnson-Bailey and Cervero's (2008) article, an individual's narrative can serve as a report, informing about a community or cultural concern. In this specific case, Johnson-Bailey provided a counter-narrative to that of Cervero, regarding their academic paths into the professoriate. The stories of Johnson-Bailey, a Black woman, and Cervero, a White male, could not be more dissimilar. Johnson-Bailey's recount of the arduous situations that she undertook while striving for full professorship serves as a sort of testimony that is shared among Black women. Explicitly when positioning it "in the larger societal plot of how race manifests in the lives of Black women (Johnson-Bailey & Cervero, 2008)

Narratives can be extensive and at times intrusive. For it is through narratives that respondents confess, reflect and unfold the actions of the past. In this study, I invited the participants to share their stories, not just retelling the events but also exposing how they as individuals came to understand or make meaning (Riessman, 1993).

Regarding this study, I found that Patton and Catching's (2009) explanation of counter stories or counter-narratives was effective in describing why the method will be used. The researchers regard that counter stories are nonfictional accounts that are grounded in life experiences and that these accounts can be presented as a composite narrative, which can be used to tell the experience of "marginalized communities" (p.716).

To engage in narrative inquiry I thought narratively about the phenomenon of the acts and the methodology in which this research was embarking on to study the experience. Thinking narratively, I concentrated on the combined subjects of the retelling; chronologically (past, present and future), the existence of logical oppositions, and the physical places and environments in which the dialogues and experiences existed.

Sample Section

Merriam (1998) notes that there are two basic forms of sampling: probability and nonprobability sampling. Probability sampling, most frequently random sampling, enables the researcher to generalize from the results of the study by the sample of the population that was chosen. This type of sampling is not justifiable in qualitative research; therefore, nonprobability sampling will be used for this study. The most common form of nonprobability sampling is purposeful sampling. For this research

study, a purposeful sampling strategy will be used in an effort to "discover, understand

and gain insight" on the researched group (Merriam, 1998).

Patton (2002) regards purposeful sampling as leading to research cases that are

"information-rich" for researchers to learn a "great deal about issues of central

importance" (p. 230). In-depth understanding is produced through studying and

analyzing those information-rich cases rather than making empirical generalizations

(Patton, 2002).

For this study, the essential criteria for participation are that the participants self-

identify as being Black or African American, the age of 25 years or older, noted by the

American Council on Education (2013) as being the minimum age of an adult learner,

currently "low-income" or "working class" and potentially "first generation" students

(not having obtained a four-year degree from a college or university). First, it is

necessary to define what "first-generation" and "working class" mean.   The National

Center for Education Statistics (NCES) has developed and then redeveloped the meaning

of "first-generation." The previous definition for the term included only undergraduate

students whose parents did not attend college. The current definition has been expanded

to include students from families where neither parent attained any education beyond

high school (Chen, 2005). The difference between the two is that the former allowed for

students whose parents did not complete high school to be included. The term "working

class" is very ambiguous and has not, as far as in literature, been giving a specific dollar

amount. To avoid any confusion within this study, I used the words "working class" and

"low-income" congruently. Adult learners are defined as learners over the age of 25 and

are often referred to as nontraditional students, as stated by the American Council on

Education (2013). I chose to study low-income, first generation African American adults because there is a gap in the literature in this specific group. Two studies from the limited few show that African-Americans who are born into families within the lowest socioeconomic status are more than likely to stay in that socioeconomic level (Conley, 1999; Walpole, 2003). For this class status there is a large disproportionate amount of them who do not gain academic success in comparison to their White peers (Conley, 1999). There has been little research completed on this topic, regarding African American adults. However, numerous studies report on the perceptions of education with children and adolescents within the low and middle socio-economic statuses (Boulard, 2004; Greg, n.d.; Mickelson, 1990).

Patton (2002) states that there is no rule for sample sizes and that the size is dependent upon "what you want to find out, why you want to find it out, how the findings will be used, and what resources you have for the study" (p.244). Sample sizes that are too few in number could be judged on its' credibility. Patton (2002) cites notes that if the purpose is to maximize information, the sampling is terminated when no new information is forthcoming and you have seemingly exhausted all possibilities. Redundancy in information is the product of expending your sampling size.

For recruiting participants for this study, I used the methods of networking and snowballing (Patton, 2002). I used my connection and association with prospective interviewees that I had confirmed fit all of the criteria established to participate in this study. I then identified potential participants through their referrals. In an effort to enhance the diversity within the selection of interviewees, I used my connection with churches and housing authorities in the states of Arkansas and Georgia; potentially

adding the states of Texas and Ohio. For initial contact with potential participants, I

developed invitation letters (APPENDIX A & B) and a questionnaire (APPENDIX C)

that explained the nature of the research study. When the contact person decided to

participate in the study, they signed two copies of the consent form (APPENDIX D),

keeping one copy for their records, before the start of the interview.

<center>Theoretical Framework</center>

Critical race theory is a critique of racial reform, whether it is legal, cultural,

social, or educational and draws from literature based in history, sociology, ethnic

studies, women's studies and law (Solorzano & Yosso, 2002). The premise of critical

race theory is the same as critical theory but focuses on the marginality of race and

examines the oppressive constructs inhabited when race interlocks with factors of class,

gender and sexual orientation (Bell, 1995). Low-income and first-generation African

American adults are disenfranchised members due to their race and class membership. In

critical race theory, race is seen as both a social construct and to be endemic. Race being

viewed as a social construct means that race is something that was "built" by society.

Society decided to rank the races in the hierarchal level which still exists and is a

considerable factor in determining and examining discriminations and inequality in the

U.S. (Bell, 1995; Ladson-Billings, 1998, 2009).

Critical race theory as a methodology or framework is often used to present

research that is grounded in the experience of marginalized persons of color. It can also

be used to present a theological and methodological approach to challenge racism.

Critical race theorists believe that race is a central issue in many societal problems, and

that it is common and positioned deeply within the culture of America (Ladson-Billings,

1998, 2009; Solórzano, Ceja, and Yosso, 2000). The methodology of critical race theory, according to Solórzano and Yosso (2002), has five elements that form the methodological perspective: the intercentricity of race and racism with other forms of subordination; the challenge to dominant ideology; the commitment to social justice (leading to the elimination of racism, sexism and poverty and the empowering of subordinated minority groups); the centrality of the experimental knowledge; the transdisciplinary perspective. The method of counter-storytelling is also a part of the methodology of critical race theory. The usefulness of the methodology, for the purpose of this research study, is embedded within Solórzano and Yosso's (2002) statements that "it is within the context of racism that the "monovocal" stories about the low educational achievement and attainment of students of color are told" (p. 27) and that counter-storytelling the experiences of racism or being marginalized can "help strengthen traditions of social, political, and cultural survival and resistance" (p.32).

<div align="center">Data Collection</div>

Data collection in this study will consist of semi-structured interviews, follow-up interviews, field notes, and document analysis. The interview questions will be sectioned into themes, such as race, class, parental involvement and will range from reflections of the participants' experiences with formal education from past to present. The interview protocol (APPENDIX E) was formatted to allow limited field notes to be taken during the process of interviewing, leaving 1 ½ inch margins on the left and right so that notes could be written close to questions and easily accessible for use in data analysis. Kvale and Brinkmann (2009) propose that taking extensive or frequent notes can be distracting to both the researcher and the participant, potentially disturbing the flow of the

conversation. However, Merriam (1998) and Patton (2002) give rationale to the usefulness of taking notes during qualitative interviews, such as, helping with the formulation of new questions, facilitating later analysis, may provide important quotes and more importantly, back-up in the event of technical malfunctions. I took mental notes, and only wrote important keys words or phrases that assisted in the analysis of the transcription (Emerson, Fretz, & Shaw, 2011).

The one-hour interviews were recorded on two digital recorders and I used a laptop with recording software in case of technological or equipment failures. The researcher transcribed the interview responses (APPENDIX D). Transcription is described as being a transformation of sound or an image from recordings to text (Duranti, 2007). Transcripts are all selective "in one way or another" because it is not possible to record every feature and all talk with the recorded interaction. Attempting to transcribe an interview verbatim can fabricate this sort of "hybrid, artificial construct that may be adequate to neither the lived oral conversation nor the formal style of written text" (Kvale and Brinkmann, 2009, p. 178). An interviewer who transcribes their own interview will have actually started the analysis of the meanings of what was said during the interview before coding has begun. The previously stated note taking will allow for transferring of the mental notes to be added after transcribing adding supplementary commentary and insight to written text. I transcribed the interview on standard size paper, 8.5 x 11 inches, which included number lines for indexing and to be used for assisting in the analysis and coding of the interview.

Interview Process: Intra-cultural and Cross Cultural Interviewing

Interviewing is the process of obtaining the feelings, experiences and knowledge of the participants from the actual sources, providing verbatim quotes (Patton, 2002). Through the process of interviewing, I looked to gain an understanding of how persons who self-identify as being African American and socio-economically disadvantaged status came to hold certain ideas on the importance/lack of importance of education and if their perceptions are direct results of the interconnection of their race and class. This study explored why adults in this specific group membership participate/do not participate in educational opportunities (i.e. complete GED, attend post-secondary institution, return to post-secondary institution) and what are their educational pursuits (i.e. high school equivalence, bachelor's degree, future graduate degree). Interviewing these participants is crucial to discovering if links exist between their cultural ideas and their decision to participate in formal education.

Interviewing participants that share my racial identity, similar family backgrounds, and possibly my gender can bring about general assumptions. It is human nature to have certain assumptions and to develop biases; researchers are no different. In fact, Merriam et al. (2001) contends, "the more one is like the participants in terms of culture, gender, race, socio-economic class and so on, the more it is assumed that access will be granted…" (p.406). Research has shown that responses to interviewing can be influenced by the participant's perception that they hold something in common with the researcher, this is also reported regarding responses to survey questions (Boland-Perez, Lebanon, & Cobb, 2005).

There is no way to completely disassemble perceptions or biases, especially those of the participants. While those perceptions and/or biases may be viewed initially as a benefit (honesty and openness) to the researcher, it should be understood that this sometimes false sense of commonality could be detrimental to the research, the researcher and the participants. Throughout all of the research, it is mentioned that the researcher must know their "role" and "function" in the study rather than on connecting to the subject on the basis of their "identity" (Lavis, 2010).

Gender in Research

The U.S. Census Bureau (2011) reports five million more women than men live in poverty. I interviewed more women than men in my study. Differences in gender can be important in conducting interviews and collecting data. The presumed characteristics of the researcher's gender, made by the participant, can be a benefit in some studies and a detriment in others. In some cases, women develop strategies that reinforce these stereotypes (Roulston & Misawa, 2011). These presumed characteristics or expectations are developed through social and cultural standards and can, according to Al-Makhamreh and Lewando-Hundt (2008), be negotiated by the researcher. Research shows that women feel more comfortable being interviewed by other women. Women make assumptions that female researchers would better understand them and their experiences, more so than their male counterparts (Johnson-Bailey, 1999; Merriam et al., 2001; Riessman, 1987; Vincent & Warren, 2001). Archer's (2002) narrative research revealed that many of the female participants believed that some subjects were "off limits" when speaking to a male researcher. These gendered topics revolved around sexual relationships, marriage/divorce, children, pregnancy and parenting, boys and boyfriends. The

researcher also stated that a major theme that became apparent during the interviews were the young female participant's unwillingness to speak with the Asian male interviewer. However, due to their comfort in being interviewed by the Asian female researcher, it is clear that the researcher's gender, not race, played a larger part in how the participants would respond. Some of the respondents replied, when questioned as to why they did not want to be interviewed by the male researcher, that they would feel "judged" by the male researcher (p. 114)

Al-Makhamreh (2010) acknowledges that her shared gender and cultural identity with the participants allowed her to conduct interviews in their homes and engage in conversation that male researchers would not have been able to do and also contends that being from the same gender, more so than culture, is what had the most positive impact on her study. Al-Makhamreh and Lewando-Hundt (2008) question if the same data could have been collected from a male researcher with equal success; noting that in Al-Makhamreh's study specifically, the insider status of Al-Makhamreh was a critical aspect that allowed her to acquire the rich, in-depth descriptions that are distinctive to qualitative research.

However, there are cases when gender works against you when interviewing applicants. One of these cases is cited by Liamputtong (2010), who refers to a researcher, who is a Somali male, and his complications accessing female participants to interview in the Canadian Somali immigrant population. The culture of the Somali dictates for men and women to be separated in public and community gatherings. This cultural rule does not allow for a full examination of the Somali community, hindering the research.

Race in Research

The topics of race and gender have been coupled in many research studies (Almakhamreh & Hundt, 2010; Archer, 2002; Johnson-Bailey, 1999; Lavis, 2010; Liamputtong, 2010; Merriam et.al., 2001; Vincent & Warren, 2001). Vincent and Warren (2001) discuss how numerous research in the past, completed by White researchers studying some aspect of the Black community or culture, resulted in inaccurate information based from assumptions of an "outsider" who did not understand intricacies of the culture and the view of Blacks being and feeling demoralized and produced.

Johnson-Bailey (1999) examined how the issue of race can persist even when the subject is not breached within the interview questions. The study showed that race was the relating factor that the participants thought that they shared with the researcher. This notion is better expressed in Johnson-Bailey's (1999) recount of the experience interviewing the participants:

> The women in the study shared their account of "knowing" about racial difference and assumed that, as a child who came of age in a segregated America, I also knew…It is an understanding of race, albeit through different means and at different ages, that unites the Black women studied and provides a common ground of understanding and analysis that benefited me as a researcher who shared the same racial background (p. 661).

The researcher also emphasized that the women always spoke of themselves as being "'Black women' never as women only or Black only" (p.662).

Halualani's (2010) study into the definition of the word "intercultural interaction" among students attending a university whose diverse population consisted of 71% self-

identifying as non-White, produced noteworthy narratives in which the participants not only defined the word previously noted but also gave an in-depth look into how other races viewed their interactions with African Americans at the same university. The researcher remarks that overwhelmingly people defined the word to be embedded in the topic of race and racism. While Halualani (2010) noted which races deemed the other as "hostile, difficult, and negative," reading the comments, I find it remarkable that the researcher received such open, honest but negative responses from participants in each of the races interviewed.

The researcher seemed to be very pleased with the participation in her research and felt the narratives to be of a unique value, revealing the inner biases that each race has about others and how stereotypes played a large part in the continuity of those biases. Unfortunately, the researcher never addressed how her race and positionality may have affected the sharing of the participants. Had I not researched the scholar, I would not have learned that she is a Hawaiian female.

As Wing (2007) explains in the study on the "model minority" stereotype and view that White America has placed on Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders, that these largely diverse but commonly linked groups are seen as to mostly display favorable characteristics such as being humble, highly intelligent, quiet, submissive, and hospitable and these stereotypical traits in thought have been adopted by the two largest minority groups in America, African Americans/Blacks and Non-White Hispanics. Conversely, as the study shows, Whites have traditionally seen Latinos and Blacks more unfavorably. With this being said, the researcher would have to be naïve not to realize that the historical favorability of her ethnicity, with all of the groups being interviewed,

may have played a large part with the openness to which the participants responded.

As a note to race, Johnson-Bailey's (1999) study presented the subset issue of color that is a long debated topic within the Black culture. Issues of skin color can be traced back to slavery and have even been researched on topics from White biases toward Blacks' skin color (Russell, Wilson, & Hall, 1992) to the affect colorism, or skin color bias, has on Blacks in the workplace (Harrison & Thomas, 2009).

Although Johnson-Bailey (1999) had both being Black and a woman in common with the study's participants, her skin tone became a topic of interest during the conversations. The researcher described these interactions as being "the most uncomfortable moments for me and for the interviewees" (p. 664). Johnson-Bailey (1999), through her own admission in the research, has a light skin color. In some sects of both the African American and American culture, this lighter skin tone is seen as superior to Blacks who have darker skin (Russell, Wilson, & Hall, 1992). This stereotype was seen by some of the participants as proof that the researcher could not fully understand their plight as Black women because of her appearance. Johnson-Bailey (1999) found that two topics emerged in the interview that interrupted both the "intimacy and the trust of the procedure" (p. 664). Those topics were color and class.

Social Class in Research

The subject of social class can be just as divisive as that of both race and gender. Where some countries may tout that they have moved past the issues of race and gender, none can say that class is not a complex issue within each community. With that being said and taking in consideration the previous statement addressing the arena in which research is "born," class is an intricate topic, which in many cases involved race

and gender.

Class is taxonomy that is not as easily recognizable with participants. Outside of research that is specified to examine the issue of class, the participant's social class can go unnoticed by the researcher unless the participant decides to divulge the information. Archer (2002) argues against viewing class as a singular category and says that "social class, race, and gender are inextricably interlinked identities and inequalities" and that although one may be more salient in the participant's life, neither of the three of them could be significant enough to disregard the other. In Johnson-Bailey's (1991) case, as a researcher, her class was questioned by the participants when referring to her childhood and adolescent years living close to the city dump. She encounters comments such as, "well look at you now" (p. 666). This occurrence has been echoed throughout literature, especially when the researchers share the same race and gender as the participants (Liamputtong, 2010; Rashid, 2007; Ramji, 2008; Quraishi, 2008).

The literature shows that if the researcher does not first establish the purpose of the study and what they would like to accomplish with the study, it will set a precedent of mistrust from not being forthcoming and truthful. Even in cases where the researcher is straightforward in divulging the purpose of their study and why they desired to study the topic, participants and the researched group may still hold suspicion as to why the researcher is "really" studying the culture. In issues concerning disenfranchised groups, participants are wary as to what could be the underlying reasons of the research and also cautious of how the examination of their group would be viewed with the rest of society (Merriam et al., 2001; Sands, Bourjolly, and Roer-Strier, 2007). In an effort to establish trust with my participants, I included a concise description and purpose of the research

study in the letters of invitation (APPENDIX A & B), research questionnaire (APPENDIX C), and consent form (APPENDIX D).

Some researchers even implement pre-emptive strategies in an effort to minimalize the differences between the researcher and the interviewee (Sands et al., 2007). This is exampled in Riessman's (1990) data collection on the experience of women from different social classes and ethnicities in dealing with separation and divorce. To make her participants feel more comfortable about her and the research in general, and in an effort to present a more equal foundation to the dynamics of the relationship, she dressed in what she felt would be more similar to the dress of the participants.

These researchers understood that within the societal view of those belonging to the higher class, a since of power has been established, whether the researcher and participant decides to act upon that power or not (Kim, 2008; Merriam et al., 2001). In an effort to make my participants comfortable and to not further balance the constructs of power in my favor, I did not dress in "business" or expensive clothing, or wear expensive accessories (i.e. purses, jewelry, briefcases). I only brought the recording instruments, carried in a backpack, and a writing instrument. I dressed in casual attire.

Data Analysis

Riessman (2008) states that researchers play a major part in constituting the narrative data that we analyze and through our presence, listening and questioning in particular ways, we critically shape the stories participants choose to tell. The narrated life stories or experiences can be analyzed from two alternatives but are often combined. The data in this study was used as research material to study the lives of the participants

in their social context and was also viewed as texts that showed the individuals'

personality or identity construction (Alasuutari, 1997). Narratives give the participant the

ability to relive past experiences with the opportunity to see it differently through

reflection. However, after viewing the transcribed interview, the participant may not

agree with the text. This action, giving the participant the opportunity to view the

transcript, should be completed before the analysis. However as Riessman (1993)

explains analysis cannot always be distinguished from transcription.

Constant Comparative

Constant comparative is the process of coding to explore similarities and

differences in data. The researcher is repeatedly examining and comparing the elements

of the data (Pidgeon & Henwood, 2004). Charmaz's (2005) suggests that there are five

categories for judging constant comparative method: trustworthiness, originality,

resonance, usefulness and the nature of the writing. I coded the data for similarities, such

as family background, life experiences relating to their race and education, life

experience relating to their class and education, their current education pursuits, and their

perception of education, using the transcribed narratives, document analysis and the field

notes to compare the experiences or incidents of the participants. Those experiences were

categorized into themes and then theorized to make meaning (Glaser & Strauss, 1967).

There may be similar themes within the two groups but true significances of the data and

research were seen in the difference of experiences told through the thematic narratives.

The method of constant comparative is one method of establishing trustworthiness

(Patton, 2002).

The trustworthiness of this study was based on the provision provided by Guba and Lincoln (1994) on strengthening trustworthiness. The fact that there is limited research on the research topic does not dismiss the trustworthiness of the research. Due to the dearth research about the impact of the race and class membership, this research is both original and useful and would add significant evidence as to how African American adults perceive formal education. Regarding resonance, this study could be linked to a wider subject matter, the fate of African American adults in the educational system. This study could be a catalyst for other researchers when trying to understand the reasons for lower achievements in education of other racial minorities.

<div align="center">Trustworthiness</div>

Trustworthiness and validity are used interchangeably throughout qualitative research (Merriam, 1998; Patton, 2002; Butler-Kisber, 2010). Trustworthiness is achieved through the marriage of multiple quality criterions. Guba and Lincoln (1992) perceive that research should be assessed through dependability and consistency, than evaluating reliability. The researchers also view readability in qualitative research to correspond to internal validity in quantitative approaches, transferability to external validity or generalizability, dependability to reliability, and confirmability to objectivity. Validity in narratives may be strengthened when the methodical story, constructed by the investigator links the pieces of data and "renders them meaningful and coherent theoretically" (Riessman, 2008, p.191). Making sense of the analytical narratives that both converge and diverge would support trustworthiness. These stories of constructed reality, through interactions between individual with social contexts (Crotty, 1998) can be seen as good narratives (Riessman, 2008). However, Riessman (2008) warns that good

narrative research "persuades readers" and the topic persuasiveness is an argument itself in the strength of trustworthiness in a good narrative. The ability to convince a reader of a proposed truth, without supplying the findings that supplement that truth is an ethical nightmare; in turn also a nightmare for providing credibility and dependability.

Guba and Lincoln (1994) provide several provisions as to how a qualitative researcher can reinforce the trustworthiness of their study. To establish trustworthiness within the research study, through those provisions, I provided: credibility by using a qualitative research design, which is a well-recognized research methods, developing early familiarity with culture of participants by supplying them with a statement of the research purpose and speaking, either face-to-face or by phone to answer any questions they may have about the research before the participant agrees to and signs the consent form. I also used reflective commentary/notes, triangulation through the use of a wide range of participants, member checks of data collected by providing the participants with a printed copy of the transcribed interview and concepts and theories formed. I employed transferability by disclosing the researcher and participant background data to establish context of study and detailed description of phenomenon. I used dependability by providing in-depth methodological explanation to allow study to be repeated; and I achieved conformability through triangulation to reduce effect of investigator bias by supplying an admission of my beliefs and assumptions, by recognizing any weaknesses in the study's methods with potential implications, in an effort to maintain integrity of research, by making certain that descriptions are in-depth for full examination by peers, and by utilizing diagrams, such as a demographic chart of participants, for assessment of congruency in study.

Researcher Reflexivity

Disclosing your positionality to your participants and potential readers is critical in qualitative research, as the researcher is also the instrument in the collect of data and the analysis (Patton, 2002). In an effort to keep reflexivity in the study the researcher's subjectivities or "bias" must be examined to ascertain the intent or beliefs that may inform the study (Hertz, 1997). Much like Asselin (2003) suggestion that researchers who are insiders may be part of a culture but not understand the subculture or the phenomena to be studied, I shared the same race of my participants and in some cases, gender.

The literature states the researcher must establish, from the beginning, the purpose and aim of the study. Without doing so, the researcher will set a precedent of mistrust from not being forthcoming and truthful (Liamputtong, 2010). Even in cases where the researcher is straightforward in divulging the purpose of their study and why they desired to study the topic, participants and the researched group may still hold suspicion as to why the researcher is "really" studying the culture. In issues concerning disenfranchised groups, specifically class and race, participants are wary of the underlying reasons of the research and also cautious of how the examination of their group would be viewed with the rest of society (Merriam et al., 2001).

Although one may be more salient in the participant's life, neither race, class and gender could be significant enough to disregard the other (Archer, 2002). This occurrence has been echoed throughout literature, especially when the researchers share the same race and gender as the participants (Liamputtong, 2010; Ramji, 2008; Quraishi, 2008).

Researcher's Role and Positionality

Negotiating your "role" as a researcher while maintaining your "function" can definitely be difficult, especially while the researcher is trying to establish a crucial relationship with the respondent. The following literature is relevant to negotiating my role as a researcher with the role that the research participants may want to give me. Adler and Adler (1987) remarked that there are three "membership roles" of qualitative researchers. The roles are: 1) peripheral member researcher, one who does not participate it the intrinsic activities of group membership; 2) active member researcher, one who engages in some of the unique or central activities of the group but does not consider themselves to behold the same values and goals of the group 3) and complete member researcher, one who is completely accepted and takes full ownership the group membership.

There are "roles" or typologies in cross-cultural research. The two types of researchers are insiders and outsiders, and within those types are two forms, indigenous and external (Banks, 1998). Insiders tend to study their own community. The indigenous insider is considered to be part of the community, by both themselves and the research respondents. The external insider is a person who is 'socialized' in a cultural community different from their own; however, they have learned the beliefs, values, behaviors and attitudes of the culture of the group they are researching and in turn will reject the beliefs, values, behaviors, etc. of the culture in which they were socialized. The individuals are "adopted insiders" (Banks, 1998). Both are given a certain level of authority due to their common behavior, beliefs and knowledge of the community in which they are researching. This belief in authority may also translate into the researcher being more

sensitive toward the research and participants (Bishop, 2008; Merriam et al., 2001). This assumption also suggests that the researcher will have easier access to the participants, allowing more meaningful conversations, and will also have the ability to pick up on the non-verbal cues. Merriam et al. (2001) also state that this positionality will "project a more truthful, authentic, understanding of the cultural under study" (p. 411). The understanding that Merriam et al. (2001) addresses is also seen by Coloma (2008) as allowing the researcher to gain trust from the participant due to the supposed similar experiences. Researchers Al-Makhamreh and Lewando-Hundt (2008) assert that being an insider improves your understanding of the culture. They also believe that being an insider gives the scholar an insight into the meanings, both symbolic and concrete, of the actions, expressions, and behaviors of the participants.

It has been debated whether participants provide what could be considered better or more rich responses to researchers that share the same culture, race, color, gender, social standing, religion, and sexual preference as themselves (Archer, 2002; Johnson-Bailey, 1999; Lavis, 2010; Liamputtong, 2010; Merriam et al., 2001; Vitus, 2008; Walby, 2010). Examples of these complexities are given in two studies cited by Liamputtong (2010). One example demonstrated how participants who share a similar, marginalized background with the researcher would give detailed accounts of their experiences. Conversely, the participants from the outside culture did not elaborate on their responses. The second study presented similar interview outcomes between the researcher and participants, because of their shared identity. The two examples also demonstrate how being an insider can be difficult for the researcher and challenging in collecting the data for the study. The researcher, who shared a nationality with his participants but comes

from a differing ethnic group, believed that difference made the interviewing more strenuous as he "integrated more into the community" (Liamputtong, 2010, p.114). The second example discussed how the local people accepted a researcher, which has an Egyptian father but lived and was educated in the United States. That acceptance translated into the Egyptian people expecting her to "know how to behave" as an Egyptian, causing the researcher to have experiences of feeling pressured and causing her to make conscious, yet overwhelming, decisions about which culture she would follow, her socialized American culture or her newly found Egyptian culture .

Outsiders tend to study a culture that is different from the one in which he or she was first socialized in. The indigenous outsider is a researcher that has socialized within a culture but has chosen to assimilate into a culture that is outside of their own. These researchers reject the cultural beliefs, knowledge, values and perspectives of the community in which they were socialized and hold the same ideals of the outsider culture or community. They are seen as "outsiders" to both cultures (Banks, 1998).

The external outsider is similar to the indigenous outsider in that they are socialized within a culture that differs from the one that they will research. However, the external researcher only has a partial knowledge and minimal appreciation of the beliefs, knowledge, values and perspectives of the researched culture. These researchers find it difficult to understand the behaviors of the studied community and often misconstrue the behaviors to be negative or incorrect. Liamputtong (2010) views the external outsider as the "most dangerous group of researchers" because they tend to claim that they are the 'best and legitimate' group of people to research these outside cultures, rather than researchers who identify with belong to the researched group (p.8). The external outsider

sees the researched group as the "other," establishing a perception that the culture to which they belong is "respectable" and will distort the behaviors of the researched culture due to this bias. The outcomes from these predisposed philosophies may contribute to the continued oppression and demoralization of the research culture.

Tharpar-Björkert and Henry (2004) reason, that the "construction" of the researcher's role or positionality is not an individual decision given only to the researcher. Instead they surmise that participants play a role in creating and policing the dynamics of the identities which they allow researchers to have, sometimes in spite of the researchers' obvious objections and opposition to these assigned identities. Turner (2008) actually argues that the researchers positionality will always affect the responses of the participants, noting that with the knowledge of their positionality comes ideas about others positionalities. The participant's idea of how the researcher views their positionality, due to the researcher's positionality, will affect how the participant responds, if at all. As Lavis (2010) says, "… identity, our articulated and embodied understanding of who we are, is viewed as contextual and constructed in negotiation with others" (p.4).

Research in general is performed, completed, or conducted by persons, institutions or entities that are placed by society in the upper hierarchical social standings. These researchers and research programs are "socially situated and thus profoundly influenced by the cultural biases on the basis of race/ethnicity, gender and class that researchers inevitably carry. Research, as an act of 'knowledge creation', does not exist in a vacuum. Research occurs in the context of power relationships, both between researcher and researched and in society at large" (Kim, 2008, p.1355).

Using the examples in both positionalities of "insider" and "outsider", it is apparent that you can have a "dual positionality" allowing both "insider" and "outsider" to coexist. It has been shown that researchers and participants may share cultural beliefs, values and perceptions but differ in how they view their own positionality. In this research study, I saw myself as an insider to the race and culture of my research participants. However, I am aware that my academic attainments place me in the position of a cultural outsider to my interviewees (Shah, 2004).

Researcher Stance

Like my participants, I grew up low-income. I am from a large, two-parent household, with six children. My family is from a rural town in the Southern United States, where we raised pigs and had a small family farm, sufficient enough just for my family. My father was accepted into the local state college but did not finish his first semester and my mother lacked two credits from graduating high school. Knowing all of that, it still did not resonate with me that I was in a low-income, "uneducated" family.

This study of low-income African American adults and their pursuits and perceptions of formal education first became a topic of interest to me, oddly, before I was an "adult." Learning that my mother did not graduate from high school is what triggered my interest. Years after that discovery, I found myself as a Black, single mother, who was a college dropout. Through my journey of re-entry, attending a technical college, then four-year university, obtaining an associate's degree, bachelor's degree, master's degree and now working toward my doctorate, I encountered many other first-generation, low-income African American adults. While I did receive encouragement from immediate family members, I was confronted with many who did not understand my

reasoning for returning to school, having at least graduated from high school and attending some college.

Because of those interactions, I have informally sought to uncover why the thought of obtaining a degree [in higher education] is not a priority for many low-income African Americans adults. Facing the barriers that numerous first-generation, low-income African American adults face when attempting to obtain a degree in higher education, I question what are the differences for individuals, within the same culture, that encourage some to strive for and others to dismiss educational opportunities.

Raised by two low-income, "uneducated" Black people, who produced six children, five whom have obtained degrees in higher education, two with graduate degrees, I understand that my positionality, through my educational attainments, may hinder my complete understanding of why members within this cultural group hold certain ideas regarding formal education.

I understand that my own epistemological beliefs regarding the process of learning and gaining knowledge may affect the design, implementation and analysis of this study. Though I share similarities with the participants, I cannot assume that the participants share in my experiences, thoughts or aspirations. My position as an insider or outsider is dependent upon each individual participant, interview question and lived experience.

<div align="center">Chapter Summary</div>

In this chapter, I provided, in detail, the methodological processes and methods that I utilized in conducing this qualitative study on the formal educational pursuits and perception of low-income African American adults. These methods include narrative

inquiry, the sample selection, data collection, data analysis and theoretical framework. The issues of validity, trustworthiness and reliability, all critical aspects of qualitative research, were discussed. Finally, I concluded with an examination and disclosure of my personal interest, as a researcher, in the topic.

CHAPTER FOUR

PARTICIPANT PROFILES

The purpose of this qualitative research study was to examine the impact of class and race on the formal education participation of socio-economically disadvantaged adult African Americans. The study is guided by two research questions:

1. How do class and race membership separately and collectively affect the beliefs of socioeconomically disadvantaged African American adults towards educational participation?

2. What culturally based concepts or values do socioeconomically disadvantaged African Americans have regarding the significance/importance of education?

In this chapter, I presented the demographic profiles and summarized narratives of each of the twelve, self-identified, low-income African American adults who participated in this study. A profile chart, listing the participants' age, marital status, number of persons in the household, their highest level of education, whether they are currently enrolled in a institute of education, if they are currently employed and their current income, proceed the profile and narrative. The information listed was retrieved from a demographic questionnaire given to each participant for completion before they could be interviewed. Each participant either completed the questionnaire in person or via phone to later verify before the start of the face-to-face interview.

The demographic profile, description, and narratives were collected using open-ended questions, hand-written field notes, and a demographic questionnaire. The data was

transcribed no later than a week after the interview had taken place. After the

transcription, participants were offered a copy of the interview. Only two participants

accepted hard copies of the transcripts. The interviews ranged in length from fifty-two

minutes to one hour and five minutes, for an average of one hour. In this chapter, I

presented summarized narratives that includes a description of the location and

environment of the interview setting, a synopsis of the participant's family history, the

occupation and living situation at the time of the interview, along with brief excepts that

provided a glimpse into the lived experiences of each participant.

Table 3

Demographic Profile Chart

Name	Age	Marital Status	# of People in Household	Community/ Residence
#1 Renee'	28	S	2	Rural Town
#2 Stephen	27	M	2	Suburban City
#3 Candice	32	D	5	Suburban City
#4 Ruth	46	D	4	Rural Town
#5 Lin	46	S	3	Urban City
#6 Shay	36	S	3	Suburban City
#7 Vincent	39	S	1	Urban City
#8 Jean	39	S	4	Urban City
#9 Keisha	40	D	3	Suburban City
#10 Elaine	43	W	2	Urban City
#11 Bobby	25	P/SO	1	Urban City
#12 Earl	39	M	6	Suburban City

Note: For this study - *Urban City* is used for communities within city limits, located in the industrial, downtown, or governmental housing districts. *Suburban City* is used for communities, areas where people live in houses near a larger city. *Rural Town* is used for communities outside of the city limits, within farming and agricultural areas.

Table 4

Education and Occupation Profile Chart

Name	Employed	Occupation Field	Current Income	Highest Education Level	Currently Enrolled in School
#1 Renee'	Yes	State Worker	$17,236-$23,265	Some College	Yes
#2 Stephen	Yes	Self-employed	$11,501-$15,500	High School	No
#3 Candice	Yes	Customer Service	$35,326-$41,355	Some College	Yes
#4 Ruth	Yes	Public Schools	Less than $11,500	High School	No
#5 Lin	Yes	Manufacturing/ Food Production	$19,501-$23,550	High School	No
#6 Shay	Yes	Public Schools	$11,501-$15,500	Some College	No
#7 Vincent	No	Unemployed	Less than $11,500	Some High School	No
#8 Jean	Yes	Manufacturing/ Food Production	$19,501-$23,550	Some College	No
#9 Keisha	Yes	State Worker	Less than $11,500	Some College	No
#10 Elaine	No	Unemployed	Less than $11,500	Some High School	No
#11 Bobby	Yes	Transportation	Less than $11,500	Some College	No
#12 Earl	Yes	Manufacturing/ Construction Equip.	$41,356 to $47,385	Some College	Yes

Renee'

A potential participant referred Renee. She was sent the questionnaire and
confirmed that she did meet the criteria. Renee agreed to participate and scheduled the
interview for Thursday, October 24, 2013 at 4:15 p.m. The interview lasted one hour and
took place at the home she shares with her young child. Renee' picked her own
pseudonym because "it sounds pretty." She is a single mother in her late twenties and
currently works as an administrative assistant. Born on the West Coast to a Black father

and Filipino mother, she quickly exclaimed that she doesn't know her "other" side and that she was raised primarily in a Black neighborhood, by Blacks and by her father's side of the family.

She lives in a small one bedroom home that was an older home that had been worn by the rainy springs and hot summers of the South. The home had a tilt to it as if the foundation of the home had started to break apart. She greeted me at the door, with a timid smile, in her work clothes. She has the skin of toasted almonds. Her face haloed by cascading, thick black hair and her eyes are a reflection of her Asian ancestry. She stands about 5'5" and looks at me as if she was waiting for some form of approval. She seemed nervous.   I asked if this was still a good time to interview and she responded that it was. The small living room had a feel of comfort. Renee automatically apologized for the extreme coolness in the home, caused by the air condition being broke and consistently running. I asked her if I could take a look at it. Surprised that I asked, she led me to the unit. I unplugged the unit and we both laughed. A look of ease replaced the previous timid expression on her face. She asked questions and apologized for what she deemed as "talking too much." We fell into a comfortable conversation that I believed was necessary for her to become more comfortable and open to the interview.

Summarized Narrative

Renee's family background and upbringing was difficult and at times, confusing. Her father was in the military and stationed in the Philippines when he met her mother. They married and moved to the United States. Renee grew up on the West Coast with her three older brothers and younger sister, living on a military base. However, that came to an abrupt end when her father went to prison. Renee rehashed the memories of her

mother's physical, verbal and emotional abuse at the hands of her father that partly led to his imprisonment. Seizing her opportunity, Renee's mother moved into a small two bedroom home and enrolled her children in a new school. The sense of normalcy was short-lived as her father found them upon his release. She recalled spending the next several years "probably on the run from my dad so he wouldn't know where we were at and he would discover where we were at [and] we would have to relocate." Those frequent relocations meant Renee attended at least five different elementary schools. By the time she reached middle school, the hardships of taking care of five children alone prompted her mother to send Renee and her siblings away to be cared for by her father and his family members in the South.

That abrupt move to the South was brief, due to them not being registered in school because her father never stayed around long enough to complete the paperwork. Renee' described the experience of having to find someone to forge the admissions paperwork to get her into high school as "the most embarrassing [memory]." She remembered being in school for about a month before the authorities realized her paperwork was forged. She recalled, "I remember the lady being so rude and when she found out why we had to forge the papers they ended up contacting my mom, who by then was in [another Western state] and she came and got us." While that memory stood out due to the awkwardness, Renee' considered the majority of her school to be uneventful. In her words, she "didn't do anything. No cheer. No dance. I just didn't do anything." She attributed her lack of participation in after school events as being an effect of being low-income. However, she didn't engage in classroom activities either. She struggled in the classroom and felt that asking questions would provide further

embarrassment; she would pretend to understand the information. In an effort to not call attention to herself or the fact that she was having difficulty in the classroom, she made certain that she was the "ideal" child, having no need for the teachers to meet her 7th grade educated mother or high school dropout father. Aside from her, none of the siblings graduated from high school. Only her sister achieved completing her GED, after dropping out of school in the 8th grade. She noted that while she believed that her father understood the importance of having an education, he was never around to influence them to continue their education. She had an aunt who expressed the need for obtaining an education but she didn't encourage Renee' or her siblings to complete their high school education. Although, at the time of this interview, she was enrolled in an institute of higher education, Renee's past experiences have greatly impacted her perceptions about formal education, at times conflict with her actions.

<p style="text-align:center">Stephen</p>

Stephen heard me speak about my dissertation, expressed interest and said that he would like to participate. It was explained to him that the study was in the beginning stages and that he would be the first person called once the interview stage was reached. When he was called three months later, he responded, "It's about time."
 The interview was scheduled for October 25, 2013 at 9 a.m. Stephen is a tall male, who greeted me at the door of his home with a big smile and hug that validated his self-definition of being a "morning person." He is in his late twenties, recently married, and now self-employed after several months of unemployment. His personality provided the comfort that is normally afforded between friends of many years. His enthusiasm is definitely contagious. He shares a mobile home with his new wife. The home was cozy

and warm and is dominated by numerous photographs of Stephen and his wife. He welcomed me to sit on the couch and turned the volume down on the television. He walked through the home and straightened things that were already straight. There were the biblical and religious themes throughout the house. There were picture framed engraved with notable scriptures. Bibles and religious books were located on the counter that connected the kitchen and living room, while biblical whatnots were placed throughout the sitting area. He offered me food and beverage and finally sat on the opposite end of the couch.

He initially doesn't want a pseudonym to protect his identity, replying, "Girl, I don't care. I ain't got no secrets." This humorous introduction illustrates Stephens has a carefree demeanor and he is forthcoming and optimistic.

Summarized Narrative

Stephen was born to a sixteen year old, who dropped out of school in the 10th grade. The first born of three siblings, Stephen's life has been anything but conventional. Stephen didn't have many fond memories of primary school; however, being recognized for his academic achievements is one of them. He didn't grow up with many material things and recalled one particularly embarrassing occasion,

> "I had to go to school with probably like five outfits and my shoes had holes in them and stuff like that and I was so embarrassed…I think it affected me throughout my entire life, you know what I'm saying? That is why when I got old enough to get a job and stuff like that, my clothes and appearance were just so important me. I remember going to school and having holes in my shoes and just

being embarrassed and ashamed and I couldn't do anything about it because it was just the situation I was in."

Stephen's mother was young and uneducated, rarely kept employment. He regarded his mother as "not knowing how to handle a lot of business in general. She didn't know how to do a lot of stuff." In spite of her lack of her education, she was adamant that Stephen earned all A's in the classroom. She did not register him for school nor did she attend any of his parent-teacher conferences, leaving any of the parental involvement in his schooling to his stepfather, whom she married when Stephen was thirteen. A sudden pained expression came to Stephen's face. Eventually Stephen finally spoke about an experience that was especially troubling for him: He was approaching his high school graduation and was being recognized for his academic achievements. He had to walk the several miles distance from their apartment to the school. Not only did his family not attend his ceremony, they did not drive him to the event.

Stephen has a positive attitude about where he is now and rarely focuses on events from his past. However, he believed that his not furthering his education was a direct effect of his mother's lack of involvement in his education. His family moved several times during his high school years. He never had a chance to settle in to any school. He continued to earn good grades and took the appropriate college screening test but because of the instability at school and home, he never knew the necessary steps to take to enroll in college. His mother believed that because of his good grades, colleges would find him.

After high school graduation, Stephen found himself back in his mother's home state and living with the parents that she desperately tried to run away from in her youth. He felt that living with his grandparent's was easily the most structured years of his life.

He was not alone there. He grandparents housed a number of their children, who had

fallen on hard times, and their grandchildren in their home. Stephen was surrounded by

relatives who were a mix of entrepreneurs, clergy, musicians, employed and unemployed,

educated and uneducated. Stephen decided at that time that it was best for him, in spite

of his academic achievements, to seek employment and join the work force. At the time

of this interview, Stephen still found himself questioning if attending college would have

made his current situation any better.

<p align="center">Candice</p>

Candice was interviewed on October 26, 2013 at 12:30 p.m. at her home. The

thirty-two year old mother of two sets of twins, ages thirteen and eight, had the youthful

look of one who recently graduated from high school. She has an enormous smile; is

very petite in stature and taller to only her set of eight year old twins. She has skin tone

of milk chocolate and her face is framed by hair the color of coal. She's dressed casually

in sweatpants and a t-shirt. Her children came from their rooms and introduced

themselves as she explained to them that she was being interviewed for a study. As she

and her children talked about school and their events, I looked around the apartment. The

apartment was located in a small and beautiful town, lined with beautiful homes and

manicured lawns, known as the place for a burgeoning middle-class to call home. It was

here that the admittedly low-income mother of four finds "peace." It was here that she

believed she had to live in order to keep her children from being what she considers

herself to be, a parent who depended on a little government assistance to help keep her

head above the waters of debt.

The apartment living room was comfortable and clean, decorated with shades of browns and red. Candice offered a tour of her home, showing that each room had its own theme. Shades of greens and tans adorn one room, while plum, reds, and golds ornament another. I couldn't help but think to myself, this home was not what people would view as "low-income." Seemingly reading my mind, she interjected, "I can do a lot with clearance items and thrift store finds, huh?" The tour concluded and she invited me to sit on the couch and start the interview. When asked if she was ready to begin the interview, she exhaled and with visible trepidation responded, "Yep. I guess…"

Summarized Narrative

Candice, a self-proclaimed tomboy, is a twin. "Fraternal" she said immediately after divulging that information and added that "these births must run in the family." The birth of twins is unique in its own right but what made this these set of twins, Candice in particular, even more unique was the fact that her mother decided to give her to her mother to raise while she kept and raised the other twin.

She remembered primarily wearing hand-me-downs and on special occasions, she was able to buy some clothes from either the local dollar store or Fred's Discount store. She expressed that Wal-Mart was too expense for her grandmother's fixed income who constantly reminded, "I can't afford that." With a look of disgust on her face, she recalled how her grandmother took her to a church's bazaar that also held a flea market and bought her numerous bras and outfits that were placed in plastic bags. She remembered the shame of knowing that wearing a stranger's clothes was the best that she had, saying, "I'm embarrassed by it, but at the same time, I didn't have a lot of stuff, so I took it."

The life of living on her grandmother's limited budget became too difficult for Candice to deal with so at fourteen she started working at a day care. She continued to work there for a few years. However, that was still not enough money for her and things became even more complicated with the birth of her eldest twins at the age of eighteen. During this time, she said that she became really rebellious and started "hustling" to make more money. Her ways of "hustling" included selling drugs and becoming a stripper. She stopped only because her mother was informed about her new occupations. She decided to earn money the legal way and started working two jobs, one full-time, during the day and a part-time at night. She did that for five years. Just as she began to see the benefit of working two jobs, she discovered she was pregnant, with another set of twins. She said that she never really had time to think about higher education. Just recently, she has started to think about it. She looked at me with tears in her eyes, shook her head and wondered if she's too late.

Candice has always considered herself to be "the other twin." Recounting why she feels as such, she became emotional while she reminisced on her sister's success and her family's reaction:

> "They always thought she was the smarter one that would succeed in life, and they would look on me as like I wasn't pretty much nothing. Ummm, so, when she graduated, they praised her on it. My grandmother, who would raise me, would be like, "I know she'll always make it," and stuff like that. They thought highly of her. So that's…they thought highly of her and always thought she would succeed because she was smart in books, and I was different."

She didn't view her ability to keep employment or caring for her four children, with a little assistance from the government, nor did she view her participation in her children's education as being successful. She doesn't believe that her raising her children in a nice home, within a beautiful community and giving them access to attend some of the best schools in her state as a major accomplishment. To Candice she will always be the one that's "different."

<div align="center">Keisha</div>

Keisha's was referred by a colleague, familiar with the research, and given my phone number to contact if interested. She contacted me and we had a short conversation, including answering the questions posed on the research questionnaire. It was confirmed that she did qualify for the study. She was eager to participate and requested to be interviewed the next day, November 18, 2013, at the home she resides in with her parents.

Coming into the driveway of the home that she shared with her parents and two children, most noticeable are the hedges that lined the front of the home, the basketball goal set up at the edge of the driveway and the barbeque grill on the back patio next to the side door. The main door to the home was open with the screen door --- the only divider between the home and outdoors. After knocking and then ringing the doorbell, an older woman came to the door to greet me. I introduced myself and I asked if she was Keisha. She responded with a light-hearted laugh and said, "Nope, I'm not. I'm her mother but child, thanks for the compliment." She took me to a living room, separated by two large French doors and located on the other side of the home.

Keisha stood to greet me. Her natural hair was styled in a way that made it seem as if she had a halo of dark brown coils surrounding her face. She wore a house dress that seemed comfortable and light, an outfit befitting the hot, fall morning. She pointed to the only couch in the room for me to sit while she sat in an office chair at the computer table that was situated along a beautiful, large window that overlooked the spacious backyard.

She started asking questions about my background and wanted to know: my birthplace, age, number of children, number of siblings, my class status growing up, if I was still low-income and what I planned to do with the research study. This inquisition was Keisha's way of qualifying me, trying to make certain that I was "right" to do this research and to see if she could trust me with her story.

Summarized Narrative

Keisha was born to a young girl, who dropped out of school in the eighth grade. After Keisha's birth, her mother immediately decided that it would be in the best interest of herself and her child if she gave her to her mother to rear. Keisha lived in a small apartment in the housing projects with her disabled grandmother and cousins. She had a strenuous relationship with her mother and very limited relationship with her father, until adulthood. Recalling how she felt as a child about the lack of relationship, she said, "Though I think there was tension between he and my mom even though I didn't live with my mom. I just think, as you get older you hear things. I think there was a little bit of tension there. Ironically he only stayed 20 minutes from me. I don't ever recall him, he never picked me up, I never spent time with he or my other siblings so, I don't know."

Admittedly, even now, after she has established a better relationship with her father, when she says or hears the word "family" she thinks of her mom's side of the family.

Keisha spoke often of her grandmother being illiterate and how that affected her and her schooling. Her fondest memories of school were ones of the "better" teachers creating fun ways for the students to learn. In her youth, she remembered how excited she was about her education. In middle school, her excitement became playing sports and considered and her good grades were simply because it was a stipulation to continue participation in athletic events. After she moved to another school in those pivotal middle school years, Keisha told of how she was bullied and mistreated and of her various fights to defend herself. This period began Keisha's complacent attitude toward school.

After graduating high school, Keisha says that she had no direction or guidance and decided to join the workforce. She learned that employment for a high school graduate was constrained and that she would not be able to survive on the low-income of the available jobs. She began her journey in higher education eighteen years ago. Over the course of those years she became a wife and mother. More recently, she became a divorced and single mother of two. At the time of this interview, she is now the sole provider for her children and is eager to complete her degree in an effort to obtain a better paying job and in turn, provide a better life for her children. As Keisha stated in the interview, "…it's been a long journey."

Ruth

Ruth, who chose the name of her favorite biblical character as her pseudonym, responded to the invitation to participate that was placed at her local Department of

Human Services. She contacted me and said, "Ummm, I seen your flyer, report or whatever it is at the food stamps office. I'm low-income, obviously, because I'm getting food stamps and (laughing) I know I'm Black. I was calling to see if you need any more people." That humorous introduction was just a glimpse into her personality. It was confirmed that the study did need more participants and we agreed to meet two days later on Monday, January 20, 2014 to interview.

Her home was a trailer situated in the middle of a large trailer park. The colors of many of the homes had faded far from the original shade. Bicycles were chained to trees and toys were scattered around various yards. Pulling into her driveway, upon first glance, quite noticeable is the siding ajar at the bottom of the mobile home. Ruth opened her door as my foot hit the first step leading to her front door. She smiled and then quickly told me, "Girl, hurry up it's too cold outside to be smiling and shining."

Ruth, who is in her mid-forties, lived in a two-bed room trailer that is decorated with sparse furnishings and a few pictures throughout the walls of the living rooms and hallways that to the bedrooms. The kitchen and living room were part of an open floor plan, separated only by the kitchen table. She says that she lives "alone," and added the gesture for quotation marks. She further explained that her grandchildren stayed with her quite frequently to allow her daughter to work late nights and weekends.

The aroma from the food Ruth was cooking could be smelled outside of the door. After entering, I saw that she was frying chicken wings and cooking greens, corn and cornbread. Ruth turned off her television and offered me dinner and a seat at the kitchen table. She didn't seem to be in any rush to start the interview and we fell into a comfortable conversation. For approximately forty-five minutes, I answered her

questions about my childhood and schooling. We discussed our experiences as single mothers and differences between living in the North and South. We discussed anything she mentioned. Still sitting at the kitchen table, she looked at me and said, "Okay, chile. You cooler than I thought. So what you gotta ask me?"

Summarized Narrative

Ruth was born in the South and lived there through her elementary years. She and her family moved to a large, urban city in the Midwest. Her family, consisting of her mother and three brothers, lived with her maternal grandmother, who was a strict disciplinarian. She remembered her grandmother being there for her and her brothers "the majority of time when mom wasn't there" and because of that she and her siblings grew closer.

While she doesn't have many memories of her elementary years, her best memories of school were during her high schools years where she played volleyball and was a cheerleader. Her academic experiences in the classroom were marred by her resistance to wearing her glasses. Ruth admitted, "Inside the classroom I was still hesitant with my learning, because I had to wear some glasses that looked like bifocals, and I think that's what hindered me, really it messed me, I don't know my process of learning, because I would have to wear them in order to see the board, and I didn't want nobody to call me four-eyes. So I wouldn't wear glasses, and my grades was not that good." She believed that had she not been so concerned with what others thought, she would have went much further in class. She considered this as one of her biggest regrets growing up.

After the "major accomplishment of graduating high school, she got a job and after two years she moved back to the South. She became pregnant in her first year, at

twenty years old and pregnant, with only a high school diploma, Ruth found herself leaning on the public assistance of the government to make ends meet. Three years later, she had another child and had a third child a year later. After the birth of her last child, her life became a host of years of unemployment, living in housing authorities and falling in debt. She had a desire to further her education but says she didn't know how to do that with three children, but was very distressed. It took a number of years for her find employment that would allow her to provide more for herself and her children. Her children not completing high school are now counted as her largest regret. Ruth believed that her lack of education had a significant effect on her adult children.

<div align="center">Lin</div>

Lin was given the invitation to participate at a church that allowed me to leave flyers. She called and we spoke briefly about the study and the criteria for participation. She informed me of her long working hours and asked if we could meet her after work the next day for the interview. Lin shares an apartment with her son, her "sometime" live-in boyfriend, his sister, who recently moved in and had no employment, and his sister's children. Her boyfriend greeted me at the door with a very confused look on his face. After giving him my name and telling him that I was there to speak with Lin, he told me to "hold on" and closed the door in my face. I stood outside her door, in 25 degree weather, in an unfamiliar neighborhood that didn't have adequate lighting.

Approximately ten minutes later, the door opened and a woman in her mid-forties, with an apologetic look on her face appeared. Lin is petite in stature and has big, brown, expressive eyes made more noticeable because of her short pixie haircut. She's visibly tired, I assumed, exhausted from the day's work. She tried to smile and verbally

apologized for her boyfriend's rudeness and explained that she had been in the shower, trying to clean-up before the interview. She welcomed me in to wait for her to dress. After several attempts to interview at her kitchen table, we discovered that, with all of the people in the home, there was not a quiet place to conduct the interview. It also seemed that Lin didn't want to divulge too much information from her background while her boyfriend and his sister were in the same room. As this was a small two bedroom apartment with no division between the kitchen and sitting area, there was no privacy. At 9 p.m. Lin was concerned about her getting son to bed on time. I suggested that we try the interview tomorrow at another location. She agreed to be interviewed the following day.

On January 21, 2014, I picked Lin up from her apartment and drove to a secure office location. Again, she was apologetic about the previous night. We talked about her job and interests on the ride from her apartment to the office. After arriving at the office and setting up the recording equipment, Lin took a large, audible gasp and shook her head in the affirmative; and we began what became the most one of the most emotional and heart-wrenching interviews.

Summarized Narrative

Lin's mother gave birth to her around the age of fifteen. She has no definite age because she says that she rarely speaks to her mother and when's she asked in the past, her mother was not truthful. Lin, at times, became emotional when speaking about her mother. She informed me that her mother used to call her "bitch and made me feel like she doesn't love me." With tears coming to her eyes she recalled a conversation her mother had with her niece: "She told my niece that she didn't care for none of us.

Meaning me and my kids. She don't care for us, my children. But I love her, but I love her…"

What Lin does know for sure is her mother dropped out of school in the eighth grade and after the birth of Lin's sister, who was born a year after her, they were given to their maternal grandmother. She never lived with her mother alone. Lin and her sister moved in with their grandmother, grandfather, and their mom's nine siblings. She mentioned, "We were raised with some and raised by some of them." On the ride from her apartment to the office, Lin talked about how as a child she had to read the newspaper to her grandfather and read signs and instructions to her grandmother. She thought that they wanted her to practice her reading, it wasn't until she was older, in her teens, that she realized that her grandparents could not read or write. Both of her grandparents were illiterate, along with a few of her aunts and uncles.

With tears in her eyes, Lin told me that she was somewhat happy until the eighth grade. In the eighth grade she began to develop a more mature physical appearance. To her dismay, her grandparents believed the growth had to mean that she was sexually active and began to tell her that she was "going to be wild, just like her mother." It's apparent that the words, more than thirty years later, still caused Lin pain. Her grandparents put her out of the home and she was forced to move in with her aunt and uncle

One positive note from Lin's moving in with her aunt and uncle is that her aunt pushed her to graduate high school. After graduating high school, Lin secured a job in her town's local plant to help pay bills. Thirty-seven years later, she is still at the same plant, working the only job she's ever had.

Vincent

Vincent was referred to be a participant in the study by his ex-wife, Ruth, who was also a participant. Vincent requested to be interviewed at his sister's residence located in a housing authority. We met on January 22, 2014. The interview lasted fifty minutes. Vincent was standing on the porch of the duplex, waiting for me. He is a tall man, around 6'4". His youthful appearance denied his age of thirty-nine years old. He's dressed in jeans and a t-shirt, big enough to fit a much larger man, and a fitted baseball cap. His cornrowed hair touched the nape of his neck.

The residence is located directly across the street form a Research 1 university and a few university students parked their cars there, using the lots and street that is supposed to be for residents. A young White girl parked her Range Rover SUV in front of the home of residents who won't, even in five years, earn the value of the car. She looked up, saw Vincent, and hit her alarm three times, ensuring that he understood that it was locked. Vincent shook his head, mumbled about "stuck-up college kids" and then turned his attention to me. Vincent greeted me with hesitancy and suspicion. He welcomed me into the home and introduced me to his sister. He sat on the love seat and motioned for me to take a seat on the couch. He automatically asked, "You not coming over here to act like them are you?" I assured him that I would not. He then began to ask me questions, such as: "What make you want to know about low-income people? What do you know about being low-income? Does your family have money? Are you okay coming to the hood? How many people are gonna see this thang?"

After all his questions were answered, he was ready to start the interview. However, he had one request, "I'm telling you my story. Don't make me look bad, sista. And don't feel sorry for me."

Summarized Narrative

Vincent was born in a small rural town in the South. Both of his parents were addicted to drugs and alcohol. Vincent's oldest memory was being taken from his home by a "White lady" from the Department of Family and Children Services (DFACS). He learned later that the agency, after receiving reports, found him and his sister in a closet, unclothed and underfed. The siblings, three in all, were split and had to live with separate relatives. He moved to a larger urban city with his aunt and her children. He described those years as some of the hardest years of his life.

Vincent's aunt, in his opinion, didn't take him and one of his sisters in out of the goodness of her heart; it was for the money she received for taking them in as foster children. His aunt didn't allow any of the children to stay at home while she was at work, not even if you were sick. "It was you just go to school and get out my house. That's basically what it was. It wasn't no, how's your grades were? How is school today?" He felt as if his aunt didn't care about him at all. When Vincent was fifteen years old, his aunt had enough of him and his sister living with her and took them back to their parents.

When Vincent's returned he felt he was met with hostility. His mother and father were upset about the added mouths to feed and decided to feed Vincent different meals than they made for themselves. Vincent recalled:

"I didn't even go to school. I think I went for about like a month or two. But then, once I got there, they didn't want me there. That's when the living situation

and food situation it got kind of real bad and, you know, the corn bread and black

eye peas, you know. It got real bad and then so, you know, I figured to myself I

had to do what I had to do. They didn't care about school. You know, because

my momma she was an alcoholic and all she…just wanted money for something

to drink. And my daddy he wasn't all there. He was drunk too, so not anybody

really cared. I think I went to school like I say about a couple of months and then

I just got tired of eating corn bread and black eye peas. So I just stopped."

Vincent dropped out of school and lived in a car with two other people and

eventually started committing crimes in order to continue eating. He was in and out of

correctional facilities throughout the remainder of his teen years and twenties. Now, he

finds himself, uneducated, unemployed and homeless.

<p style="text-align:center">Jean</p>

Jean called and asked to participate in the study. The interview took place at an

office room that I reserved and lasted a little more than an hour. Jean didn't have any

transportation and requested that I drive her to her relative's home, where she and her

three children had been living since she could no longer afford her own place.

Jean is a tall, very attractive woman. Her face was the evidence of perfectly

applied make-up. She wore fitted jeans, a colorful blouse, with high heels and a trench

coat. Every finger, except her thumbs, was adorned with rings and her she had large gold

hoops in her ears. On the drive to the office, Jean spoke about her children and how

many people don't believe she's almost forty years old. She asked questions about my

research and my background. One thing she said repeatedly is, "I just want you to know

that I'm not dumb. I'm just down on my luck when it comes to money but I'm very

intelligent. I could be in your position but I had children and wanted to have a family. I just wanted you to know that just because I don't have any money and I didn't finish college, it doesn't mean I'm not smart." I agreed with her statement. Once we arrived at the office and took a seat, she wanted to know more about the study and specifically about my going to school. Seemingly comfortable, she informed me that she was ready to start the interview.

Summarized Narrative

Jean is the second child born to a married teenage couple. Her older sibling passed away. She described her childhood as being relatively "happy" although her parents didn't have much. She began to notice that her family had "problems when I was, I say, early in elementary school. A lot of domestic violence stuff going on in my house… My dad was a bad alcoholic, very bad alcoholic, but he was good when he was good. When he was good, he was a good dad, but when he was drinking, it was really bad, leaving in the middle of the night, sometimes. Went to shelters just to get away from my dad. Stuff like that."

She's didn't have a close relationship with her mother. She believed it was due to her mother not having a close relationship with her mother and that it was a cycle. She remembered, as a child, not hearing her mother say, "I love you" to her or her siblings. Since Jean had children, she found that her mother has tried to communicate more. However, she acknowledges that this lack of communication with her mother has affected her relationship with her own children.

She stated that being low-income and being dark-skinned were two of the most negative memories she had of school. She was constantly teased for being both. Because

of the lack of communication between her and her mother and her father not being around, she felt that she didn't have anyone to talk to growing up. She also became a mother figure to her brothers and wanted them to feel the love she knew they lacked from their parents. She and her father barely spoke. She admitted, "There's some bitterness there but I'm trying to deal with it. I'm trying to be the bigger person…come to terms, he just who he is."

When she thought of a good memory from her childhood, she said, "Just being in school. I think just being with my friends, being around my friends, at elementary school age, I think it was just being around my friends. At the time, being away from home and being with my friends at that time. Yeah." She still views school as an escape, an escape from everything wrong that she endured at home.

<div align="center">Elaine</div>

I met Elaine while putting up flyers for the study in the office of a housing authority. She read the invitation and asked if those who had not graduated from high school were included. I confirmed that it was based on income. She surprised me by saying, "Oh, that's easy. I don't have one."

The interview took place on January 23, 2014 at 11 a.m. at Elaine's two bedroom apartment in a small housing authority. Elaine greeted me outside on her porch. She is a short, fair-skinned woman with hazel eyes and hair the color of the sun (yellow?). She had an infectious smile and greeted me with a hug. She informed me that she waited outside for me to make me feel more comfortable about coming to "a place like this." Her response to my informing her that I had been to several "places like this" in different states was, "Okay. Look at you trying to be cool with the ghetto." She found her joke

humorous to the point that tears formed in her eyes. She welcomed me into her home. Sitting on the couch was her nineteen year old daughter, who complained about their car not working, causing her to be late for work. Elaine asked me to wait while she called someone to repair the car. She then turned to me and informed me to wait, if I had the time, until the car was checked and her daughter was at work because there would be too many people in and out. She was correct. Over the span of an hour, the home was at a hectic pace with cousins, friends, neighbors and an ex-boyfriend showing up to help repair her car. After the car was repaired and everyone left, Elaine looked at me and said, "That's how it is around here. Looking out for each other. I ain't got no money and they don't either but together we get thangs done. You feel me?" I agreed that I did get what she was saying.

Settling down on the couch, I noticed a diploma encased in a large beautiful frame, hanging on the wall. Following my line of sight, Elaine said, "That's my baby's high school diploma. She one of the only ones who graduated from high school, in my family. It shows that I'm not that bad of a momma. My baby graduated high school."

Summarized Narrative

Elaine grew up in a Southern town with her nine siblings. One of her earliest memories of school was overhearing a teacher saying that she and her siblings "got dirty clothes on, nappy hair, [they] mama send them to school like that." Elaine said, that a few days after she overheard the teacher, she remembers Department of Family and Children Services (DFACS) coming to take her and siblings away. She recounted the event:

"When I was seven years old, I got taken away from my mama and daddy and went to go stay with my uncle in North Carolina…When I went, they were saying

it was child abuse, when I was in the home with my mother and father, so that's the reason why I went and go stay with my uncle in North Carolina. After my uncle had passed, after he had passed, I went to go stay with my auntie that stayed in Atlanta, Georgia. It got worse after that. The beating started, hitting, eating out of trashcan, sleeping on the street. Didn't really have no one I could call on to talk to. It was just awful to have to grow all by yourself. Didn't really have nobody to talk to. No sisters, because they were being abusive, too. Really, just all in all by ourself. Then I was telling my mama about it, she ignored me. She didn't want to come see, [neither] my mama or my daddy.

They just left us and left us at there were auntie, where she beat us, almost drown [me] in the tub. I done been shot at, I done been kicked, beat up, just been in prison. I just had a real hard life of coming up as a child."

She dropped out of high school, got married, and had had a daughter. After her husband's death and with no steady income, she found herself living off of welfare. Not having the education to get a job that would assist in taking care of her daughter and herself, she has maintained living on some form of public assistance for the past fifteen years. Elaine's life story is tale of numerous ups and downs, with the downs being more frequent. However, through it all, she has kept a smile on her face. As she said, "I choose to be happy. I can't afford to be anything else."

<div align="center">Shay</div>

Shay learned of the study through a church member who had an invitation to participate. Shay contacted me and after answering a few of the qualifying questions. We set a date for the interview. However, she had to cancel several times due to work

obligations. On January 23, 2014, Shay scheduled for me to come interview her. The interview was scheduled for 5 p.m. but she was delayed by working late and childcare issues. The parking lot, that has many potholes and broken down cars, was surrounded by aged buildings with young children who burst from the apartments to play in the lot, taking full advantage of the unseasonably warm weather.

At 5:38 p.m. a car parked next to me in the parking lot of the apartment complex. A young lady, with long black hair, jumped out of the car. She turned to yell at the passenger, "Hurry up! I already got her waiting." She pulled out her cell phone and dialed a number. Answering my ringing cell, I informed her that I was in the car next to her. She looked at me smiled and then waved for me to get out of the car and join her. We entered her building. The doors to the two apartments on the entry level were open with residents talking back and forth. After climbing two flights of stairs, the door opened into a small two bedroom apartment. "Excuse the mess" is said in haste, as the two figures disappeared toward the back bedrooms. A few minutes later, Shay reentered the living room, looked at me and rolled her eyes. She said, "You could sit down, my house ain't that dirty." She misunderstood my reasons for still standing by the door, not wanting to be disrespectful and sit without being asked to do so. She accepted my explanation and responded with, "Oh. I'm sorry." She smiled, slightly embarrassed, and asked me to sit down. She asked very few questions and then we started the interview.

Summarized Narrative

Shay was born to an unwed, teenage mother, who had recently graduated high school. Her father signed away his parental rights to Shay when she was an infant. Shay's mother later married and the man adopted Shay as his daughter. The new family

moved to Germany because of the father's enlistment in the armed forces. Like most military family, they moved quite often, living in several cities within the United States and abroad.

Shay did not grow up in a low-income family. She did not experience hunger, homelessness or abuse as a child. In fact, she says she doesn't have many negative memories at all. Though her most memorable occasion was having "a teacher that really gave me a lot of …she showed me a lot of attention. She always brought me treats and things." She found out, at the age of seventeen, that the teacher was her aunt, the sister of her biological father. She didn't know the identity of her biological father until right before her graduation from high school. She laughed at her memories of "feeling special" when in reality she had no idea who the teacher was in relation to her.

Shay was sixteen when she became pregnant for the first time. Still in school, her father worried about how she would take care of a child. Shay recalled a conversation with her father after he learned of her pregnancy:

> "Who's going to hire you? How you're going to work? How you're going to take care of your child? And he just kept getting at me about like, 'What are you going to do? What are you going to do?' To the point where I would say, 'Well I don't know what I'm going to do. I guess I'll give him up for adoption.' He going to say, 'Well what makes you think we going to let our grandchild be out here in the world somewhere and we don't know?'"

Shay realized that her father was right and started working and continued to live with her parents until she became pregnant with her second child at nineteen and them moved into housing authority. Shay has worked since she was sixteen, never been

unemployed and only earned enough to live in public assisted living quarters. This is not the life she envisioned for herself but at thirty-six years old, Shay is confused as to what she could do to change her circumstances.

Bobby

Bobby discovered the invitation to participate on the bulletin board of a local community college in his city. He recognized my last name and called me to inquire about participating in the study. I interviewed Bobby on March 14, 2014 at 8:44 p.m. However, the interview was scheduled for 7 p.m. Bobby showed up to the location and apologized about his tardiness. As Bobby came into the residence, I noticed his outfit. He looked dressed to be going out afterwards. He wore tight skinny jeans, a multi-color shirt with, a large gold rope chain necklace, rings on his fingers and tiny hoop earrings. He had on makeup that appeared to be expertly applied and his hair was freshly cut, with a bleached blond section in the front and a design fashioned on the side. Bobby is tall with the skin the color of cocoa. He is blessed with high cheekbones and a full set of lips. His stare was hypnotic and haunting. The hazel colored contacts blocked outsiders from viewing the fullness of who he is.

Bobby greeted me with a hug and immediately went into an explanation for his lateness. He told me an elaborate and hilarious tale of the many things that hindered his timely arrival. His sits back in the recliner across from the couch that I am sitting on. He crossed his legs and looked around the room at the framed art. He automatically looked at the TV at the sound of Beyoncé singing. He jumped from his seat, danced and sang along with every note, reached for my hand and insisted that I dance with him. We danced for three songs. He replicated the intricate dance moves displayed on the screen,

lost in the dance, I had been long forgotten. After we sat again, he said, "See that right there…her, Beyoncé, she is who I was supposed to be. Or at least she should have been my sister."

Summarized Narrative

Bobby was born to a young woman in an urban South. His mother, a high school dropout, lived with her parents. Regarding his childhood, Bobby said, "All I can remember growing up is I was always with my grandparents. I know my mom, my uncle, my aunties stay together but…I think at that time, I knew we stayed in the hood. We were considered as the hood…I just felt like we lived a regular life. We just stayed in the hood." Although he lived in "the hood," Bobby didn't know the financial status of his family until he discovered that his mother was on food stamps. He stated, "I was like okay I knew…I knew something was wrong. Oh, okay they get food stamps. Now I know they have to be low income even though we stayed at my grandpa's…I knew we were low income because of the food stamps."

His memories of schools were mostly negative, marred by the days of conflicts with teachers, his behavioral problems due to Attention Deficit Disorder, and being unmercifully teased about his appearance and thoughts about his sexuality. While stating during the interview that he didn't really care, he revealed after the recording that he felt he had to hide his sexuality from his family because of their religious beliefs and especially from his grandfather, who was a pastor.

Bobby admittedly has a complicated relationship with his mother and always regarded his grandfather as being his father and true parent. He saw his grandfather and grandmother as the only constants in his life. They resided in the same home all of his

life. His grandfather had the same occupation all of his life and no matter how many times his mother shifted from unemployed to working, living with his grandparents or moving out on her own, he could always find his grandparents at the same place. Stability has always meant a lot to Bobby.

Even with the stability of his grandparents, Bobby recognized that although he looked at his life as "regular" he and his cousins lived differently than some of their other relatives. Thinking about the differences between the cousins Bobby said, with deep emotion, "I've had no car, stuff like that and sometimes no food and stuff like that but then I have other cousins who always had. They might not have lived in a mansion but they've always…their parents always was there in their life, mommy and daddy. They always had their support, I guess. They always had it. We didn't have it. We basically were single [parents]; [basically] learning through life ourselves…We went through together. We understand their growing up, not having gone without having food or walking to the store. They didn't have…they always had somebody there." Bobby believed that education could assist in creating a better life for himself but is wary of the perceived "waste of time" if he failed in his attempt to obtain a higher education.

<div align="center">Earl</div>

I interviewed Earl on March 16, 2014 at 8:30 a.m. at his church. He contacted me to participate in the study after reading the letter of invitation displayed at his church. Earl requested to be interviewed at his church due to his working two jobs and only having his Sundays free. He arrived slightly late and jokingly explained how difficult it was to corral three children and two women into arriving anywhere early. We were given permission by the pastor of the church to use the conference room for the interview.

Responding to my question of if he would be comfortable talking about past events, possibly past "sins" while in the church, he responded, "If there's one place that I'm comfortable, it's here and you know you'll get the truth from me in the Lord's house.

Earl was dressed in a light brown suit, accented with a blue shirt, tie and handkerchief. He sat across the table from me and automatically started asking me questions. He was most interested in my journey as a graduate student, citing that he was working toward his bachelor degree and he wanted to get my opinion on going to graduate school. By the end of the conversation, Earl starts to refer to me as "Lasker." We discussed being parents and the complexity of trying to provide for your family, furthering your education and being an active participant in your children's life. Earl believes that being present in the lives of his children is one of the most important tasks of being a father.

I noticed the time and informed him that we'd better start the interview in order for him to make it to the church service on time. Earl laughed and said, "Lasker, I'm just waiting on you." Laughing at one another we began the interview.

Summarized Narrative

Earl is a devoted, married father of three and a grandfather. He works two jobs and is committed to giving his wife and children the best life possible. He is a starch contrast from the people and environment of his childhood. He grew up in an urban development in large city in the Midwest. Earl's mother dropped out of school before making it to high school; she spent the majority of Earl's childhood addicted to drugs and alcohol. Referring to this time period, Earl said:

"It was rough, you know. Yeah, it was rough. It was not being able to have some of the things that the other kids in the neighborhood had, especially being in a single parent home. I had no male figure to help raise me, to show what growing up to be a man was, as far as work ethics and habits, and different things like that. But running low on food all the time…sometimes not knowing what the next meal was going to be or where it was coming from. Sometimes wake up and coming home in the winter time, you have no heat; because the bill…stuff like that is cut off or had the water cut off or the phone bill being turned off. It was rough. She tried to make do with what she had; we made do, but it was rough, especially having two other siblings in the household as well. That's it; it was just kind of rough."

Earl enjoyed school but admitted that he wasted too much time being a class clown. He also enjoyed sports throughout his middle and junior high school years. His most negative memory of school is his not being able to play sports in high school. Earl got into trouble with the law during his 10th grade year by selling drugs. When asked why he started selling drugs, he took a deep breath, looked me straight in my eyes and said, "…it was easy money and because of my family situation. So it did help somewhat pay bills to take care of them [his siblings], because by that time, my mother heavily got on drugs and was barely at the house to care of the house."

Earl spent his adolescence between trying to survive in the poverty and trying to provide for his siblings in his mother's sporadic absence. Being a husband and father were youthful wishes; however, being a homeowner, a business owner, and a college

student weren't even imaginable. He is determined for his once unimaginable goals to become the norm for his children.

Chapter Summary

The purpose of this chapter was to provide relevant background information on the twelve men and women who participated in this research study. The profiles were divided into two parts. The first section of the profiles focused on specific parts of the interview, such as the dynamics, including the interview location and detailed descriptions of the participants from the demographic questionnaire and field notes and reflections provided from the interview.

The second section of the profile consisted of a summarized narrative. This section provided a glimpse into the life and background of each participant in their own words, using the narrative derived from the interviews. This section gave a glimpse of the participant's past and current environment, a perception of their social class and education and an analysis of how that has impacted their life.

CHAPTER FIVE

FINDINGS

The purpose of this qualitative research study was to examine the impact of class and race on the formal education participation of socio-economically disadvantaged adult African Americans. The study is guided by two research questions:

1. How do class and race membership affect the beliefs of socioeconomically disadvantaged African American adults towards educational participation?

2. What culturally based concepts or values do socioeconomically disadvantaged African Americans have regarding the significance/importance of education?

This chapter consists of the major findings which emerged from the data. This findings chapter is divided into three parts: the data display, the major themes with accompanying data from the interviews, and the chapter summary. The major themes are: *Negatively Impacted by the Lack of Role Models*, *Not Making Link the Between Education and Success*, A *Lack of Family Support*, *Constrained by Financial Limitations*, and *the Intersection of Race and Class*, and *Mixed Cultural Messages About the Importance of Education*.

Data Display

There were six major themes in this chapter. Three of the themes contained sub-themes: The first themes was, *Negatively Impacted by the Lack of Role Models*, which had two subthemes: *The Non-Role Model – Family Member* and *Negative Impression of Educated Blacks.* The second theme was *Not Making the Link Between Education and*

Success and the third theme, A *Lack of Family Support for Educational Pursuits*, had two subthemes: *Lack of Investment* and *Inherited Generational/Family Sense of Hopelessness*. The fourth theme, *Constrained by Financial Limitations*, had the subthemes: *Personal* and *Family*. The fifth theme was *The Intersection of Race and Class* and the chapter concluded with the sixth theme, *Mixed Cultural Messages about the Importance of Education.* The themes and subthemes are showed in the following data display.

Data Display

I.   Negatively Impacted by the Lack of Role Models

    A.   The Non-Role Model – Family Member

    B.   Negative Impression of Educated Blacks

II.   Not Making the Link between Education and Success

III. A Lack of Family Support for Educational Pursuits

    A.   Lack of Investment

    B.   Inherited Generational/Family Sense of Hopelessness

IV.   Constrained by Financial Limitations

    A.   Personal

    B.   Family

V.   Intersection of Race and Class

VI.   Mixed Cultural Messages about the Importance of Education

Negatively Impacted by the Lack of Role Models

One of the most prevalent themes to emerge from the data was *Negatively Impacted by the Lack of Role Models*. This theme had two dimensions or categories; 1)

T*he Non-Role Model – Family Member* and 2) *Negative Impression of Educated Blacks*.
The theme occurred in ten of the twelve narratives.

Overall the theme, *Negatively Impacted by the Lack of Role Models* means that
the participant's desire for an education was impacted by the absence of role models in
their family, community, and in society. The data in this theme will be represented under
the subthemes of *The Non-Role Model – Family Member* and the *Negative Impression of
Educated Blacks*.

The first subtheme, *The Non-Role Model-Family Members*, was evident in ten of
the twelve participant interviews. It was stated most succinctly by Renee', a twenty-eight
year old single mother, who is the only high school graduate in her family, who said:

I can't think of … my family just wasn't big on it. My dad believed in education

but he wasn't there to really enforce it like he needed to and my mom she stopped

going to school when she was twelve. Education wasn't pushed. I should say that

not even a close relative that went to college. It was that you should go but it

wasn't … I don't think it's really viewed. Like I said it's not something that's

required. I think as long as you're working and as long as you can keep a job that's

the biggest thing.

Renee' revealed that working took precedence over education and continued
about her father's opinion on the need for education:

My father does, the only thing with him is he wasn't there to enforce it. Even now,

we have a better relationship now but since we don't have that close father

daughter relationship his words are kind of just, "Oh, I hear you." He is very big

on education but he wasn't there to push us and make sure we were about

education.

Expanding from Renee's narrative, Candice, the young mother of four, added the

aspect of her community, stating:

Nothing. My family, my extended family, my aunties and all, they didn't really

never go to school, and none of my cousins did, either. The only one that actually

graduated college was my twin…because a lot of people in [my town], where I

grew up, it's a lot of people, they didn't go to college, and probably they didn't

even finish school. I don't know, but nobody really just talk about it. I can't

remember a time where anyone would say, "What are you going to do after high

school? Are you going to go to college? Education is important." I never really

had that from anyone, so it was barely…I can't remember a time when it was

discussed like that. Still really don't. They just think, whatever you decide, you

just do. They don't really, as for me and my house, and my children, I pursue it

pretty well, because I want them to go to college, but as for my family, they don't

really bring it up.

Similar to Renee's narrative, Earl's community did not place an emphasis on

education. Earl recounts his time growing up in an urban area with an addicted mother:

No, it wasn't even a topic really. Not really, because most of the family was on

drugs, so they didn't see education as really important. One thing that always

stood out to me is that, during school, the one thing my mama always make

emphasis in, if you don't do nothing else, at least make sure you get your

diploma. [But] I think kind of in any urban, the biggest thing, you know, they

want you to get your education, but the sports was always the big push before

education.

Echoing the sentiment of Earl's mother, Vincent's sister was the only family

member to speak about education. Vincent, a homeless man who shuffles from home to

home of relatives and friends recounted:

Zero. Wait a minute. Wait a minute. I think my sister did say, she did tell me,

about the only thing that was important is my school. I think she told me, 'Stay in

school.' Well other than that that's the only thing that I heard about school. So I

did never know, did good to graduate, it were never heard that you need to

graduate. It was said you needed to get some good grades but they didn't say

nothing about finishing school.

My older sister she graduated high school. That was it. Nobody else

really did anything else. It was just my older sister, she did graduate. Most do not

have high school diplomas. Yeah, ain't no college.

While many of the narratives spoke of the impact of the non-role model family

member, Elaine, the single mother, living in the housing project, recalled the hurtful

words of one of the many non-role models in her life:

"You ain't going to make it. You ain't going to never succeed. You and your

family member, all you all are crazy." You keep hearing it over and over and

every day and then the good thing about it was, I was seeing my older sister, how

she was in high school, she kept going. She was making A's and B, and that

would make me want to just keep on getting in there and making … Because she

said, "Don't bring no D's and F home and all this other stuff," so I see her report

card and I say, "I'm going to make them the same way. A's and B's." I started

getting on up and studying more, making A's and B's, but I never let her…I

never broke down until the day she had told … I had the last straw when she told

me, "God ain't going to help you all. I don't know what you all going to school

for. Your mama and daddy didn't have no education. Look at them. Look where

they live. Look where you all live. You all in my house. You all ain't ever

become successful." You hear it over and over and over…every, every day. This

just like a constant reminder. So that pretty sure let you know that if you go to

school, back of my mind telling me, that I'm not never going to succeed at

anything.

The second subtheme, *Negative Impression of Educated Blacks*, was strongly

evident in four of the participants. Bobby comes from a very large family that is mostly

uneducated. However two relatives, an aunt and uncle both graduated college. Regarding

how he and his family view the most educated member of their family and educated

Blacks in general, he simply states, "Everybody thinks they're stuck-up."

Likewise, Jean, describing the most educated member of her family, she

expressed that they viewed them:

As a snob. She's the type of person, pushes stuff in your face, and I might not do

what you do, but that don't make me less smart than you, but she makes you feel

like that, you know what I mean? Yeah. Just that is just so beneath you. That's

how she acts, literally, that's how she acts.

Contrary to the previous narratives, Elaine helped her family member, her sister, achieve her goal of obtaining a nursing degree. Saddened by reminiscing on her past with her sister, Elaine revealed:

They don't see her no different than I see her. They're like, she go and graduate, she think she special. All this. But she talk about herself like, "My sister (I) make straight A's all the way through high school. Straight A's." My auntie wasn't proud of her or nothing. She was the queen, too, she's got a little picture where she's the homecoming queen. She mostly made straight A's. That's what keep me wanting to keep going but then she got down and start getting stuff … Helped her out, she wouldn't help me back out.

Repeating Elaine's comments about feeling left behind, Ruth expressed a similar sentiment:

Some of them get big head. Some of them, not all of them. Some, when they do get so educated, they think they're more than you. You're beneath them, and they forget where they came from. They leave and they don't want to come back, but I couldn't blame them. Because if I got the chance to get out, I wouldn't want to come back either. But I would want to help if someone needed help.

The direct effect of not having significant and positive role models that served as examples of educated Blacks may have contributed to many of the participant's not making or forming a discernible association linking education to success.

Not Making the Link between Education and Success

This theme means that the participant does not see a connection between obtaining an education, especially post-secondary, to becoming successful. The theme

was present in ten of the twelve narratives and was also the subject that seemed to receive the most contradictory narratives. Many of the participants spoke of the need for education, expressing how their lives would have been different if they had obtained further education, be it completing high school or college. However the narratives tell a different perspective that was not expected. Of the participants who did respond to the interview question on the connection, none of the participants seemed to want to give more than a brief statement about why they don't view a connection and few of them were able to give examples to support their rationale. Though brief, each response was absolute.

Lin, who spoke of a dead-end job of working in a poultry plant being caused by her lack of education, posed a contrary narrative regarding the link of education to success. Lin stated:

No. I don't think you need to go, but you can go. I don't think you need to go because I think you can do anything even if you don't go to college. It's ways around everything. So I don't think you need to go, but it's good to go…I ain't saying you shouldn't go and I ain't say you can't be successful if you don't go, so…

Likewise, Stephen, who often referred to his lack of education as giving him a feeling of being "stuck" responded, "I also feel like you can be successful without a degree. You can find an area and be successful in it and make a bunch of money and you don't have to have a degree."

Both Vincent and Jean commented that success was connected to money and money was connected to getting a job, thus cutting education out of the equation. Vincent asserted:

> I say it's not connected. Ain't nobody said you going to do this. You're going to be successful. I ain't heard nobody in the family say if you finish school you going to be this. You going to be that. It was always ... you got to eat. So it wasn't never, that's what I'm saying it wasn't never about no school.
>
> "Just finish school and get a job.' That was it. No, it wasn't connected to success. No. They didn't talk about it."

That statement by Jean resonates throughout her narrative, taking care of the now and worrying about the future later.

Keisha, who lived her childhood being separated from her father and his side of the family, admits that her family is an example of both viewpoints:

> On my mom's side it is not connected to success because they just believe if you work hard you can have whatever it you want to have. That is just the mentality. On my dad's side it is definitely connected to success.

Earl is the only participant who provided an explanation as to why his family does not link education with success. Heralding from a family of musicians and athletes, he stated, "I don't think they see it. I think they gear it on…somewhat…talent. They think they got some talent to offer, more than education."

Earl and Keisha are also the only participants that distinguished that while their families did not view a connection between education and success, nor did they previously. Their interpretations have changed through their life experiences.

Renee' never knew anyone who attended college during childhood and knew very few who had graduated high school. She divulged that even now she is conflicted on if there is truly a tie between a person's successes being attributed to their education:

I know that it is. I think maybe I don't know a lot of people that have degrees and a good paying job. You know what I mean? I guess that I don't know a lot of people where it's worked for them. I know a lot of people who go to school but I don't know a lot of people who because of their degree they are making this amount.

The coupling of their lack of role models and their families' lack of connection between success and education has basis in their families' lack of support in their education throughout their childhood and adolescent years.

<center>A Lack of Family Support for Educational Pursuits</center>

The theme, A *Lack of Support for Educational Pursuits* was observed in the interviews of eleven of the twelve participants. This theme means the participants shared an experience of being overlooked or disregarded regarding their education and participation in school activities. Though this theme shares, with *Negatively Impacted by A Lack of Role Models*, in being one of the most prevalent, it was most certainly the area or issue that resulted in the most emotional revelations.

The data in this theme will be presented in two subthemes, *Lack of Investment* and *Inherited Generational/Family Sense of Hopelessness*. Ten of the eleven participants described upbringings that expressed a *Lack of Investment* in their educational well-being. This sentiment was best conveyed in Stephen's response to questions about his parent's participation in his school activities:

Do I have a memory from when they did attend? No. I am trying to be nice but I don't remember her; I know my daddy didn't at all. I don't remember her coming to any throughout my whole entire life, except for probably my graduation. I don't remember her coming to any award assemblies. As far as like handling parent-teacher conferences and stuff, they didn't do none of that. I was just basically by myself in that. All they instructed was to bring straight A's home. My mama was just adamant about me having straight A's. If I had a B it was a whoopin'. So it was serious. Me and my sister.

She never took the time out. First of all she really didn't know nothing anyway and then she never took the time to, you know, be there for us and do parent-teacher conferences and stuff. That is why when I came here in about '05 and I was around the (family from church) and before that I never seen parents be that involved; Black people anyway, that involved in their child's school affairs like y'all go to all their games; I mean all the games. You know what I am saying? It is just foreign to me and I still... if I had kids now I still can't see myself just going to every game and doing that. I just can't see that, but I think it is because nobody ever did that for me. I would try to do it but I don't think I would make every game. My mind might change once I have kids but my mama, they didn't deem that important. As long as I was bringing home good grades. Like I said, the award assemblies and stuff like that… (shaking his head negatively)

I was in choir. I remember one time I wanted to go to the choir concert. Couldn't go because they wouldn't take me. You know what I am saying? Or one time I was being recognized. This was when I was getting ready to graduate and I

was being recognized for my achievements in high school and I had to walk to the school. I would catch the bus to the school and I was by myself. My mama and them didn't go.

Repeating Stephen's narrative of lack of parental guidance or interest, Shay reiterates that she didn't receive any consideration from her parents or immediate family members regarding homework or school activities. Shay attributes any attention she received about her education to her aunt, who she explains was the only family member who expressed concern about the children's education. Reminiscing on her parent's lack of concern for their children, she stated:

> And I don't even remember a Parent-Teacher Conferences myself. I actually don't and maybe it was because of where we were. But I don't remember my mom ever going to any Parent-Teacher Conferences or PTA meetings or anything like that.

She also disclosed how she and her sister responded to the feeling of being ignored:

> I guess she felt like my mom and my dad didn't really have time because my dad was ...they were in church a lot. So that was their focus. So they're focus really wasn't on us it was more on church. And so my sister says that she signed her own permission slips. She signed her stuff. She did her own thing because she knew that they weren't going to do it for her. So that's how she...I did enough to get by. Like I could have done better. I mean I didn't do bad in school but I could have done a whole lot better if I got pushed more at home, from home. Yes. I just did enough to get by. Like a "C" was fine with me. I was cool with a "C." I don't know how to say...like it's not an "F." Actually a "D" was passing too. It wasn't

failing. So I was ...I mean I thought more of myself than to get a "D" but a "D"

was okay too.

Bobby's narrative is comparable to Stephen and Shay's, having little to no

support at home and no consideration being made, unless it concerned misbehavior.

Bobby declared:

Nobody helped me with my homework. I used to try. They didn't know it, know it

themselves. So it was like I had to learn this because I didn't know a thing. I just

had to make something up or ask the teacher.

We didn't have none of that (attending parent-teacher conferences). We

didn't have none of that. Maybe…I'm talking like me and my first cousins, my

mother didn't go to like PTA meetings. They might have came for a conference,

like say if I was being bad or something but I don't remember going to PTA

meetings, parent night. It was none…oh, no. Yeah, they wouldn't participate.

They're just like y'all go to school because y'all was supposed to go to school. I

don't remember no participation in anything.

The family's lack of support or investment in the education of the participants in

addition to the family's historically negative dialogue regarding education being

compounded by the families' financial difficulties is the foundation of the subtheme

Inherited Generational/Family Sense of Hopelessness.

Specifically, the subtheme of *Inherited Generational/Family Sense of*

Hopelessness means the participants have developed a self-perception of not being able

to overcome the pitfalls accompanying being raised in impoverished or low-income,

uneducated families. Seven of the twelve participants presented some residual feelings of

despair. These feelings are best expressed through the comments of Elaine, Jean, Renee', Vincent and Stephen.

Elaine's experience of being taken from her home at an early age and then being shuffled between several homes was difficult. Yet, she felt the most anguish through the words of her family members:

We had it hard. There were too many people that didn't mention anything about education because I guess when you've been from a broken home, you tend to lean on, it keeps you in a trap, it keeps you from moving forward. It does, like "Lord can I finish school?" In the back of your mind, "You never going to be nothing. You always going to be bad." My dad even told us that, "You all ain't never going to be nothing. Who your daddy is? You all ain't never going to end up being nothing. Look at your mama. Look at her sitting over there." I mean, he said all that in front of everybody. It was rough. I ain't going to say it was peaceful and easy. It was rough.

They're all like, "What's the purpose?" I got my auntie … Thought she cared about me, took me in, I thought she cared about me…but I got to hear all of this? I went from different home, from different home, not just in … I mean homes, just different homes. Six, seven, eight homes.

Jean thought back to her family members, especially her mother and aunt, discouraged her dreams of continuing her education and finding that it seemed to be a generational trait within her family:

They just don't talk about anything. They just don't. They just don't. I don't know why they don't. I think because their parents were like that. I really do.

They just want, I think my grandmother, they just want you to get a job. Get a job

and keep it and try and retire. That's just about summed it up for them. What you

want to go waste time going to school for?

She understood the detrimental impact those thoughts had on her upbringing and

regrets the decisions she's made in not pursuing her educational and occupational

aspirations. She revealed that she tells her children differently than she was taught and

uses a successful Black as a role model:

Whatever you want to do, whatever you want to pursue, you do it. You do it, no

matter what, and you don't let nobody, nobody knock your dream down at all. I

tell them, even if it's me. You do it. Also, just don't let what you're going through

now overwhelm you to the point where you can't, like I did. I'll do it tomorrow,

this is too much, I got kids. They just did it, no matter what. I listen to Oprah's

story a few times. She's talked about her childhood. I can identify that, and she

didn't have that encouragement, like we're supposed to have coming up. But she

did it. She did it, and that's huge. She really did it. It's huge.

Jean had a revelation about her life reflecting on her lack of education and how

her familial relationships impacted her schooling:

I think I just I wasn't who I could have been in school. I think I did just enough.

Kept my head low. Just enough to pass, but I know I had the potential to do much

more, but I just I think I did enough. I know I did enough to get by. I don't know

if that was self-esteem or what, but that's what I did. I never said it out loud. Oh,

wow.

Renee' also reflected on her childhood and current situation, contemplating in what manner her parent's actions affected her now as a parent. With tears in her eyes, she exclaimed:

I wish they would have pushed me and now that I have my daughter, I'll make it a point that we read, I'll make it a point and it's something that she doesn't care about but work on your handwriting. Don't just write down anything. Think about what you're writing. I think my mindset will be different about school and I think I'm not going to say I would have been smarter but I would be a lot smarter than what I am now. I've floated along. There was no accountability for my homework, for nothing. They didn't see the benefit of playing a sport or playing an instrument and what that can do to your mind. My parents just did not push education and trying to do it when you're out of high school is not effective. I wish they would have showed me the importance of an education and not just saying you need to finish school.

Vincent's complex history of being a high school dropout, ex-convict, and now homeless caused him to realize even more how his lack of education had affected his life. Although he knows that obtaining his GED would be an improvement, he feels lost in the tasks of simply working enough to feed himself:

I got a lot on my plate. I got to eat at the end of the day and I can't, you know what I'm saying. Right now at the point of my life I just ... I understand there's not much time to take out your day but at the end of the day I got other little things I need to do. That's why I say I wish I would have did it then instead of waiting now, you know, when everything you got a whole lot of stuff on your

plate. I'm working all week trying to get me together. And right now it just ain't

... it's just not in my plan.

Stephen has no difficulty expressing his unhappiness and sometimes, anger

toward his rearing and lack of assistance he received from his family toward his

education. Admittedly dismayed at times, Stephen states:

> I feel like she didn't make the best choices raising us and stuff like that and she
>
> didn't put us first as a parent. A lot of that stems from probably not completing her
>
> education and not knowing how to do stuff for herself and stuff like that. It has
>
> also affected her kids negatively. Had she been in my school like she was
>
> supposed to I would have went to college. I had potential to go to college for free;
>
> you know what I am saying? But I didn't know because I am a child, so my mama
>
> wasn't there to guide me and tell me to send out this letter for this and try to apply
>
> for scholarships. I didn't know how to do all that. I don't believe she knew either
>
> but she wasn't involved enough in my school ever to even consider it. They just
>
> thought once I got out of school I was going to get a scholarship because I had
>
> good grades and that didn't happen. I had to kind of figure stuff out on my own
>
> and I came down here and tried to get in school and I couldn't, you know what I
>
> am saying? Then I just started working. I just kind of lost the desire to go, but it
>
> was always my desire to go to college. As time went on and I was making the
>
> grades and stuff and even I took my ACT and I did pretty good on it for the first
>
> time but only took it once because I didn't know how to... I didn't have no body
>
> there with me because my mama had took me away from [his birthplace] and we
>
> was moving from school to school during my high school years. I was taking time

to adjust and me, as a child, I don't know what I was supposed do to be trying to go to that next level. When I graduated it just hit me. I had to work and stuff like that. I was trying to get into school but my financial aid wouldn't clear right because of our income. They couldn't verify income and stuff like that. I never could get into school and I think her not being involved in my school and her not finishing school and her not... only understanding the importance of making A's, but it is more than that to do stuff.

He continued, struggling to find exactly what he wanted to say. Shaking his head and in a measure, becoming despondent, he spoke:

My upbringing discouraged me. The fact that I wasn't prepared. When I came down here, I thought it was going to be simple as me going up there and registering and getting all that information, filling out my financial aid should have been given to me. When I got down here I hadn't prepared or gotten anything together and nobody around me knew how to do it so you know what I am saying, I just lost hope. I started working and that was just the end of it and I just never had a desire to go back and do it.

Though many of the participants expressed how the lack of education precipitated many of the misfortunes of their early and adolescent years, they also contend that financial strains on their parents and now on themselves have greatly impacted their educational pursuits or lack thereof.

Constrained by Financial Limitations

The theme, *Constrained by Financial Limitations*, was observed in eight of the twelve participants. This theme means that the participants felt limited in their pursuits of

education. The data in this theme will be presented in two subthemes, *Personal* and *Family*. Although all of the participants self-identify as being low-income, not all participants were actively pursuing furthering their education. The subthemes of *Personal* and *Family* are divided by participants who feel that their family's or their personal financial constraints played a larger role in their educational decisions.

The subtheme *Personal* was in large part the most apparent reason for the participants not pursuing their education. Most expressed, in brief statements, how their current situations affected those pursuits.

Lin, who spoke of her dream to become a nurse, became somewhat irritated when asked for reasons why she has not pursued her dreams. She responded, "I already told you. Yeah, because I ain't got the money to do it. I ain't got the money."

Jean, noted her working full-time and being a single mother as part of the reason why she hasn't been about her goal of obtaining a bachelor's degree:

Here lately, I really want to pursue school, but it's really hard for me to see how, because I need to work. I need to work. I need that now, and I don't have a support system where somebody got my back, and I can lean off. I can work so many hours and go to school. I need to get as many hours as I can working. Single mom. I just can't right now.

Ruth, Shay and Bobby have all seriously considered going back to school but either have personal experiences with institutions that have impeded that progress or see examples of others that cause them to reevaluate if a college education is worth the cost of attendance.

Ruth, who one year prior to this interview was enrolled in a technical college, had what she considered a troubling experience and it diminished her desire to return to college. She explained her situation:

> Mine was the tuition, when it was time for the second semester to go back. The first interview, it got my mind rolling to go back to school, and I went for a semester, and my mind wasn't having it. I guess because I took on too much at one time, and I wasn't told again. I guess to me, I felt like I was thrown in the mix, because it was a money thing, and they really weren't looking out for my intentions, because if they had, they would have told me I didn't have to take four classes at one time. Instead, my instructor told me later on when it was time for the finals that, when I signed up for classes, since I was a fresh person off the block, for a long period of time, I never went to college. They should told me all I had to do was take two classes. Again, that's where I said I felt like it's just about the money now. They're really not about the students.

Shay had a similar experience with courses and she now feels like she is in a no-win situation. She explained her predicament:

> One of the things…one of the reason why when I finished with my diploma I did go back to start my Associate's. But when you had to take the placement test, I had to take a Remedial Math and Remedial Reading, which financial aid it wouldn't pay for it. I would have to pay myself. And I was just like, "No, I don't have it right now. I can't do it right now." So I didn't. That was another reason why I didn't go back just because I didn't have the money to pay for those

classes. Because I actually went and got my certificate and it was all free because I had kid so it was free.

Now Shay finds herself in a situation where she can't make more money because she doesn't have the credentials and she's not able to attend school for the credentials because she does not have the tuition for the perquisite courses.

The thought of returning to school causes Bobby to panic. Having experienced living without basic needs in his youth and now working and being able to afford his wants, Bobby is hesitant to return to school and possibly not being able to work and provide for himself:

> Oh my god, working. Not having no money. This is the whole thing because I see my friends and they struggle. They go to school, then they have to scuffle for money. I was just like "Oh my God. I can't do that." I'm like how ... I'd be talking to myself sometimes. I was like, "Oh my God!" I'm really upset. I really need to go to school but I was like, "Oh my god going to school every day and I can't work like I need to." I was like, "I don't know how I'll be able to do that because I don't have anyone to do anything for me."

With each of the previous participants there current circumstances weighed far more than their background of growing up low-income. However, with Stephen and Vincent, their past experiences are real difficult to overcome. Vincent was presented with the ultimatum of attending school or working. In effect, either attending school or starving:

> I think if a lot of low income folk had somebody they, you know, talk to, you know, when school get a little tough. Because I know it can be rough. But if I

had somebody could have talk to and they were saying just stay in school a little bit more longer. I'd have been all right. But, no. Ain't nobody ever said. They said you could either do this or you could do that. "That" would have been starving, so, I'm not starving.

We know she (mother) probably tried but I know she could have did a little better. We all could have but we were all put in situations that we had to do this and do that. It was either starve or eat. It was either one or the other. You know, what you going to do? You can't eat your school books.

This rationale still resides in his consciousness and prohibits him from truly considering furthering his education and obtaining his GED.

Parallel to Vincent's reasoning, Stephen often connects any dialogue regarding him attending school to the image of being impoverished. Although he excelled in education, the memory of his family's financial struggles serve as a marker of what his life could be:

I stayed in [a large metropolitan city] and I went to [high school] and we had moved there and didn't have any money, like we moved there just on a whim. All of my clothes was left here in [his mother's home state] because we had it in storage and I remember having to go to school with probably like five outfits and my shoes had holes in them and stuff like that and I was so embarrassed. Now, nobody ever really talked about me that I could hear. I think the Lord just protected me from that but just the fact that I had to go to school and just be raggedy was just detrimental to me. I think it affected me throughout my entire

life, you know what I am saying? That is why when I got old enough to get a job and stuff like that, my clothes and my appearance were just so important to me.

I remember going to school and having holes in my shoes and just being embarrassed and ashamed and I couldn't do anything about it because it was just the situation I was in. I remember one particular time it was pouring down rain and I had to walk home. I mean it was pouring down rain and so I am getting drenched and it just so happened I was on my way home and I told ya, they was Nike Prestos and they was cloth shoes. They were the only shoes I had and they had holes at the top of it. They cloth shoes, so I am getting soaked head to toe.

This White teacher came, she drove by and she felt sorry for me and took me home. I was blessed that she did that because I still had a ways to go, but that experience when I stayed in [a large metropolitan city] was probably the most negative that I have probably had, that I can remember right off.

Being low-income and our mama not feeling like she was making the best decisions and we are stuck. It impacted our lives so negative, you know what I am saying? That it is hard for me to even overcome. Some still struggles for me.

Stephen doesn't believe that there is a guarantee that he'll graduate and doesn't want to chance working part-time or not working at all to accomplish a goal that may land him in a state where he once climbed out of. That fear, he readily admits, has impeded his progress toward attending an institution of high education.

Financial constraints are not the only limitations that the participants referenced. The participants also believe that race played a significant part in their pursuit of

education and the combination of race and class was the most substantial of all concerns in their life, both positive and negative.

<div align="center">Intersection of Race and Class</div>

The theme *Intersection of Race and Class* means that the participants believed that both race and class contributed significantly to their narratives. In some cases, one played a larger part in the participant's pursuit and perception of education. This theme was evident in eight of the twelve participants. Participants offered narratives and examples of how race and class impacted their lives and also who they both relate in the topic of education.

Jean doesn't believe that education is very important to Blacks and other minorities. Just as it was in her family, she believes that the importance of education isn't instilled in the average Black family, stating:

> No. Same thing I think said, because of this vicious cycle of generations, and wasn't instilled in most of us. It wasn't instilled in our mothers, our grandparents. It just wasn't, and we passing it along to our children.

Jean also feels that being low-income impacted her education more than being Black, she stated:

> Low-income. Because that's why, I think a lot of the reason my family thought the way they did was because we were low-income. It was about right now. Get a job so you can eat right now. Education nonsense, we didn't have nothing. I can't blame them for how they felt, but that's why.

Speaking on Black and minority low-income families, Candice shared that she believed that education is not of importance to the group, however; she states why she is

different. She also notes, in the second paragraph, her impression of Blacks in America, saying:

> A lot of them don't, because a lot of Black don't come from, like my family didn't really talk about education, and a lot of Black people back in the day, to me, did not think about education because they only went for high school. Now it may be some more different because I'm a young mom, and I want to see my kids graduate, because I didn't, and I think education very important now for me, and I hear a lot of people, Black mothers to me, always on their kids about education, but I'm not to go so far as men. A lot of men don't think it's important. I think women think it's more important than men.
>
> I think that's how it's perceived, but it shouldn't be that way. We are considered, to me, "They not going to succeed. They can't be successful." But a lot of African-Americans even more than Caucasians or Mexicans, any kind of race, but I think Blacks, I don't know why it seem like, to me, we focus on being less, not having money, not finishing school, we always count on, all they want to do is fight and stuff like that. I don't think we even classify in the real world, to me. I don't know why.

Shay, also doesn't believe that education is of great importance to many low-income Blacks. Using people that she knows as examples, she believed that many of them know they should attend school but are stuck, trying to make ends meet and survive:

> … I know people that are low income and you know they know that they need to go to school to be successful. But then I know some also that they just try to

survive from day to day. So that's all they want to do is just be able to survive. And go to work and get a paycheck and pay their bills and that's just it. It depends on the circumstances.

Stephen shared his conflicting view on why racism will override your education but why you should strive to obtain a higher education anyway and how, in some cases, living in poverty was more salient in his life experiences:

I don't believe... I think in this country there is still stereotypes and there is still stigmas associated with just your person. If you are born a Black person you already I feel like at the back of the line. I think we have to do much more than other races to accomplish what they have accomplished. Education I feel gives you a head start and I also feel like it is not a guaranteed. I know a bunch of people with college degrees and they bought were I am in life, you know what I am saying? Or worse, you know what I am saying? I work with people who have the same jobs and we have the same job and same pay grade and they have many degrees. I feel like it just depends on what you do with it and it also depends on who you are and I feel like still this world, America in itself they still have their stigmas and their stereotypes and so you may not be considered for a certain thing just because you are Black or just because you are a girl, different thing. I think it gives you a head start but I don't think it [levels the playing field at all].

Education is Important for Black and other minorities in America? I believe that, I believe that. I believe education is important for everybody but I really feel that Blacks IF they can, they should strive to get one because it gives it like I said a head start. It gives them opportunities then that may not be open for

everybody, you know what I am saying? Especially with the stigma of our race
and the majority of our men being in prison and just being single and parenting a
bunch of kids. I think you need that education because the economy is down and
if you don't have it. I mean some people won't even consider you if you don't have
your credentials so I feel like you need your education.

Yes, yes. I feel like to accomplish what the White people accomplish we
have to have more, a bunch more to me in my mind. We have to be just... they
don't, they can't have a reason to deny us. We have to be that good at whatever we
do. That is my personal feeling because I feel like if you apply for a job and both
of you all are equal they going to most likely go with the White person.

The following comment was in regards to which did he believe played a larger
part in his life, race, being a Black man or being low-income, Stephen said:

I would like to say poverty in itself is just like, to me it was hard to go through
when you don't feel like you... what is going to happen or you can't do nothing.
You just stuck. They don't have no money to do nothing, you can't do nothing and
I feel like me being in poverty and not having a support system and then having to
half raise my brother and sister just affected me completely all during life. It still
affects me now.

Renee' explained, "I don't think education is really pushed for African Americans.
I'm not saying that you don't have a lot for…from my personal experience, I don't see
education being really big. I'm going to tell you my view and this is me, a lot of times
coming out of high school for a lot of African American families such as mine it's like
once you graduate and you are out of the house you're starting from ground zero."

Complicating that narrative Renee' also states that in many cases, "White folks basically take it as there's no sense in me getting an education because when I go apply for these job they are not going to give it to somebody Black." However, she doesn't believe that should stop Black for "getting an education."

In comparison she believes that it's ultimately harder trying to attend school being low-income than it is being Black. She states:

Is education worth the sacrifice of being underemployed, not making enough money, not affording a car? In a sense, yes and no. In some cases, I believe a person just has to work to make it but as far as someone just trying to get out there and get on the ground so that they can have this and that, that's a different story. Then there's… where from my point of view you can go to school all day long and come out with your degree and have no work experience. That's a bad thing, you know what I mean? My mindset I think if you are able to go to school and not work or whatever the case, I would say it's not worth it. I don't think it's worth it … my mindset, I would have seen going out and working.

Earl is currently enrolled in an undergraduate program, working toward his bachelor's degree and has consistently spoken about him attending school to better his family financial situation. Conversely, he comments on why the Black community doesn't seek success through education and why there's "no positive outcome for pushing an education" to Blacks:

I think probably more because they're Black, because there's been so much dirt, so much negative toward the Black community, that education, like I said was

never a big thing just talked about. You thought success was going to come through sports or some type of talent or from the streets.

So I think there's just all the negative that's geared toward Blacks, that I don't think our younger generation is even trying to push to educate themselves, because they're looking at now, how we have so many that is indebted with college loans and different things. They've got these degrees, but they're working at McDonalds. Or they have these degrees, and they can't find no job. Or they got degrees, but they can't get a job within the field that they were going to school for, so they're looking at it as far as, "Why should I go through all that, getting myself in debt, and I can't even find a job or get a job or anything like that?" So I think it's just geared that right now, it's like, there's no positive outcome for pushing an education.

Vincent offers examples of why education is not of the utmost importance to low-income Blacks and to Blacks in general:

Importance of education to Blacks? It depends on their living situation. Well let's say they're living in the hood. You think they're really worried about going to school? No. They see the minus side of it. So ain't nobody really talking about. They might cut school just to go make the money.

I've got a hundred plaques on that wall I'm still going to be Black. Like I said anything you can have all them plaques up on the wall. You're still going to be Black. They still going to be looking at you the same way.

Referring to his time growing up in different homes and witnessing other Black families that weren't low-income, he also adds that he believed that being low-income affected him more than his race:

Low Income. I say that because even as I was growing up for the people ... you know how you go to school and you see that the Blacks that they have a little money. They didn't have as many problems that I had. You know, they can go home to their nice home and they probably finished school. You know they didn't have that many issues at the house as I did.

Keisha, who was approaching her graduation, earning a bachelor's degree, expressed the need for Black and minorities to seek furthering their education. Previously not being able to connect education with success, through her own educational journey, her perception has changed:

Yeah, it's definitely important. I think it's important for everybody but I think it's more important for Blacks and minorities because we're just that, we are the minority and to maybe even to place ourselves, to give us more of edge I, guess you would say, in whatever capacity whether it's the workforce whatever it is. I think that can at least give us more of an edge. Now am I'm not saying that levels it, no. It still doesn't level with it in my opinion but I think it's definitely important. If you want to even be considered now I think it's necessary that you have that to do so...

The narratives in the previous themes often contradict what the participant had said about the importance to education to the Black community. These "mixed" messages were found throughout the participants comments.

Mixed Cultural Messages about the Importance of Education

The theme occurred in six of the twelve participants. *Mixed Cultural Messages about the Importance of Education* means there was a noteworthy comment or belief that challenges the other comments made by the participant.

After commenting previously that obtaining an education is not a "necessary" and that she had not seen it "work out" for others who attended school, Renee' was questioned as to what advice she would give a younger Black person about education, she undeniably recognized the trickiness of the statement she would give, saying:

It kind of sounds hypocritical but I would tell any Black person to go to school, you need your education. It's kind of like saying what's right and I do think they need their education. One thing that my father used to say and he still says now and it sounds kind of racist but in his mindset growing up and living closely to [an urban city] is that you will always have to do everything better. Even if you are skilled at something you can have a better skill than the one you have, you have to have everything better and to me that's why I would push because that's what will set you apart.

Candice had previously mentioned how she understood the importance of education and how she would encourage her sons to go to college in an effort to have a better life. In spite of this, when questioned if she believed that education would make everyone equal, she responded:

No. Because I can be just as smart as someone who as a master's or a PhD. I can learn to do the same things they do. I may not graduate school, but brain-wise, I might be where they at, but for knowledge-wise, I think they know more if they

did go through the school process, but I think school don't make you. I think it helps you, but you still can be just as smart as the one who did graduate school. Saying that one, who did not have a degree, could do the same things (jobs) as those who have obtained graduate degrees is not false but it's not likely that many people without those degrees would be placed in a position to do their jobs.

Lin offered that while it may be a good idea to attend college, it's "ways around everything" and that college isn't' necessary. Yet, she then said that education is important for Blacks and other minorities "Because you got to have an education if you want to make. If you don't have no education guess what, you can't make it." She also added that education "is a gateway to everybody's success."

Vincent previously stated that success was linked to money and that money came from getting a job, alleviating education from the process. However, that tone changed regarding the placement education should have in the younger generation of African Americans. He remarked that:

Basically on the top of their list. On the very top. Because education not on top. We already in trouble, as it is, without education. Don't put...don't bother anyway without a education. It should be on top of your list.

Bobby said that he believed that only fifty percent of success could be connected to education but that belief did not curtail his opinion on the importance of education for his younger relatives. He implored them to continue into higher education straight from high school in hopes of keeping the momentum and completing rather than dropping out as he did.

Likewise, Stephen stressed the need for education for all Blacks but specifically for Blacks living in poverty and low-income. Nevertheless, Stephen finds himself just recently employed, after several months of unemployment, and very much so low-income. However, he doesn't consider education as a viable option for him to move out of his current income status.

The contradictory statements could have been made because of a miscommunication. On the other hand, outside of Renee' the other participants were not aware of their conflicting statements. I think in the case of Candice, Lin and Vincent the statements regarding the connection or lack of connection between success and education could have been made in an effort to protect themselves. Each submitting that they did not recognize the link, thus offering that their lack of success is blamed on the family background but then all reported that their not having an education doesn't make them "lesser." However, it was through their comments about giving young Blacks advice on education that you get a glimpse into what they truly feel about education, all believed that informing them to stay in school and gain as much education as they possible could was the best advice.

<div align="center">Chapter Summary</div>

In this chapter, six major themes were presented. The themes were constructed from the interviews of twelve participants, low-income African American adults. The first theme *Negatively Impacted by Lack of Role Models* were expressed in the subthemes of *The Non-Role Model-Family Member* and *Negative Impression of Educated Blacks.* In these subthemes it was found throughout the narratives that having a negative or no role model coupled with having a negative impression of educated Blacks resulted in the

participants not having positive images of education or believing that education was of value. Also the lack of role models, educated and non-educated, extended throughout the generations.

Those results greatly affected the next theme *Not Making the Link between Education and Success*. In this theme it was found that success was tinged on the ability to seek a job as soon as possible and success was as obtainable without an education and through other means such as athletics or entertainment. The inability to link education and success attached another level of "unimportance" to the value of education.

In the third theme, A *Lack of Family Support for Educational Pursuits*, two subthemes emerged, *Lack of Investment* and *Inherited Generational/Family Sense of Hopelessness*. Through the subthemes it was found that the majority of the participants received little to no support from family member regarding education and school activities. This further instilled the thought of their education being insignificant. It was also found that the feelings of being insignificant propelled some of the participants into a sense of desperation often causing the person to feel stuck in the situation with no discernible way out.

Constrained by Financial Limitations, the fourth theme, revealed that the sense of hopelessness was directly aligned with either the participant's current financial situation or their incapability to let go of their impoverished and difficult family experience.

The fifth theme, *The Intersection of Race and Class*, showed how profound race and class were on the experiences of the participants singularly and in connection with the other. It was found that neither could be considered to be wholly more relevant than the other, each impacting the participant differently.

The sixth and final theme, *Mixed Cultural Messages about the Importance of Education*, presented the conflicting narratives of participants, providing reasoning behind the contradictory statements and offering another perspective on what the inconsistency may mean. Each of the themes provide a layer of understanding to why low-income African American adults pursue education and how the perception of education was developed throughout their life experiences.

CHAPTER SIX

CONCLUSIONS AND DISCUSSION

The purpose of this qualitative research study was to examine the impact of class and race on the perceptions of formal education and participation of socioeconomically disadvantaged adult African Americans. The study was guided by two research questions:

1. How do class and race membership affect the beliefs of socioeconomically disadvantaged African American adults towards educational participation?

2. What culturally based concepts or values do socioeconomically disadvantaged African Americans have regarding the significance/importance of education?

This chapter contains four sections. The first section provides a summary of the study. The second section discusses how the study relates to the literature. The third section presents the conclusions resulting from the analysis of the data and the fourth section offers the implications of the study on theory, practice and future research.

Summary of the Study

A qualitative design was used for this study and the data were analyzed employing narrative analysis. Twelve participants from U.S. states in the South, Southwest, Southeast, and Midwest United States were selected to participate in the study. Each participant fit the following criteria: low-income, as designated in Table 1 and Table 2; 25 years of age or older; self-identified as being Black or African American; and first-generation students or potential students. The participants were interviewed in face-to face and in-depth conversations. The semi-structured interviews, ranging in length

from fifty-two minutes to one hour and five minutes, with the average interview lasting

for an average of one hour. These interviews were the main source of data for this study.

Each interview was recorded and then transcribed. The other sources used for this study

were field notes, documents and observations. The data was analyzed through narrative

analysis (Johnson-Bailey, 2004; Riessman, 1993) and reported the lived experiences of

the participants (Patton & Catching, 2009). Participant narratives were analyzed

individually and coded utilizing the constant comparative method, finding the similarities

and differences in the data and placing those inferences into categories, which then

evolved into meaningful themes (Charmaz, 2005; Glaser & Strauss, 1967; Pidgeon &

Henwood, 2004).

The participants ranged in ages from twenty-five to forty-six at the time of the

interviews, with the participant pool consisting of eight women and four men. Ten of the

participants were parents. Ten of the participants earned an income less than $25,000

annually and eleven of the participants were born into families that were low-income.

Three of the interviewees were enrolled in college courses at the time of the interview.

Six major findings emerged from this study. They were communicated as themes:

1) *Negatively Impacted by Lack of Role Models*; 2) *Not Making the Link between*

Education and Success; 3) A *Lack of Family Support for Educational Pursuits* ; 4)

Constrained by Financial Limitations; 5) Impacted by the Combined Effects of the

Intersection of Race and Class: and 6) Receiving *Mixed Cultural Messages about the*

Importance of Education.

The first theme was entitled, *Negatively Impacted by the Lack of Role Models*.

This theme, which explains that the participants did not strive towards educational

success because of the absence of role models from their lives, contained two sub-themes: *Non-role Model in the Family* and *A Negative Impression of Educated Blacks*. The second finding in this study was *Not Making the Link between Education and Success*, which speaks to the fact that the participants in this study did not believe that attaining an education has a correlation to a person's success.

The third research finding, A *Lack of Family Support for Educational Pursuits*, contained two subthemes, *Lack of Investment* and *Inherited Generational/Family Sense of Hopelessness*. This theme and subthemes spoke to the families overall belief in what is expected of a family during the participant's tenure in school. The fourth theme from the study was *Constrained by Financial Limitations*, which had two subthemes, *Personal* and *Family*. This fourth theme refers to the data that demonstrated that the participants' goals and dreams of an education were limited by their socioeconomic status. More specifically, they could not strive to obtain a higher education when their basic needs were not being met.

The fifth theme was the *Impact of the Intersection of Race and Class on the Educational Experience*. This theme elucidated how the participants' experiences were negatively impacted by both their race and class membership. The sixth and final theme, *Mixed Cultural Messages About the Importance of Education*, spoke directly to how the overall cultural of the African American community had a complex and often conflicting relationship with the significance of education for Blacks. Simply stated it can be characterized as a love/hate relationship.

Response to the Literature

This literature review for this study examined four areas of scholarship: 1) the historical perspective of the African American educational experience; 2) the historical perspective of African Americans' in adult education; 3) social issues and movements in adult education; 4) race and social class in education; 5) first-generation and low-income students; and 5) participation in adult education. In this section, I situated the findings from this study as they related to the existing literature.

Historical Perspective of African American Education Experience

Unlike the years during the mid-1700's and up until the beginning of the Civil War in 1861, in contemporary society education is seen as a right to which everyone is entitled, specifically elementary to secondary education. However, education in higher institutions of learning is still regarded as being a privilege. The participants in this study regarded higher education as something that was not available to them and not meant for low income people. Similar to the findings of Snyder and Dillow's study (2012), which reported a high school graduation rate of 84.8%, this study's participants had a graduation rate of 83.3%. So the participants in this study paralleled the learners in the Snyder and Dillow study. While this study focused on first-generation students who have yet to complete a degree in higher education, 25% of the participants were enrolled at a four-year college or university at the time of this study. Barring any complications that might prevent them from graduating, this study's statistics are in line with the numbers from the 2011 study of Snyder and Dillow (2012).

The findings from this study also were in agreement with other studies which were examined and presented in the literature review that presented findings

characterizing the experiences of African American students at predominately White Institutions as isolating and hostile. These studies by Allen and Haniff (1991), Pascarella & Terenzini (2005), Thompson and Fretz (1991), and White (1998) assessed the experiences of African American students at predominately-White institutions (PWI) and reported findings of social isolation and high dropout rates. This study also found that the participants enrolled in higher education reported feelings of social isolation and had also dropped out of school on one or more occasions. However, unlike the studies cited, this study's findings are not applicable to participants enrolled in Historically Black College and University (HBCU) since the participants from this study were at PWIs.

Historical Perspective of African Americans' Adult Education

One commonality between the African American historical figures of adult education and the participants in this study is that both believed in lending assistance to their Black communities. Since many of the participants in this study had family members who were illiterate, they shared a basic belief that it was their duty to reach out and lift up their family members into literacy. In some instances this was done for altruistic reasons and in other situations it was done out of necessity.   The literature reviewed for this study showed how this was a constant theme in the African American community, as historical figures such as Septima Clarke and Booker T. Washington had also dedicated their lives to educating their race (Cain, 1995; Peterson, 1996). This study included participants who had the responsibility of reading to and writing for their illiterate parents or guardians. In addition, as older children several of them also had to teach their younger siblings.   However, many of the participants didn't link these actions

as being educational, but instead saw their actions as necessary and expected family duties.

Furthermore, when questioned about successful educated African American adults, only one participant thought to name historical figures. Both Harriet Tubman and Booker T. Washington were named as important past prominent African Americans; however, the participant did not know what they had achieved. The participant also didn't seem interested in learning about the figures or the links between African Americans and education.

Social Issues and Movements in Adult Education

The literature reviewed also included information on organizations like the Grange (Stubblefield & Keane, 1994) and the Noble Order of the Knights of Labor (McLaurin, 1997), labor organizations that were created for the working class and had educational programs for their members and surrounding communities. This section also covered the importance of women's' groups and church groups that provided education to Blacks. In a like manner, the participants in this study were also members of social or labor groups in their work places and churches and used their connections to these groups to either find out about educational opportunities or to further their educational goals.

The members of this study also participated in organizations within their institutions of higher education. Some of these groups focused on addressing the concerns and needs of single parents and other groups were dedicated to first generation or working-class students. The overall purpose of such groups was to assistant their student members in staying in school and graduating. Another point at which there was a connection between the literature examined and the lived experiences of the participants

was in the ways in which their housing was associated with their education. In the early

1900s the settlement houses that emerged played an important role in helping the

socioeconomically disadvantaged immigrants and urban dwellers seek out and obtain

basic literacy and basic needs (Friedman & Friedman, 2006). Likewise, the participants

in this study were engaged in programs in their government assisted housing units that

helped with basic needs, such as health, housing and food/nutrition for low-income

citizens.

Race and Social Class in Education

The findings from this study are also parallel to the findings from studies done by

Lareau (1987), Hoschschild (2003), and Feinstein, Duckworth and Sabates (2004). Those

three studies looked at the reasons why parents did not participate in their children's

education; and cited family instability and the role of family in academic success as the

main reasons. In concert with these studies' findings, this study on socioeconomically

disadvantaged learners also found that the majority of the parents did not participate in

their children's educational pursuits. The parental lack of engagement could be attributed

to their lack of education and their failure to understand the significance of education or

how it could positively impact one's life situation. Lareau's (1987) study reports that the

lack of parental involvement from the under or uneducated and low-income parent is

often ascribed to the parent's not placing a value in the child's education and the parental

refusal to participate in school activities is also seen in the Lareau study as directly

linked to the parent's social class. However, the participants of this study, who

admittedly had difficulty helping their children in school because of their limited or poor

education, did not see their parents as being hampered by the same limitations. Instead

they attached their parents' non-involvement to an inability to see or recognize the importance of education to their children's future opportunities. Much like Hochschild's (2003) study, the participants in this examination also reported having lives filled with uncertainty in their living situation, and spoke about not having enough food to eat or of not having decent clothing to wear.

The findings in this research study on low-income learners also supported Feinstein, Duckworth and Sabates (2004) study's results that revealed that the parent's education is the best factor in predicting the educational success and behavior of their children. One of the ways in which this study expanded on this idea is that it showed that the positive influence could come from a member of the extended family or from a close friend. This finding can be explained by research that shows that the African American community constructs family differently by including people who are outside of the immediate family, such as friends and church members, conferring on them an honorary family membership (Douglas & Peck, 2013). Many of the participants in this study, who were enrolled in college, looked to such people in their communities who had education as their role models. The literature in this study included very few studies that examined the combined impact of race and class on a student's education. Indeed when race and class are examined as factors that can affect the education outcome, they are studied separately. However, this study, which assessed them together sets forth that the issues of race and class are intrinsically linked and that race is just as significant to the educational experience as is class, when the participants are African American, in that they produce a synergistic influence because they are fused and inseparable.

First-Generation and Low-Income Students

This study was in line with the many studies concerning first-generation and low-income students (list a few). The participants' membership in two marginalized groups drastically decreased their probability of attending and then graduating from through post-secondary institutes. When first-generation and low-income status is combined with membership in a disenfranchised racial group, it becomes even more improbable that a student will achieve a higher education degree (Aronson, 2008; Choy 2001; Pascarella, 1980; Pascarella & Chapman, 1983; Pascarella & Ishitani, 2006).

This study's participants lined up with what the literature portrays as typical first generation and low-income students. The participants in this study were women, who earned less than $25,000 annually, were 30 years or older and were heads of households with dependents. All of these descriptions are among the mostly likely characteristics of first-generation and low-income students (Choy, 2001; Nunez & Cuccaro-Alamin, 1998).

In this study, as it was with the literature, many of the participant's lack of aspirations to attend college stemmed from the familial and cultural beliefs that working is more beneficial to moving out of the most dire situations of poverty (Brooks-Terry, 1998; Terenzini & Pascarella, 1994; Terenzini, Rendon, & Blimling, 1996). The participants seemed to be extrinsically motivated concerning the methods of obtaining success and wealth (Warner & Phelps, 2008). While they understood that education may lead to success, they didn't feel that the four years needed to obtain a college degree was worth it. Unlike the studies cited in this literature review, the participants believed that because of their race, they would never truly become successful in a higher education degree.

Participation in Adult Education

A study by Snyder and Tan (2005) reported that the most participants in adult education are White women with high school education who earn $75,000 or more, and who live in a city or suburban town. However, the participants in this research study do not fit that profile in that they are Black and earn less than $25,000 a year and many of them lived in rural locations in government assisted housing. Additionally, the characterization of adult learners as striving towards self-actualization and fulfillment, as noted by Cross (1981) and Houle (1961), was not supported by this study's findings. Instead the learners in this study were found to be goal-oriented and purpose driven. Additionally, the participants in this study only participated in adult education opportunities that were closely related to their goal of obtaining a higher education in order to increase the probability of their escaping out of poverty. Of all the barriers (Cross, 1981) and deterrents (Valentine & Darkenwald, 1990) noted in previous studies, this study found that the most significant barriers for socioeconomically disadvantaged African American adults were making education a low personal priority and the high and prohibitive cost of an education. The situational barrier of being low-income and the dispositional barrier of their beliefs toward education were found to be interrelated and were also found to work against the learners changing from their current situations.

Conclusions

Through the data analysis and assessment of the findings, three major conclusions emerged from this study. The three conclusions were: 1) The race and class membership of socioeconomically disadvantaged African American adults fosters a worldview of hopelessness regarding the importance/significance of education in their lives; 2)

Socioeconomically disadvantaged African American adults in this study embrace and disperse culturally based beliefs that education is for Whites and that obtaining an education would separate them from the comfort and security of their racial group members; and 3) Socioeconomically disadvantaged African American in this study do not accept that there is a link between education and success but instead feel that any life success is made random and chaotic by the forces of racism and classism.

Conclusion One: Worldview of Hopelessness

The first conclusion is that the race and class membership of socioeconomically disadvantaged African American adults fosters a worldview of hopelessness regarding the importance/significance of education in their lives. This conclusion addresses the second research question: What culturally based concepts or values do socioeconomically disadvantaged African Americans have regarding the significance/importance of education?

The reflection on the participants' attitudes of their family and community members regarding the significance/importance of education throughout their childhood and adolescence is at the center of this conclusion. Many of the families are headed by under-educated or uneducated single parents who have transferred their feelings of educational inadequacy and underachievement to their younger family and community members. These feelings are also displayed through the lack of parental involvement and interest in their child's educational or school activity.

Many of the participants in this study experienced a chaotic and difficult home life, ranging from abandonment to extreme poverty, which also played a significant part in the involvement of the child and parent in the participant's school activities. The

parent, guardian, or role model's lack of participation, support and positive affirmations regarding education, whether the parent understood the ramifications of their actions or not, greatly impacted the their child's future involvement in and aspirations toward education as a whole (Diamond & Gomez, 2004).

Research such as the Kerbow and Bernhardt (1993) study, reported that Black parents are more active, than White parents within the same social class, in terms of joining parent-teacher organizations and in contacting their child's schools. However, when including the issues of race with social class, this first conclusion is supported by the literature. This conclusion also coincides with the literature on the plight of low-income and first-generation students who are more likely to not participate in educational activities, which also give students a since of fitting in (Nunez & Cuccaro-Alamin, 1998; Thayer, 2000).

When learners feel that they do not belong and they do not have narratives from positive role models to combat those feelings, the student begins to doubt their own academic capabilities and this plays a part in lowering these students' aspirations for education (Warburton, Burgarin, & Nunez, 2001). In addition, when the learners are surrounded by family and community members who have little to no experience in educational achievement, as stated by Striplin (1999) and Thayer (2000), these connections, at times, dissuade the students from seeking or continuing their education. In effect, they've created a multifaceted vortex of hopelessness within the population.

Conclusion Two: Education is for Whites

The second conclusion is that socioeconomically disadvantaged African American adults in this study embrace and disperse culturally based beliefs that education

was for Whites and that obtaining an education would separate them from the comfort and security of their racial group members (Cuthbert, 1942/1987). This conclusion addresses the first research question: How do class and race membership affect the beliefs of socioeconomically disadvantaged African American adults towards educational participation?

Participants in this study expressed the notion of education not being "made" for Blacks. They point to issues of racism and used instances such as the few educated Blacks they do know either not being financially successful or being financially successful and separating themselves from the Black community. They also based these beliefs on their previous experiences within predominately White schools, being taught by White teachers. They witnessed their families struggle against racism and faced their own battles with racism. Participants believe that racism is entrenched within the very fabric of America and that includes the educational system. Because of these reasons the participants had a deep mistrust of the educational system and particularly Whites working in education. Terrell and Terrell have coined a (1981) term for these beliefs, "cultural mistrust." Cultural Mistrust is the predisposition of Blacks to mistrust Whites, in part because of the historical ramifications of slavery. An example of this belief is demonstrated by Blacks underperforming on standardized and achievement test because they do not trust White to assess them objectively. This has also been attributed to Blacks not expecting to gain employment in higher paying occupations or attaining to higher educational levels.

Another way to view this conclusion is through Ogbu's (2004) explanation of the collective problems of status for minorities, specifically Blacks in America. Ogbu (2004)

states that through the tenants of a majority-profited process of involuntary incorporation into society, instrumental discrimination, social subordination, and expressive mistreatment by the "dominate" group, Whites, have stigmatized the culture of Blacks to be inferior. Due to this stigmatization, Blacks have ascertained that they do not fit into the dominate culture and have, in many cases, become bitter, knowing that they cannot simply avoid their forced placement into this proposed subservient group membership. One of the possible responses to this forced status is Blacks, separately and collectively, embracing their exclusion from the dominate culture and effectively creating an oppositional culture (Ogbu, 1974, 1978), which includes rejecting the systems set in place for educational and occupational success, leading to financial success.

Specific to education, these actions may materialize in disenfranchised members, in race and class, limiting their school activity involvement and more importantly lowering their aspirations for academic success, believing those acts to be for "Whites." Minority members who participate and succeed in these actions are said to be "acting White" (Fordham & Ogbu, 1986).

Wilson (1978, 1985) theorized that when Blacks, with higher incomes than their community members, moved from the community it initiated an oppositional behavior in poor Blacks and also caused the creation of an "underclass" system within the collective Black community. An effect of this move is that low-income Blacks rarely come in contact with educated and financially successful Blacks, who previously had notable positions in community organizations, churches, and occupations. The lack of positive role models left the communities void in the transfer of knowledge of how to succeed, that had once been passed from generation to generation. Pointing to their limited

experience of knowing Blacks who are academically and financially successful and those who are moving from the Black community, the socioeconomically disadvantaged adults in this study held the viewpoint that achieving success causes you to retreat from your own culture and community. Consequently, this has led to many of the participants not wanting to participate in educational opportunities.

Conclusion Three: No Link between Education and Success

The third and final conclusion that emerged from this study is that socioeconomically disadvantaged African Americans in this study do not accept that there is a link between education and success but instead feel that any life success is made random and chaotic by the forces of racism and classism. This conclusion addresses the second research question: What culturally based concepts or values do socioeconomically disadvantaged African Americans have regarding the significance/importance of education?

On the surface, this conclusion could be linked to Conclusion Two (*Education is For Whites*) and the lack of educated role models within the Black community as causation. As a matter of fact, you could deem this conclusion as being an outcome of the previous two conclusions. However, there is a deeper underlining reason for this conclusion. The participants in this study spoke about the uncertainty of pursuing an education, noting that achieving a higher education doesn't guarantee financial stability and decided to work now rather than later. This perception is supported by the literature regarding low-income and first generation student's and family's rationale to enter the workforce rather than to pursue high education. Many families, instead of supporting educational aspirations, regarded education as being "not a big deal" or important. The

low-income and first-generation families in this study also placed an emphasis on the

potential student assisting the family by working and thus adding to the family's income

(Brooks-Terry, 1998; Terenzini & Pascarella, 1994; Terenzini, Rendon, & Blimling,

1996). Participants in this study also conveyed that even if you beat the odds, of being

low-income, and obtain a degree of higher education, you are still Black and the issues of

racism are too overwhelming for Blacks to truly be successful on the level of their White

counterparts. According to Mickelson's (1990) study, Black students were correct in their

perception that their efforts in education were not rewarded or recognized in the same

manner than Whites. Studies such as Mickelson's (1990) simply adds more data for

low-income Black's distrust in the system because of racism and classism causing the

participants to feel that they have little to no control over their present and future

circumstances. Mickelson (1990) and Ogbu (1978) also noted that employment in lower

paying jobs and fewer promotions for the disenfranchised are realities that shape a

student's perception of the value and significance of education that it also affects their

academic behavior. Succinctly stated, Blacks may underperform because they do not see

how education is directly linked to success.

Race and class affect the beliefs of the importance/significance of education on

socioeconomically disadvantaged African American adults, thus, affecting their

educational aspirations and that the aspirations of their family and community.

Socioeconomically disadvantaged African Americans receive little to no encouragement

or support from family and perceive the pitfalls of racism and classism to be to

insurmountable.

Implications and Recommendations for Future Research

The implications for this study are directly connected to the literature regarding race and class membership's effect on education. Theoretical and practical implications, along with recommendations for future research will be discussed in this section.

Implications for Theory

The findings in this study have implications for critical race theory, specifically when used in adult education. Critical race theory focuses on the oppressive concepts that emerge when concentrating on issues of race and the intersection of race with class, gender and sexual orientation (Bell, 1995; Ladson-Billings, 1998, 2009). While adult education has embraced the critical theories such as feminist and Black feminist theory, few studies examine the participation of Black adults in formal educational opportunities through the lens of critical race theory.

Although critical race theory was used for the analysis of this study, this study also has implications for adult learning theory. Through the many varied and adapted versions of the adult learning theory, many of the assumptions would not apply to first-generation and low-income Black adults. This study's findings illustrate how applying the conventions of the adult learning theory may be problematic if not recognizing the complexities and many dimensions of race and class.

Conducting a research study that utilized the combined theories of adult learner theory with critical race theory would be an effective entry in understanding the ways in which race and class play a significant part in the adult learner's education or barriers to education. Comparably a study that examines the complexity of race and class, along

with gender, applying tenants from feminist theory, would better inform institutions of the differing needs of the adult learner.

Implications for Practice

In addition to the theoretical implications, this study also presents implications for practice within adult education. As stated earlier in his chapter and also within the literature review, the adult student population in higher education has rapidly increased. First-generation and low-income students are attending higher education at a larger rate than in previous years. From the literature we know that these students more than likely to not have solid role models, family support or an understanding of intricacies of attending and graduating from an institution of higher education. Adult educators, conscious of these characteristics, should take this opportunity to provide service to these students via mentorship initiatives designed to decrease the high drop-out rate of this disenfranchised group. These mentorship programs could provide students with the possibility of connecting with other students, and faculty, if possible, who are from similar backgrounds, similar family lives, and who have related interests.

Specifically for the classroom, and due to many of the students having been out of the classroom for a number of years and possibly not being comfortable in their new setting, educators should "ease" adult low-income and first generation students through the transition of a new learning environment. One way to "ease" the students through this new experience is to offer opportunities for the students to engage in "in-class" or group activities in an effort to subdue the potential anxiety and confusion of entering or re-entering post-secondary education.

Understanding that these students are likely under financial constraints, educators should present a curriculum that allows for material to be more accessible to each student, via technology (i.e. e-reserve, blackboard, e-blogs). Another suggestion is providing students with the opportunity to meet in a computer or technology lab to research and discuss curriculum based topics. Providing access to technology would enrich the student's experience while increasing their class participation and their engagement in the coursework.

More importantly, the educator should assess the needs of the class by requesting the students, by name or anonymously, inform the educator of what they expect from the course, the best way in which they learn new information, whether they are more comfortable with group or individual assignments, and if they have any questions that had not been previously answered by the instructor about their role and the curriculum. The instructor should then accommodate, as best they can, the learning styles and expectations of the student. In addition, a best practice would be to assess the student's experience at the mid-semester also. This will afford the instructor another opportunity to observe the effectiveness of the curriculum and also provide another method for the students to feel invested in their knowledge.

Institutional support in the form of presenting former graduates from first-generation and low-income backgrounds to speak to current students and discuss issues that are unique to this group membership would be beneficial. Another form of institutional support could be sponsoring events tied to the low-income, first-generation community in the city. Doing so would allow the current students to interact with

communities similar to theirs while also providing the community with positive role models, inspiring others in the community to pursue to higher levels in education.

Recommendations for Future Research

In Closson's (2010) critique and discussion on critical race theory's place in adult education, the researcher mentions that "There clearly has been considerable discussion of race and racism in adult education" (p. 262). Indeed it has, seemingly more garnered to the historical place African Americans have in the field. Closson (2010) also noted that at that time, the only handbook that had devoted an entire chapter to the topic of race and racism was the *Handbook of Adult and Continuing Education* (Wilson & Hayes, 2000). Interestingly, later that year a handbook entirely devoted to race was published, *The Handbook of Race and Adult Education: A Resource for Dialogue on Racism* (Sheared, Johnson-Bailey, Colin, Peterson, & Brookfield, 2010). Despite these notable contributions on race, research concentrating on low-income and first-generation Black adult learners is scarce, even though previous literature has indicated that this group has unique characteristics that should be explored.

This study is an addition to a gap in the literature on first-generation and low-income students by focusing on Black adults. Future research concentrating on adults who belong to differing racial minority groups, alongside their White counterparts, would definitely benefit the field by providing a more specific understanding of what is needed to reach individuals within the racial minority groups and the adult first-generation, low-income groups as a whole.

Chapter Summary

This chapter provided a summary of the study, discussed how the study relates to the literature, and presented the conclusions derived from the analysis of the data and findings. Implications for the theory and practice in adult education were provided, along with future recommendations for research in the field. The following closing remarks are my thoughts about the experience of researching a subject and interviewing participants that mirror my background.

Closing Remarks

At the beginning of this research study, I viewed "low-income," "poor," and "poverty" interchangeably. Not fully understanding the intricacies of each and unconsciously dismissing, in my identifying as a rural low-income group member, how these terms collectively and individually permeate through the cultural mentality of first-generation Black students.

My having access to positive, educated Black role models, who did not move away from our community after attaining educational and financial success, situated me in a place of privilege, well, at least amongst those belonging to the lower-income class. Although I was questioned about my perceived need to continue my education, I did not lack support from the majority of my community, family or friends. My educational achievements throughout the years were acknowledged and praised and my aspirations to obtain a higher education was encouraged.

 My community was one of diverse educational levels, family incomes, and occupations. There was not a time that I went to bed unfed. I do not have the experience of having to walk miles to and from locations. I was never homeless nor did I have to

live with other family members. I lived in a two-parent household and both parents worked, full-time, throughout my life.

Although my parents would be considered either "uneducated" or "undereducated," the message of the importance of education was prevalent in my home and community. So it is with this new understanding that I realize that many of my educational successes and my aspirations, thus far, are greatly attributed to the foundation instilled in me from my family and community. This has been an experience that money couldn't buy.

REFERENCES

Adler, P., & Adler, P. (1987). *Membership roles in field research*. Newbury Park, CA: Sage.

Adult Learner. (2013). *American Council on Education* (ACE). Retrieved from http://www.acenet.edu/higher-education/topics/Pages/Adult-Learners.aspx

Alasuutari P (1997). The discursive construction of personality. In: A. Lieblich & R. Josselson (Eds.). *The Narrative Study of Lives* (Vol. 5, pp. 1-20). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.

Allen, W. R., & Haniff, N. Z. (1991). Race, gender and academic performance in U.S. Higher Education. In W. R. Allen, E. G. Epps, & N. Z. Haniff (Eds.), *College in Black and White: African American students in predominantly White and in historically Black Public Universities*. State University of New York Press.

Almakhamreh, S., & Hundt, G. L. (2010). An examination of models of social work intervention for use with displaced Iraqi households in Jordan. *European Journal of Social Work*, 1369-1457.

Archer, L. (2002). 'it's easier that you're a girl and that you're Asian': interactions of 'race' and gender between researchers and participants. *Feminist Review, 72*, 108-138.

Aronson, P. (2008). Breaking barriers or locked out? Class-based perceptions and experiences of postsecondary education. In J. T. Mortimer (Ed.). Social class and transitions to adulthood. *New Directions for Child and Adolescent Development*, 119, 41-54.

Asselin, M. E. (2003). Insider research: Issues to consider when doing qualitative

research in your own setting. *Journal for Nurses in Staff Development, 19*(2), 99-

103.

Aud, S., Fox, M. A., & KewalRamani, A. (2010). *Status and trends in the education of*

racial and ethnic groups (NCES 2010-015). U.S. Department of Education.

National Center of Education Statistics. Washington, DC: U.S. Government

Printing Office. Retrieved from http://nces.ed.gov/pubs2010/2010015.pdf

Aud, S., Hussar, W., Johnson, F., Kena, G., Roth, E., Manning, E., Wang, X., & Zhang,

J. (2012). *The condition of education 2012* (NCES 2012-045). U.S. Department of

Education. National Center of Education Statistics. Washington, DC: U.S.

Government Printing Office. Retrieved from

http://nces.ed.gov/pubs2012/2012045.pdf

Ballard, A. B. (1973). *The education of Black folk: The Afro-American struggle for*

knowledge in White America. New York, NY: Harper & Row Publishers.

Banks, J. (1998). The lives and values of researchers: Implications for educating citizens

in a multicultural society. *Educational Researcher, 27*(7), 4-17.

Barnett, M. (2004). A qualitative analysis of family support and interaction among Black

college students at an Ivy League university. *The Journal of Negro Education,*

73(1), 53-68.

Bell, D. A. (1995). Who's afraid of critical race theory. *University of Illinois Law Review*,

893.

Bennett, Jr., L. (1993). *Before the Mayflower: A history of Black America*. New York,

NY: Penguin Books.

Bhatti, G. (2006). Ogbu and the debate on educational achievement: An exploration of the links between education, migration, identity and belonging. *Intercultural Education, 17*(2), 133-146.

Bishop, R. (2008). Freeing ourselves from neocolonial domination in research: A Kaupapa Mãori approach to creating knowledge. In N. K. Denzin & Y.S. Lincoln (Eds.), *The Landscape of Qualitative Research*, (3rd ed.). (pp. 145-183). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.

Black, N. (1989). *Social feminism*. Ithaca, NY:Cornell University Press.

Bloom, J. (2007). (Mis)reading social class in the journey towards college: Youth development in urban America. *Teachers College Record, 109*(2), 343-368.

Bogdan, R. C., & Biklen, S. K. (1992). *Qualitative research for education: An introduction to theory and methods* (2nd ed.). Boston, MA: Allyn and Bacon.

Boland-Perez, C., Lebanon, P., & Cobb, P. (2005). Race-Matching: Interviewers' reactions to the race-matching process. *Conference Papers -- American Association for Public Opinion Research,* 1.

Boshier, R. (1971), Motivational orientations of adult education participants: A factor analytic exploration of Houle's typology. *Adult Education, 21*, 3-26.

Boulard, G. (2004). College access still tied to income, report says. *Black Issues in Higher Education, 21*(7), 6.

Bowen, W. G., & Bok, D. (1998). *The shape of the river: Long-term consequences of considering race in college and university admissions*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.

Braddock, J. H., & McPartland, J. M. (1988). Some cost and benefit considerations for Black college students attending predominately White versus predominately Black universities. In M.t. Nettles (Ed.), *Toward Black undergraduate student equality in American Higher Education*. Westport, CT: Greenwood Press.

Brookfield, S. (2005). *The power of critical theory: liberating adult learning and teaching* (1st ed.). San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.

Brooks-Terry, M (1998). Tracing the disadvantages of first-generation college students: An application of Sussman's option sequence model. In S. Steinmetz (Ed.), *Family and support systems across the life span* (pp. 121 – 134). New York: Plenum.

Brown-Nagin, T. (1999).The transformation of a social movement into law? The SCLC and NAACP's campaigns for civil rights reconsidered in light of the educational activism of Septima Clark. *Women's History Review, 8*(1), 81-137.

Butchart, R. E. (1990). Schooling for a freed people: The education of adult freemen, 1861-1871. In H. G. Neufeldt & L. McGee (Eds.). *Education of the African American adult: An historical overview* (pp. 45-58). Westport, CT: Greenwood Press.

Butler-Kisber, L. (2010). *Qualitative inquiry: Thematic, narrative and arts-informed perspectives.* Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.

Cain, R. A. (1995). Alain Leroy Locke: Crusader and advocate for the education of African American adults. *The Journal of Negro Education, 64*(1), 87-99.

Carneval, A. P., Rose, S. J., & Cheah, B., (2011). *The college payoff: Education, occupation, lifetime earnings*. Washington, D.C.: The Georgetown University Center on Education and the Workforce.

Carter, D. J. (1999). The impact of institutional choice and environments on African American and White students' degree expectations. *Research in Higher Education, 40*(1), 17–41.

Chapman, C., Laird, J., Ifill, N., & KewalRamani, A. (2011). *Trends in high school dropout and completion rates in the United States: 1972-2009 – Compendium Report* (NCES 2012-006). U.S. Department of Education. National Center of Education Statistics. Retrieved from http://nces.ed.gov/pubsearch/pubsinfo.asp?pubid=2012006

Charmaz, K. (2005). Grounded theory in the 21st century: Applications for advancing social justice studies. In N. K. Denzin & Y. S. Lincoln (Eds.), *The Sage handbook of qualitative research* (3rd ed.), (pp. 507-535). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Chen, X. (2005). *First-generation students in post-secondary education: A look at their college transcripts* (NCES 2005-171). U.S. Department of Education. National Center of Education Statistics. Retrieved from http://nces.ed.gov/pubsearch/

Choy, S.P. (2001). *Findings from The Condition of Education 2001: Students Whose Parents Did Not Go to College: Postsecondary Access, Persistence, and Attainment* (NCES 2001−126). U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics. Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office.

Clandinin, D. J., & Connelly, F. M. (2000). *Narrative inquiry: Experience and story in qualitative research*. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass Publishers.

Clandinin, D., Murphy, M., Huber, J., & Orr, A. (2009). Negotiating narrative inquiries: Living in a tension-filled midst. *Journal of Educational Research, 103*(2), 81-90.

Clinton, C., & Lunardini, C. (2000). *The Columbia guide to American women in the nineteenth century.* New York, NY: Columbia University Press.

Closson, R. B. (2010). Critical race theory and adult education. *Adult Education Quarterly, 60*(3), 261-283.

Coffman, S. (2011). A social constructionist view of issues confronting first-generation college students. *New Directions for Teaching & Learning,* 127, 81-90.

Colin III, S. A. (1996). Marcus Garvey: Africentric adult education for selfethnic reliance. In E. Peterson (Ed.), *Freedom road: Adult education of African Americans* (pp. 41-65). Malabar, FL: Krieger

Colin, III, S. A. J., & Guy, T. C. (1998). An Africentric interpretive model of curriculum orientations for course development in graduate programs in adult education. *PAACE Journal of Lifelong Learning*, 7, 43-55.

Coloma, R. S. (2008). Border crossing subjectivities and research: Through the prism of feminists of color. *Race, Ethnicity and Education, 11*(1), 11-27.

Comer, J. P. (1968). The social power of the Negro. In F. B. Barbour (Ed.), *The Black power revolt* (pp. 72-84). Boston: Extending Horizons.

Conley, D. (1999). *Being Black, living in the red: Race, wealth, and social policy in America*. Los Angeles, CA: University of California Press Berkeley.

Connelly, F. M., & Clandinin, D. T. (1990). Stories of experience and narrative inquiry. *Educational Researcher, 19*(5), 2-14.

Cook, M., & Evans, W. (2000). Families or schools? Explaining the convergence in White and Black academic performance. *Journal of Labor Economics, 18*(4), 729-754.

Cooke, R., Barkham, M., Audin, K., Bradley, M., & Davy, J. (2004). How social class differences affect students' experience of university. *Journal of Further & Higher Education, 28*(4), 407-421.

Creswell, J. W. (2009). *Research design: A qualitative, quantitative, and mixed method approaches.* Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.

Crosby, O. (2000). Degrees to dollars: Earnings of college graduates in 1998. *Occupational Outlook Quarterly, 44*(4), 30.

Cross, P. (1981). *Adults as learners: Increasing participation and facilitating learning*. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.

Crotty, M. (1998). T*he foundations of social research: Meaning and perspective in the research process*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publication.

Cuthbert, M. V. (1942/1987). *Education and marginality: A study of the Negro woman college graduate*. New York, NY: Garland Press.

Darling, R.A., & Smith, M.S. (2007). First-generation college students: First-year challenges. In M.S. Hunter, B. McCalla-Wriggins, & E.R White (Eds.), *Academic Advising: New insights for teaching and learning in the first year* (pp. 203-211). Manhattan, KS: NACADA Monographs.

Davidson, C. (2009). Transcription: Imperatives for qualitative research. *International Journal of Qualitative Methods, 8*(2), 35-52.

Diamond, J. B. & Gomez, K. (2004). African American parents' educational orientations: The importance of social class and parents' perceptions of schools. *Education and Urban Society, 36*(4), 383-427.

Douglas, T. M., & Peck, C. (2013). Education by any means necessary: Peoples of African descent and community-based pedagogical spaces. *Educational Studies: Journal Of The American Educational Studies Association*, *49*(1), 67-91.

Dunn, F. (1993). The educational philosophies of Washington, Du Bois, and Houston: Laying the foundations for Afro-centrism and multiculturalism. *The Journal of Negro Education, 62*, 24-34.

Duranti, A. (2007). Transcripts, like shadows on a wall. *Mind, Culture and Activity, 13*(4), 301-310.

Emerson, R. M., Fretz, R. I., & Shaw, L. L. (2011). *Writing ethnographic fieldnotes* (2 ed.). Chicago, IL: The University of Chicago Press.

Engle, J., & Tinto, V. (2008). *Moving beyond access: College success for low-income, first-generation students*. Retrieved from The Pell Institute for the Study of Opportunity in Education website: http://www.pellinstitute.org/downloads/publications-Moving_Beyond_Access_2008.pdf

Feinstein, L., Duckworth, K. and Sabates, R. (2004). *A model of the inter-generational effects of parental education: Research brief RCB01-04*. Nottingham: Department for Education and Skills. Retrieved from http://webarchive.nationalarchives.gov.uk/20130401151715/https://www.education.gov.uk/publications/eOrderingDownload/RCB01-04.pdf

Fleming, J. (1984). *Blacks in college*. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.

Foley, D. (2004). Ogbu's theory of academic disengagement: its evolution and its critics. *Intercultural Education, 15*(4), 385-397.

Fordham, S., & Ogbu, J. U. (1986). Black students' school success: Coping with the "burden of 'acting White'". *The Urban Review, 18*(2), 176-206.

Franklin, J. H. (1969). *From slavery to freedom: A history of Negro Americans* (3rd ed.). New York, NY: Random House.

Franklin, V. P. (1990). Education for life: Adult education programs for African American in Northern cities, 1900-1942. In H. G. Neufeldt & L. McGee (Eds.). *Education of the African American adult: An historical overview* (pp. 113-134). Westport, CT: Greenwood Press.

Friedman, M., & Friedman, B. (2006). *Settlement houses: Improving the social welfare of America's immigrants*. New York, NY: The Rosen Publishing Group, Inc.

Glaser, B. & Strauss, A. (1967). *The constant comparative method of qualitative analysis. The discovery of grounded theory; strategies for qualitative research*. Chicago, IL: Adline.

Goetz, J. P., & LeCompte, M. D. (1984). *Ethnography and qualitative design in educational research*. Orlando, FL: Academic Press.

Gosa, T. L., & Alexander, K. L. (2007). Family (dis)advantage and the educational prospects of better off African American youth: How race still matters. *Teachers College Record, 109*(2), 285-321.

Graduation gains. (2013). *Diverse: Issues in Higher Education, 30*(4), 5.

Grant, N. L. (1990). Adult education for Black during the New Deal and World War II: The federal programs. In H. G. Neufeldt & L. McGee (Eds.). *Education of the African American adult: An historical overview* (pp. 211-232). Westport, CT: Greenwood Press.

Greg, T. (n.d). Low-income college students are increasingly left behind. *USA Today*. Retrieved from EBSCOhost.

Guba, E. G., & Lincoln, Y. S. (1992). *Effective evaluation: Improving the usefulness of evaluation results through responsive and naturalistic approaches*. New York, NY: John Wiley & Sons.

Guba, E. G., & Lincoln, Y. S. (1994). Competing paradigms in qualitative research. In N. K. Denzin & Y. S. Lincoln (Eds.), *The handbook of qualitative research* (pp. 105–117). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Guy, T. (1996). The American association of adult education and the experiments in African American adult education. In E. Peterson (Ed.), *Freedom road: Adult education of African Americans.* Malabar, FL: Krieger.

Guy, T. C., & Brookfield, S. (2009). W. E. B. Du Bois's basic American Negro creed and the associates in Negro folk education: A case of repressive tolerance in the censorship of radical Black discourse on adult education. *Adult Education Quarterly, 60*(1), 65-76.

Gyant, L. (1996). Educating head, hand, and heart: Anna Cooper and Nannie Burroughs. *Thresholds in education*, 10, 3-9.

Halualani, R. T. (2010). Interactant-based definitions of intercultural interaction at a multicultural university. *The Howard Journal of Communications, 21* (3), 247-272.

Hamilton, C. W. (1996). Nature of motivation for educational achievement among African American female college students. *Urban Education, 31*(1), 72-90.

Hamilton, E. (1990), Post-World War II manpower training programs. In H. G. Neufeldt & L. McGee (Eds.). *Education of the African American adult: An historical overview* (pp233-247). Westport, CT: Greenwood Press.

Harrison, M. S., & Thomas, K. M. (2009). The hidden prejudice in selection: A research investigation on skin color bias. *Journal of Applied Social Psychology*, *39*(1), 134-168.

Hayes, E. & Colin III, S. A. J. (1994). Racism and sexism in the United States: Fundamental issues. In Hayes, E. & Colin, S.A.J. III (Eds.), Confronting racism and sexism (pp. 5-15). Creating Environments for Effective Adult Learning. *New Directions for Adult & Continuing Education*, 50, 5-15.

Hendricks, W. A. (1998). *Gender, race, and politics in the Midwest: Black club women in Illinois*. Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press.

Heningburg, A. (1945). Adult education and the National Urban League. *The Journal of Negro Education, 14*(3), 396-402.

Hertz, R. (1997). *Reflexivity and voice*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Hill, S. (1987). *Trends in adult education: 1969-1984*. U.S. Department of Education. National Center of Education Statistics. Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office

Hoberman, J. (2000). The price of "Black Dominance." *Society, 37*(3), 49-56.

Hochschild, J. L. (2003). Social class in public school. *Journal of Social Issues, 58*(4), 821-840.

Horn, L., & Nuñez, A. M. (2000). *Mapping the Road to College: First-Generation Students' Math Track, Planning Strategies, and Context of Support* (NCES 2000– 153). U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics. Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office

Houle, C. O. (1961). *The inquiring mind*. Madison, WI: University of Wisconsin Press.

Hsiao, K. P. (1992). First-Generation College Students (ERIC ED351079). *Office of Educational Research and Improvement*. Los Angeles, CA: ERIC

Ihle, E. L. (1990). Education of the free Blacks before the civil war. In H. G. Neufeldt & L. McGee (Eds.), *Education of the African American Adult* (pp. 11- 23). Westport, CT: Greenwood Press.

Immerwahr, J., & Foleno, T. (2000). *Great expectations: How the public and parents- White, African American, and Hispanic-view higher education*. Retrieved from The National Center for Public Policy and Higher Education website: http://www.highereducation.org/reports/expectations/expectations.pdf

Institute for Higher Education Policy. (2011). *Initial college attendance of low-income young adults* (June Report). Retrieved from Institute for Higher Education Policy website: http://www.ihep.org/publications/publications-detail.cfm?id=145. *Intercultural Education*, *15*(4), 385-397. doi:10.1080/1467598042000313412

Ishitani, T. T. (2006). Studying attrition and degree completion behavior among first-generation college students in the United States. *Journal of Higher Education*, 861-885.

James, F. (1990). Booker T. Washington and George Washington Carver: A tandem of adult educators at Tuskegee. In H. G. Neufeldt & L. McGee (Eds.). *Education of the African American adult: An historical overview* (pp. 61-74). Westport, CT: Greenwood Press.

James, J. (2012). The College Wage Premium. *Economic Commentary*, No. 2012-10, 1-4.

Johnson, K. A. (2009). "In service for the common good": Anna Julia Cooper and adult education. *African American Review, 43*(1), 45-56.

Johnson-Bailey, J. (1999). The ties that bind and the shackles that separate: race, gender, class, and color in a research process. *International Journal of Qualitative Studies in Education (QSE), 12*(6), 659-670.

Johnson-Bailey, J. (2004). Enjoining positionality and power in narrative work: Balancing contentious and modulating forces. In K. deMarrais, & S. Lapan (Eds.), *Foundations for research: Methods of inquiry in education and the social sciences* (pp. 123-138). Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.

Johnson-Bailey, J. (2006). African American in adult education: The Harlem Renaissance revisited. *Adult Education Quarterly, 56*(2), 102-118.

Johnson-Bailey, J. (2010). Learning in the dimension of otherness: A tool for insight and empowerment. *New Directions for Adult & Continuing Education, 126*, 77-88.

Johnson-Bailey, J., & Cervero, R. M. (2008). Different worlds and divergent paths: Academic careers defined by race and gender. *Harvard Educational Review, 78*(2), 311-332.

Johnstone, J., & Rivera, A. (1965). *Volunteers for learning*. Hawthorne, NY: Aldine.

Jones, B. W. (1982). Mary Church Terrell and the National Association of Colored Women, 1896-1901. *The Journal of Negro History, 67*(1), 20-33.

Jones-Wilson, F. C., Ashruy, C. A., Okazawa-Rey, M., Anderson, D. K., Jacobs, S. M., & Fultz, M. (1996). *Encyclopedia of African-American education*. Westport, CT: Greenwood Publishing Group, Inc.

Jud, G., & Walker, J. L. (1977). Discrimination by race and class and the impact of school quality. *Social Science Quarterly, 57*(4), 731-749.

Kennedy, S. (1959/1990). *Jim Crow guide: The way it was*. Boca Raton, FL: Florida Atlantic University Press.

Kerbow, D., & Bernhardt, A. (1993). Parent intervention in the school: The context of minority involvement. In B. Schneider & J. E. Coleman (Eds.), *Parents, their children and schools (pp. 115-146)*. Boulder, CO: Westview.

Kett, J. A. (1994). *The pursuit of knowledge under difficulties: From self-improvement to adult education in America, 1750-1990*. Standford, CA: Standford University Press.

Key events in Black higher education. (2013) *The Journal of Blacks in Higher Education*. Retrieved from http://www.jbhe.com/chronology

Kim, K., & Creighton, S. (2000). Participation in adult education in the United States: 1998-1999. *Education Statistics Quarterly, 2*(1), 123-128.

Kim, K., Hagedorn, M., Williamson, J., & Chapman, C. (2004). *Participation in adult education and lifelong learning: 2000-2001* (NCES 20004-050). U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics. Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office.

Kim, M. M., & Conrad, C. G. (2006). The impact of historically Black college and university on the academic success of African American students. *Research in Higher Education, 47*(4), 399-427.

Kim, S. N. (2008). Whose voice is it anyway? Rethinking the oral history method in accounting research on race, ethnicity and gender. *Critical Perspectives on Accounting, 19*(8), 1346-1369.

Knighton, T., & Mirza, S. (2002). Postsecondary participation; The effects of parents' education and household income. *Education Quarterly Review, 8*(3), 25-32.

Kvale, S., & Brinkmann, S. (2009).*InterViews: Learning the craft of qualitative research interviewing* (2nd ed). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage

Ladson-Billings, G. (1998). Just what is critical race theory and what's it doing in a nice field like education? *International Journal of Qualitative Studies in Education, 11*(1), 7-24.

Ladson-Billings, G. (2009). Critical race theory in education. The Routledge International *Handbook of Critical Education*, 110.

Lareau, A. (1987). Social class differences in family-school relationships: The importance of cultural capital. *Sociology of Education*, 73-85.

Lareau, A. (2002). Invisible inequality: Social class and childrearing in Black families and White families. *American Sociological Review*, 67, 747-776.

Lareau, A., & Horvat, E. M. (1999). Moments of social inclusion and exclusion race, class, and cultural capital in family-school relationships. *Sociology of education*, 37-53.

Lavis, V. (2010). Multiple Researcher Identities: Highlighting Tensions and Implications for Ethical Practice in Qualitative Interviewing. *Qualitative Research in Psychology, 7*(4), 316-331. doi:10.1080/14780880902929506

Leipziger, H. M. (1916). Education for adults through public lectures in New York City. *Annals of the American academy of political and social science, 67,* 210-217.

Liamputtong, P. (2010) *Performing qualitative cross-cultural research*. New York, NY: Cambridge University Press.

Lifetime Earnings and Higher Education--A Response to the Higher Education Bubble Debate. (2011). *Presidency, 14*(3), 40.

Lissak, R. (1983). Myth and reality: The pattern of relationship between the Hull House circle and the "new immigrants" on Chicago's west side, 1890-1919. *Journal of American Ethnic History, 2*(2), 21-50.

Lohfink, M. M., & Paulsen, M. B. (2005) Comparing the determinants of persistence for first-generation and continuing-generation students. *Journal of College Student Development, 46*(4), 409-428.

Lovett, B. L. (1990). Black adult education during the Civil War, 1861-1865. In H.G. Neufeldt & L. M 1cGee (Eds.), *Education of the African American adult: An historical overview* (pp. 27-43). Westport, CT: Greenwood Press.

Lynch, K., & O'Riordan, C. (1998). In equality in higher education: A study of class barrier. *British Journal of Sociology of Education, 19*(4), 445-478.

Maxwell, J. A. (2005). *Qualitative research design: An interactive approach* (2nd.).

Thousand Oaks, GA: Sage Publications.

McLaurin, M. A. (1978). *The Knights of Labor in the south*. Westport, CT: Greenwood

Press.

Merriam, S. B. (1998). *Qualitative research and case study applications in education*.

San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

Merriam, S. B., Johnson-Bailey, J., Lee, M., Kee, Y., Ntseane, G., & Muhamad, M.

(2001). Power and positionality: negotiating insider/outsider status within and

across cultures. *International Journal of Lifelong Education, 20*(5), 405-416.

doi:10.1080/02601370110059537

Merriam, Sharan B. (1998). *Qualitative research and case study applications in

education*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

Mickelson, R. (1990). The attitude-achievement paradox among Black adolescents.

Sociology of Education, 63(1), 44-61.

Mishler, E. (1991). *Research interviewing: Context and narrative. Cambridge*, Mass:

Harvard University Press.

Morstain, B. R., & Smart, J. C. (1974). Reason for participation in adult education

courses: A multivariate analysis of group differences. *Adult Education, 24*(2), 83-

98.

Myrdal, G. (1944). An American dilemma: The Negro problem and modern democracy.

New York, NY: Harper.

Nesbit, T. (2006). What's the matter with social class? Adult Education Quarterly, 56(3),

171 – 187.

Nunez, A. M., & Cuccaro-Alamin, S. (1998). *First generation students: Undergraduates whose parents never enrolled in postsecondary education*. U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics (NCES). Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office.

Ogbu, J. (1974). *The next generation: An ethnography of education in an urban neighborhood*. New York, NY: Academic Press.

Ogbu JU (1978). *Minority Education and Caste: The American System in Cross-Cultural Perspective*. New York, NY: Academic Press.

Ogbu, J. U. (1981). Origins of human competence: A cultural-ecological perspective. *Child Development, 52*(2), 413-429.

Ogbu, J. U. (2003). *Black students in an affluent suburb: A study of academic disengagement*. Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erllbaum.

Ogbu, J. U. (2004). Collective Identity and the Burden of "Acting White" in Black History, Community, and Education. *Urban Review*, *36*(1), 1-35.

Pascarella, E. T. (1980). Student-faculty informal contact and college outcomes. *Review of Educational Research, 50*(4), 545–595.

Pascarella, E. T., & Chapman, D. (1983). A multi-institutional path analytical validation of Tinto's model of college withdrawal. *American Educational Research Journal, 20*(1), 87–102.

Pascarella, E. T., & Terenzini, P. (1978). The relation of students' precollege characteristics and freshman year experience to voluntary attrition. *Research in Higher Education, 9*(4), 347–366.

Pascarella, E. T., & Terenzini, P. (1980). Predicting freshman persistence and voluntary dropout decisions from a theoretical model. *Journal of Higher Education, 51*(1), 60–75.

Pascarella, E. T., & Terenzini, P. (1983). Path analytic validation of Tinto's model. *Journal of Educational Psychology, 75*(2), 215–226.

Pascarella, E. T., & Terenzini, P. (2005). *How college affects students* (2nd ed.). Jossey-Bass.

Pascarella, E. T., Wolniak, G. C., Flowers, L. A., & Pierson, C.T. (2004) The role of race in the development of plans for a graduate degree. *The Review of Higher Education, 27*(3), 299–320.

Patton, L. D., & Catching, C. (2009). Teaching while Black: Narratives of African American student affairs faculty. *International Journal of Qualitative Studies In Education (QSE), 22*(6), 713-728. doi:10.1080/09518390903333897

Patton, M. Q. (2002). *Qualitative research and evaluation methods*. (3rd ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.

Paulsen, M. B., & St. John, E. P. (2002). Social class and college costs: Examining the financial nexus between college choice and persistence. *The Journal of Higher Education, 73*(2), 190-236.

Perna, L. W. (2004). Understanding the decision to enroll in graduate school: Sex and racial/ethnic group differences. *The Journal of Higher Education, 75*(5), 487–527.

Perlmann, J. (1987). A piece of the educational pie: Reflections and new evidence on Black and immigrant schooling since 1880. *Sociology of Education, 60*(1), 54-61.

Peterson, E. A., (1996). Introduction. In E.A. Peterson (Ed.), *Freedom road: Adult education of African Americans* (pp.1-4). Malabar, FL: Krieger Publishing.

Pidgeon, N., & Henwood, K. (2004). Grounded theory. In M. Hardy & A. Bryman (Eds.), *Handbook of data analysis* (pp. 625-648). London: Sage Publications.

Potts, E. (1996). W. E. B. Du Bois and Booker T. Washington. In E. Peterson (Ed.), *Freedom road: Adult education of African Americans*. Malabar, FL: Krieger.

Quraishi, M. (2008). Researching Muslim prisoners. *International Journal of Social Research Methodology, 11*(5), 453-467. doi:10.1080/13645570701622199

Ramji, H. (2007). Dynamics of religion and gender amongst young British Muslims. *Sociology, 41*(6), 1171-1189.

Raper, A. F. (1933). *The tragedy of lynching*. Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press.

Rashid, S. (2007). Kal Dristi, stolen babies and 'blocked uteruses': Poverty and infertility anxieties among married adolescent women living in a slum in Dhaka, Bangladesh. *Anthropology & Medicine, 14*(2), 153-166. doi:10.1080/13648470701381465

Rodriguez, J. P. (1997). Antiliteracy laws. The Historical Encyclopedia of World Slavery (Vol. 1, pg. 42). Santa Barbara, CA: ABC-CLIO.

Richardson Keller, F. (1999). An educational controversy: Anna Julia Cooper's vision of resolution. *NWSA Journal, 11*(3), 49-67.

Riessman, C. K. (1987). When gender is not enough: Women interviewing women. *Gender and Society , 1*(2), 172-207.

Riessman, C. K. (1990). *Divorce talk: Women and men make sense of personal relationships*. New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press.

Riessman, C. K. (1993). Narrative analysis. *Qualitative research methods series, Vol. 30.* Newbury Park, CA: Sage.

Riessman, C. K. (2008). *Narrative methods for the human sciences*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Roulston, K., & Misawa, M. (2011). Music teachers' constructions of gender in elementary education. *Music Education Research, 13*(1), 3-28. doi:10.1080/14613808.2011.553275

Rowland, M. L. (2000). *African Americans and self-help education: The missing link in adult education*. Bloomington, IN: ERIC Clearinghouse for Adult, Career, and Vocational Education.

Rubenson, K. (2005). Social class and adult education policy. *New Directions for Adult & Continuing Education*, 106, 15-25.

Rury, J. L. (1983). The New York African free school, 1827-1836: Conflict over community control of Black education. *Phylon, 44*(3), 187-197.

Rury, J. L., & Hill, S. A. (2012). *The African American struggle for secondary schooling 1940-1980: Closing the graduation gap*. New York, NY: Teachers College Press.

Russell, K., Wilson, M., & Hall, R. (1992). *The color complex: The politics of skin color among African Americans*. New York, NY: Doubleday.

Sands, R. G., Bourjolly, J., & Roer-Strier, D. (2007). Crossing cultural barriers in research interviewing. *Qualitative Social Work, 6*(3), 353-372.

Schneider, D., & Schneider, C. J. (2007). *Slaves in America* (2nd ed.). New York, NY:

   Infobase Publishing

Scott, J. C. (1999). The Chautauqua movement. *Journal of Higher Education, 70*(4), 389-

   412.

Shah, S. (2004). The researcher/interviewer in intercultural context: A social intruder!

   British Educational Research Journal, 30(4), 549-575.

Sheared, V. (2006). Giving voice: An inclusive model of instruction—A womanist

   perspective (1994). *The Womanist Reader: The First Quarter Century of*

   Womanist Thought, 269.

Sheared, V., Johnson-Bailey, J., Colin, III, S. C., Peterson, E., & Brookfield, S. D.

   (2010). *The handbook of race and adult education: A resource for dialogue on*

   racism. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.

Snyder, T. D., & Hoffman, C. M. (2003). *Digest of education statistics 2002* (NCES

   2003-060, Table 8). U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education

   Statistics. Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office. Retrieved from

   http://nces.ed.gov/pubs2003/2003060.pdf

Snyder, T. D., & Dillow, S. A. (2012). *Digest of education statistics 2011* (NCES 2012-

   001). U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics.

   Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office. Retrieved from

   http://nces.ed.gov/pubs2012/2012001.pdf

Snyder, T. D., & Tan, A. G. (2005). *Digest of educational statistics2004* (NCES 2006-

   005). U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics.

Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office. Retrieved from http://nces.ed.gov/pubsearch/pubsinfo.asp?pubid=2006005

Solorzano, D. G., & Yosso, T. J. (2002). Critical race methodology: Counter-storytelling as an analytical framework for education research. *Qualitative Inquiry, 8*(1), 23-44.

Solorzano, D. G., Ceja, M., & Yosso, T. J. (2000). Critical race theory, racial microagressions, and campus racial climate: The experiences of African American college students. *The Journal of Negro Education, 69*(1/2), 60-73.

Striplin, J.J. (1999). *Facilitating transfer for first-generation community college students*. ERIC Digest. Los Angeles, California: ERIC Clearinghouse for Community Colleges. (ERIC Reproduction Service Document No. ED430627). ERIC Digest, June. www.eric.ed.gov

Stubblefield, H. W., & Keane, P. (1994). *Adult education in the American experience: From the colonial period to the present* (1st ed.). San Francisco: Joessey-Bass Publishers. ISBN 0787900257

Terenzini, P. T., & Rendon, L. I. (1994). The transition to college: Diverse students, diverse stories. *Research in Higher Education, 35*(1), 57.74.

Terenzini, P. T., Pascarella, E. T., & Blimling, G. S. (1996). Students' out-of-class experiences and their influence on learning and cognitive development: A literature review. *Journal of College Student Development, 37*(2), 149-162.

Terrell, F., & Terrell, S. L. (1993). Level of cultural mistrust as a function of educational and occupational expectations among Black. *Adolescence*, *28*(111), 573

Thapar-Björkert, S., & Henry, M. (2004). Reassessing the research relationship: Location, position and power in fieldwork accounts. *International Journal of Social Research Methodology, 7*(5), 363–381.

Thayer, P. B. (2000). Retention of students from first generation and low income backgrounds. *Council for Opportunity in Education*. Retrieved from http://eric.ed.gov/PDFS/

The Education Resource Institute, Pathways to College Network. (2004). *A shared agenda: A leadership challenge to improve college access and success*. Retrieved from http://174.133.199.34/pdf/research-studies/ResearchReport_SharedAgenda.pdf

Thomapson, C., & Fretz, B. (1991). Predicting the adjustment of Black students at predominately White institutions. *Journal of Higher Education, 62*(4), 437-450.

Tough, A. (1968). *Why adults learn: A study of the major reason for beginning and continuing a learning project*. Toronto, Canada: Ontario Institute for Studies in Education.

U.S. Census Bureau, U.S. Department of Commerce (2011). *People in Poverty by Selected Characteristics: 2010 and 2011 (Table 3)*. Retrieved from http://www.census.gov/hhes/www/poverty/data/incpovhlth/2011/table3.pdf

U.S. Department of Commerce, U.S. Census Bureau. (n.d.). *A century of population growth, from the first census of the United States to the twelfth, 1790-1900: XIV-statistics of slaves*. U.S. Department of Education, National Center of Education Statistics. Washington DC: U.S. Government Printing Office. Retrieved from http://www2.census.gov/prod2/decennial/documents/00165897ch14.pdf

Valentine, T. (1997). United States of America: The current predominance of learning

for the job. In P. Belanger & S. Valdivielso (Eds.), T*he emergence of learning*

societies: Who participates in adult learning? (pp. 95-108). New York, NY:

Elsevier.

Valentine, T., & Darkenwald, G. G. (1990). Deterrents to participation in adult education:

Profiles of potential learners. *Adult Education Quarterly, 41*(1), 29-42.

Van Deburg, W. L. (1984). *Slavery & race in American popular culture*. Madison, WI:

The University of Wisconsin Press

Vargas, J. H. (2004). *College knowledge: Addressing information barriers to college*.

Boston, MA: College Access Services: The Education Resources Institute (TERI).

www.teri.org

Vincent, C., & Warren, S. (2001). "This won't take long...": Interviewing, ethics and

diversity. *International Journal of Qualitative Studies in Education (QSE), 14*(1),

39-53. doi:10.1080/09518390010007674

Vitus, K. (2008). The agonistic approach: Reframing resistance in qualitative research.

Qualitative Inquiry, 14(3), 466-488. doi:10.1177/1077800407309331

Walby, K. (2010). Interviews as encounters: Issues of sexuality and reflexivity when men

interview men about commercial same sex relations. *Qualitative Research, 10*(6),

639-657. doi:10.1177/1468794110380525

Walpole, M. (2003). Social mobility and college: Low SES students' experiences and

outcomes of college. *The Review of Higher Eduction, 27*(1), 45-73.

Walpole, M. (2007). *Economically and educationally challenged students in higher

education: Access to outcomes* (Vol. 33). San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.

Walpole, M. (2008). Emerging from the pipeline: African American students, socioeconomic status, and college experiences and outcomes, *Research in Higher Education*, 49, 237-255.

Warburton, E.C., Bugarin, R., and Nuñez, A.-M. (2001). *Bridging the Gap: Academic Preparation and Postsecondary Success of First-Generation Students* (NCES 2001–153). U.S. Department of Education, National Center of Education Statistics. Washington DC: U.S. Government Printing Office.

Warner, C. B., & Phelps, R. E. (2008). The relationship between motivational orientation and educational aspirations in urban, African American youth. *Middle Grades Research Journal, 3*(2), 71-85.

White, L. S. (1998). "Am I Black enouf fo ya?" Black student diversity: Issues of identity and community. In K. Freeman (Ed.), A*frican American culture and heritage in higher education research an practice* (pp. 93-120). Westport, CT: Praeger Press.

Whiteaker, L. H. (1990). Adult education within the slave community. In H. G. Neufeldt & L. McGee (Eds.). *Education of the African American adult: An historical overview* (pp. 3-10). Westport, CT: Greenwood Press.

Williams, L. S. (1990). Black communities and adult education: YMCA, YWCA, and fraternal organizations. In H. G. Neufeldt & L. McGee (Eds.). *Education of the African American adult: An historical overview* (pp. 135-162). Westport, CT: Greenwood Press.

Willie, C. V., Garibaldi, A. M., & Reed, W. L. (1991). The education of African Americans. Westport, CT: Greenwood Publishing Group

Wilson, A., & Hayes, E. (Eds.). (2000). *Handbook of adult and continuing education*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

Wilson, W. J. (1978). *The declining significance of race*. Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press.

Wilson, W. J. (1985). Cycles of deprivation and the underclass debate. *Social Service Review, 59*, 541-559.

Wing, J. (2007). Beyond Black and White: The Model Minority Myth and the Invisibility of Asian American Students. *Urban Review, 39*(4), 455-487.

Wood, B. (2005). *Slavery in colonial America.* Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers.

Woodson, C. G. (1915). *The education of the Negro prior to 1861: A history of the education of the colored people of the United States from the beginning of slavery to the civil war*. New York, NY: G.P. Putnam's Sons.

Wormser, R. (2002). Reconstruction (1865-77). *The rise and fall of Jim Crow: Jim Crow Stories*. Educational Broadcasting Corporation. Retrieved from http://www.pbs.org/wnet/jimcrow/stories_events_reconstruct.html

Yan, W. (1999). Successful African American students: The role of parental involvement. *The Journal of Negro Education, 68*(1), 5-22.

Yee, S. J. (1997). Finding a place: Mary Ann Shadd Cary and the dilemmas of Black migration to Canada, 1850-1870. *Frontiers: A Journal of Women Studies, 18*(3), 1-16.

APPENDIX A

EMAIL/LETTER SOLICITATION

Dear Sir or Madam:

I am a doctoral student under the direction of Dr. Juanita Johnson-Bailey in the Department of Lifelong Education, Administration and Policy at The University of Georgia. I am conducting a research study entitled, "Our Story: African American Adults' Perceptions of Formal Education."

The purpose of this study is to discover why African American adults, who are working-class, choose to participate/do not participate in educational opportunities (i.e. complete GED, attend post-secondary institution, return to post-secondary institution) and what are their educational pursuits (i.e. high school equivalence, bachelor's degree, future graduate degree). The findings from this research study may provide current and future education professionals, at institutions higher education, insight into creating a more inclusive environment with opportunities and people, on campus, to help meet the needs of working-class African American adults.

If you would like to participate or know of any potential participants that would like to participate in this study, you/they will be asked to take part in an audiotaped interview that will last approximately 60 minutes.

Participants of this study must identify as being African American, at least 25 years old, has not completed a four-year degree from a college or university, does not have a parent that has completed a four-year degree from a college or university, and identify as being working class or low-income (the person must meet the financial income requirements*). I am happy to answer any questions you may have about this research study. You may contact me at tjlasker@uga.edu or 501-908-6045.

If you would like to participate, please send an e-mail to me or call me as soon as possible. In the email, please include your contact phone number. I will call you to further discuss the details of the study.

If you know of a potential participant, with their approval, please send me an e-mail with their name, phone number and e-mail (if possible) or please give them this letter and my contact information listed below.

*Income requirements will be given once participant has contacted me.
A $20 Wal-Mart gift card will be provided for those participating in this research study.
Thank you for your time and consideration. Please keep this correspondence for your records.

Sincerely
Tennille Lasker-Scott
Email: tjlasker@uga.edu
Phone: (501) 908-6045

APPENDIX B

LETTER OF INVITATION

Dear (insert name):

Greetings! I would like to invite you to participate in a study that I'm conducting on how adult African Americans feel toward formal education. So I'm interviewing Blacks to see why they either decide to pursue an education as an adult or decide not to make schooling part of their adult life.

Your name and contact information was given to me
by_____.

As an African American woman who is pursuing a graduate degree at the University of Georgia, I often answer questions from my family and friends as to why I've chosen to back to school at this time. And I have been fascinated by their reactions to my decisions to go back to school and interested in what they think about the American education system.

Please let me include you in this important conversation by participating in my study, Our Story: African American Adult's Perceptions of Formal Education. The purpose of this study is to discover why African American adults, who are working-class, choose to participate/do not participate in educational opportunities (i.e. complete GED, attend post-secondary institution, return to post-secondary institution) and what are their educational pursuits (i.e. high school equivalence, bachelor's degree, future graduate degree).

In order to participate in this study, you must meet the following requirements: **Participants of this study must identify as being African American, at least 25 years old, has not completed a four-year degree from a college or university, does not have a parent that has completed a four-year degree from a college or university, and identify as being working class or low-income (the person must meet the financial income requirements*).**

I'm from the Department of Lifelong Education, Administration and Policy at The University of Georgia, and will be conducting the study, under the direction of Dr. Juanita Johnson-Bailey (706-542-2848). I understand that your time is valuable; my interview will take one hour of your time and may be completed with one meeting. However, you may be contacted for a 30 minute follow-up interview for clarification on your responses. The time and location of the meeting will be arranged for your convenience. If you agree, the interview will be recorded with a digital recorder and by a

recorder on a laptop. All information obtained will be treated confidentially. Your name will not be used in connection with the information you provide. To protect your identity, you will be given a pseudonym (fake name) for privacy.

*Income requirements will be given once participant has contacted me.
If you would like to be a part of this research, please contact me by email or by the phone numbers provided below.
Sincerely,

Tennille Lasker-Scott
Doctoral Candidate
The University of Georgia
College of Education
Department of Lifelong Education, Administration, and Policy
Adult Education, Learning and Organization Development Program
Phone: (501) 908-6045 or (706) 850-6443
tjlasker@uga.edu

APPENDIX C

RESEARCH QUESTIONNAIRE

The purpose of this study is to discover why working-class African American adults choose to participate/do not participate in educational opportunities (i.e. complete GED, attend post-secondary institution, return to post-secondary institution) and what are their educational pursuits (i.e. high school equivalence, bachelor's degree, future graduate degree).

What is your gender? ☐ Male ☐ Female

What is your date of birth? _____

What is your place of birth? _____

What is your current age? _____

What is your relationship status?

☐ Single ☐ Married ☐ Separated

☐ Divorced ☐ Widowed ☐ Partner or Significant Other

Do you have any children? ☐ Yes ☐ No

If yes, how many? _____

What is/are the age(s) of your child(ren)? _____

What is your highest educational level? (Choose One)

☐ Less than high school ☐ Completed some high school ☐ High school graduate

☐ Completed some college

What is your spouse/partner/significant other's highest educational level? (Choose One)

☐ Less than high school ☐ Completed some high school ☐ High school graduate

☐ Completed some college

Did you grow up in a one or two parent household?

☐ One parent ☐ Two parents ☐ Other

If other, please explain: _____

Are you currently employed? ☐ Yes ☐ No

If employed, what is your current occupation?_____

If employed, how many years have you been employed at your current job? _____

How many adults are in the household? _____

How many adults in the household are employed? _____

How many adults are employed full-time or part-time?

Full-time_____   Part-time_____

How many dependents do you/head of household currently have (those counted on tax reports)?
_____

What was **your** (include all contributors, spouse, etc.) total household income last year before taxes?

    ☐Less than $11,500   ☐$11,501 to $15,500   ☐$15,501 to $19,500

    ☐$19,501 to $23,550   ☐$23,551 to $27,550   ☐$27,551 to $31,550

    ☐$31,551 to $35,600   ☐$35,601 to $39,600   ☐$39,601 or more

Complete *ONLY* if you currently attend a university or college (community and technical college included)
What was your (include all contributors, spouse, etc.) total household income last year before taxes?

    ☐Less than $17,235   ☐$17,236 to $23,265   ☐$23,266 to $29,295

    ☐$29,296 to $35,325   ☐$35,326 to $41,355   ☐$41,356 to $47,385

    ☐$47,386 to $53,415   ☐$53,416 to $59,445   ☐ $59,446 or more

Parental Background Information:

What is your parent's highest educational level? (Choose One)
Mother/Female guardian:

☐ Less than high school   ☐Completed some high school   ☐ High school graduate

☐Completed some college

What is your parent's highest educational level? (Choose One)
Father/Male guardian:

☐ Less than high school   ☐Completed some high school   ☐ High school graduate

☐Completed some college

APPENDIX D

CONSENT FORM

I, _____, agree to participate in a research study titled "**Our Story: African American Adult's Perceptions of Formal Education**" conducted by Tennille Lasker-Scott, from the Department of Lifelong Learning, Administration, and Policy (Adult Education Program) at The University of Georgia (706-542-2214) under the direction of Dr. Juanita Johnson-Bailey, Professor, Department of Lifelong Learning, Administration, and Policy, Adult Education Program, The University of Georgia (706-542-2848). I understand that my participation is voluntary.

I can refuse to participate and can withdraw my consent at any time without giving any reason, and without penalty or loss of benefits which I would otherwise be entitled. If I decide to withdraw from the study, the information that can be identified as mine will be kept as part of the study and may continue to be analyzed.

The purpose of this study is to examine the impact of race and class status of socio-economically disadvantaged adult African Americans on their educational participation and their educational pursuits. If I elect to participate in this study, I will be asked to do the following:

1. Participate in a one-hour interview with the researcher;
2. Answer questions and share stories about experiences as a low-income, African American adult.

I may be asked to participate in a follow-up 30 minute interview.

The interviews will be audio-recorded, and transcribed, with the tapes stored in the researcher's secure office location. No information about me, or provided by me during the researcher, will be shared with others without my written permission. The information I provide will remain confidential and will not be released in any individually identifiable form, unless otherwise required by law. For purposes of confidentiality, the research data will be coded and my real name will not be recorded in the data, on tape, or in the transcripts. All data transcription will occur by the researcher and that I will be allowed to review the tapes or transcripts upon my request. The researchers will keep the audio-recordings and key code, for purposes of validating the participants' statement/responses. The audio-recording and key code will be kept for a period of three (3) months after completion of data collection, as to ensure that the participant has adequate time to listen to recording and validate any member checking activities, if needed. After the three (3) month period, all-recordings and key-codes will be destroyed.

I will not receive cash, but will receive one (1) $20 Wal-Mart gift card as a gift of appreciation from the researcher.

The benefits for me are that I will have the opportunity to share stories of my life, with specific focus on my academic career. Furthermore, I understand this study may increase understanding of how persons who self-identify as being African American and socio-economically disadvantaged status came to hold certain ideas on the level of importance of education and if their perceptions are direct results of the interconnection of their race and class.

Some participants of this study, while reflecting on past events, could possibly have feelings of discomfort when discussing situations that occurred or circumstances that they previously endured. I will be able to take breaks at any time and I may ask the researcher to move on to another topic if I don't want to answer any questions.

The researcher will answer any questions about the research now or during the course of the research project (501-908-6045 or 706-850-6443; email: tjlasker@uga.edu).

I understand that I am agreeing by my signature on this form to take part in this research project and I understand that I will receive a signed copy of this consent form for my records.

_____   _____
Date   Name of Researcher (Print)

_____
Signature

_____   _____
Date   Name of Participant (Print)

_____
Signature

Please sign both copies, keep one and return one to the researcher.

Additional questions or problems regarding your rights as a research participant should be addressed to The Chairperson, Institutional Review Board, University of Georgia, 629 Boyd Graduate Research Center, Athens, Georgia 30602-7411; Telephone (706) 542-3199; Email Address: IRB@uga.edu.

APPENDIX E

INTERVIEW GUIDE

The following guide will be used in the study of **Our Story: African American Adult's Perceptions of Formal Education**. The questions are subject to change based on the participant's responses.

What's your best memory of elementary school?

What's your best memory of school after elementary school?

What's your most negative memory of school?

What are some important stories of school or education (good or bad) that you have heard from family members?

How was school or education discussed in your home?

What family member was involved in your schooling?

 Who helped you with homework?
 Who went to PTA meetings or talked with teachers?
 Who looked at your report card?

Who in your family has the most formal schooling?
How does your family regard this person, think of this person?
Who in your family has the least amount of formal schooling?
How does your family regard this person, talk about this person?

How would describe your family's educational profile from the following choices?

 Most family members have high school degrees.
 Most family members do not have high school degrees.
 Most family members attended college.
 Most family members attended some college.
 Most family members did not attend college.
 Education and educational pursuits are discussed positively in my family.
 Education and educational pursuits are not discussed in my family.

      Education is seen as connected to success.
      Education is not seen as being connected to success.

Who do you see as the most successful African Americans in the United States?

      How has their education contributed to their success?

What message or meaning is there for you in their story for you as a Black person?

      What message or meaning is there is this story for Black people?

What do you think of the following statements?

      Education makes everyone equal.

      Education levels the playing field.

      Education is important for Blacks and other minorities in America.

      Education does not make a difference to Blacks and other minorities in American

      because of racism.

What has encouraged you to pursue an education?

What has discouraged you to pursue an education?

What place does education have in your life?

What place, if any, does education have in your future plans?

What advice would you give a Black child or family member regarding education and

what it can do for them?

If you could change anything about your educational history what would it be?

Is there anything that I have not asked that you would like to discuss?

Is there anything that you would like to ask me?