# CONSTRUCTING SUCCESS FOR BLACK STUDENTS

# IN SUBURBAN HIGH SCHOOL

by

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A DISSERTATION

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Considerable literature supports that teachers are important to student achievement, but few studies have assessed the student voice to determine what specific teacher behaviors and interactions affect achievement. This study is a secondary analysis of existing data from a local implementation of a national survey of student appraisals of teacher-student relationships, school experiences and their impacts on achievement. Data were analyzed to explore differences in perceptions for White and Black students, for higher- and lower-performing Black students and for Black males and females who attend suburban, high SES, high-performing, predominantly White high schools. Findings indicate an achievement gap between Black and White students, Black higher- and lower-performing and Black male and female students in predominantly White high schools. Students' perceptions of specific teacher interactions, school experiences and achievement differed and were impacted by race and gender effects, but more positive appraisals of student-teacher interactions and school experiences were positively related to improved achievement for all students.

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For my grandmother, who…and for my children and grandchildren to whom I hope to impart the same knowledge and wisdom that my grandmother Leonia Patrick gave to me.

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# CHAPTER I

## INTRODUCTION

The idea that teachers affect student learning is rarely challenged (Goodlad, 2004; Gollnick & Chinn, 1998; Darling-Hammond, 2010; Oakes & Lipton, 2007). But, what makes a good teacher? Teacher education programs set up high standards and rigorous training to improve teacher quality to ultimately raise student achievement, especially for poor and minority students. Despite increased preparation and teacher accountability we still find many students failing. Among assessments of teachers, few include the student voice. What would a student say makes a good teacher or school? Discouraging educational outcomes persists for Black high school students, especially in communities that are urban, poor, and minority, where failure is often expected, and attributed to poverty, crime, lack of resources, poor quality teachers, dilapidated facilities, and family problems (Bartelt, 1995; Hummel & Nagle, 1973; Verstegen & Ward, 1991). Nationally, 75% of White students graduate high school on time, while approximately 50% of Black students graduate on time (Orfield, 2001).

A historical academic achievement gap between Black and White students remains. The racial achievement gap persists even in predominantly White, high-performing, high SES schools (Ferguson, 2002). As a group, Black students may encounter similar challenges in such schools, but some experience greater success than others. There is a divergence in success between Black students. Often in the same classrooms, some Black students benefit from certain supports while others may not. There are multiple influences on student success, but the teacher remains the most proximal and powerful influence (Vygotsky, 1978; Chaiklin, 2003). But, what makes a

good teacher in the eyes of the student? This research analyzes Black and White students' perceptions of specific teacher interactions, school experiences and beliefs to determine how these may relate to their achievement.

Prior to the 1954 Brown v. Board of Education Supreme Court directive, racially segregated schools were normal across the U.S. The disparity in access, resources and outcomes between White and Black children was taken for granted, but rarely discussed. After integration, disparity in access, resources and outcomes between White and Black children continued (Cottrol, Diamond, & Ware, 2003). Significantly, an achievement gap between White and Black children still exists within schools that are considered to be racially integrated schools. Explanations for this disparity in outcomes for students in such schools are many, but few efforts have resulted in equitable educational outcomes, independent of racial categories. Discouragingly, race still appears to serve as a viable marker and predictor of success and failure within schools. Guinier and Torres (2002) warn that "those who are racially marginalized are like the miner's canary; their distress is the first sign of danger that threatens us all". If we attend to the needs and well-being of our most disadvantaged children we will be more likely to ensure the well-being of all children.

Before the turn of the 20th century, W.E.B. Du Bois attended Harvard University where he was one of the few Black students and the first Black American to graduate with a doctorate. Du Bois stated, "I was in Harvard but not of it and realized all the irony of my singing 'Fair Harvard.' I sang it because I liked the music, and not from any pride in the Pilgrims" (Lewis, 1993, p. 80). This comment illustrates the separation and

isolation Du Bois faced daily as a Black student attending a predominantly White, high SES and high-performing educational institution-Harvard University.

Du Bois recounted several incidents at Harvard that served to confirm his perception that some felt he did not belong there. He describes battling an "inferiority complex" (Lewis, 1993, p. 80) or internal self-doubt, because of the different treatment he received as a Black student compared to the majority White students. Reflecting his outsider status and the very different experiences of being "in Harvard but not of it" (Lewis, 1995, p. 271), Du Bois said that "the Harvard of which most White students conceived I knew little" (Lewis, 1995, p. 271), even though they attended the same classes and were in the same school. Despite being in the same classrooms and school, Du Bois faced a different reality than his White peers. He reported a racial stereotyping incident, likely one of many he experienced, when he said "sometimes the shadow of insult fell, as when at one reception a White woman seemed determined to mistake me for a waiter" (Lewis, 1995, p. 273). These experiences affected Du Bois' education and he made a meaningful statement about the power and impact of a teacher saying, "My salvation here was the type of teacher I met rather than the content of the courses" (Lewis, p. 272). Du Bois perceived that his educational success was preserved by his interactions with his teachers, despite his exclusion.

For many Black students in predominantly White, high SES, high-performing schools today, the comments of Du Bois may eerily echo their current experiences. Though they may be in high-performing schools, statistics indicate that Black students are not having similar experiences as White students, are not often among the students who profit from the excellent academic and educational context, and are not equal

beneficiaries of what the school environment provides. Though in a high-quality school, many Black students may not be the welcomed or expected recipients of good education. Many Black students face internal doubts, are subject to stereotyping and endure racialized experiences at school on a regular basis. Many Black children share Du Bois' experiences and words reporting a very different school environment than their white peers. Of the potential influences on his education, Du Bois identified the type of teacher he had as most important, as his "salvation" educationally. This agrees with current research on the potential teacher effect on student success. As Whitcomb and Rose (2008) state, "Good teachers do more than boost achievement, they shape lives" (p. 6). Teachers can, and do, shape the lives of children in their classrooms and schools. How can teachers, who are mostly White, middle-class and female, shape the lives of Black children and participate in the salvation of their education (Gitomer, 2007b).

There is, what Goodlad (2004) calls an "array of factors" (p.168) and William Julius Wilson (Steele, 2010) terms a "concentration" of factors that shape and define the academic environment, performance and success of a child in school (Delpit, 1995; Bartelt, 1995). Examining school as an ecological model of educational processes, we see multiple key influences that affect student outcomes. Parents, school, peers and other factors contribute to a child's success or failure in school (Bronfenbrenner, 1986). Examining this network of factors requires a shift of focus from the child or children to the characteristics of the larger system around them.

Across the country, (6.6%) of all other children are placed in gifted and talented programs, over twice the rate of Black children (3%) (National Research Council, 2002). The average SAT test score for Black students is 200 points lower than the average for

White students (Journal of Blacks in Higher Education, 2006). Black students have lower rates of college entrance and completion and lower grades than White students even when they attend the same schools (Berlak, 2001; Council for Exceptional Children, 2002).

If conditions are bad for Black students in general, they are worse for Black males (Noguera, 2003). On average, 60% of Black boys will never graduate from high school (Orfield, Losen, Wald, & Swanson, 2004; Smith, 2004). Males tend to receive three times higher rates of placement for emotional disturbance, as girls, but at the intersection of race, and gender, we see Black males referred at greater than five times the rate for White females (Colpe, 2000). While only 8.6% of the national school population, Black males represent 22% of all school expulsions and 23% of suspensions. Black male students face greater risk of being subjected to corporal punishment, expelled or suspended from school than White or female students (McFadden, Marsh, Price, & Huang, 1992; National Center for Education Statistics, 2009). More Black males will earn a GED in prison than will earn a college degree in school (Smith, 2004; Sturgeon, 2005). These discouraging data reflect challenges facing educators, families and children to improve the success of Black children, and especially Black males, in high school. It seems apparent that Black students, as a group, and especially Black males, are not enjoying the success of being well-served in public schools.

The macro-ecology of the school environment is constituted of a complex set of forces acting on children and there is a predictable relationship between the school context and educational accomplishment (Nieto, 2004; Delpit, 1995; Bartelt, 1995). What ecological factors impact the educational success or failure of Black students in public

high schools? Larger forces act upon the child, as well as upon school and teachers. While important to the conversation about improving education for all children, the larger influences may seem invisible to the child. It is the micro-interactions or the day-to-day experiences and influences that most affect the personal and academic responses of the child (Bronfenbrenner, 1986; Nunes, 1999; Trifonas, 2003). A closer look at this level of interaction may provide insights to help teachers and schools enhance support for Black children and others, as well as close the racial achievement gap. Current trends in the data indicate a lessening of the gap between White students and their Black and Latino peers in elementary school, yet a significant achievement gap still remains (Oakes & Lipton, 2007). Race and ethnicity still predict student test results and academic performance, but neither race nor ethnicity directly or indirectly represents the ability to learn or to be successful in school.

Despite some improvements, the racial achievement gap widens between White children and Black children the longer they are in school (Tatum, 1997). Ferguson (2002) reports that even in "reputedly excellent" (p. 2) school districts, "Blacks and Hispanics were underrepresented at the top and over-represented at the bottom" (p. 2) respecting achievement measures. Contrary to the goals and expectations of the Brown v. Board Supreme Court decision and efforts to racially integrate public schools, equal access for Black children and children of color has, unfortunately not resulted in equal educational outcomes even when Black children attend the same high quality classrooms and schools that White children attend.

Opportunity, privilege and freedom in democracy is associated with a good education, and is considered one of the most important means of improving chances of

success in life (Marable, 2002). The exceptional failure of Black youth in public schools represents an education that is "in a state of crisis" (Talbert-Johnson, 2004, p. 23) itself. As Goodlad (2004) suggests, we must be concerned with "both quality and equality of educational opportunities" (p. 131) in school and must examine "school-to-school variations" (p. 137) to determine what, if any, differences exist between more successful compared to less successful schools. Examining differences in student perceptions of teacher interactions and experiences within school may provide useful insights to help support Black students and others.

In an extremely competitive economic environment continuing failure for Black students in school predicts a difficult future for Black students in society. In an increasingly more global society, the educational failure of children in high school presents immediate and serious concerns, not just for Black Americans, but for all Americans and threatens the social, moral and economic health of the nation (Marable, 2002). Referring again to the canary analogy, Guinier and Torres (2002) reflect further,

> It is easy enough to think that when we sacrifice that canary, the only harm done is to the communities of color. Yet others ignore problems that converge around racial minorities at their own peril, for these problems are symptoms warning us that we are all at risk… (p. 22).

These pathologies are not located in the canary. We must look critically at the system surrounding the child.

## Key Influences on Student Academic Performance

Particular research agendas, educational policies and mandated school and classroom practices appear to impact the education of Black children, often negatively. Research may neglect to take into account such crucial identity variables as race, culture

and language when assessing the performance of Black students and other students of color.

Scientific based research is focused on deficits and has often employed a type of discrepancy model which identifies and responds primarily to deficits. Locating the achievement deficit in the identity of the child, schools often excuse failure for some children. For example, by associating academic ability with particular physical and cultural traits of children, learning disabilities and other measures of failure became associated with and even anticipated for certain children (Bradley, Danielson, & Hallahan, 2002). As Kavale (2001) states,

> The failure to find significant cognitive (IQ) discrepancies in learning disabled populations and the desire to reinforce notions about the academic achievement deficits associated with those who are learning disabled directed attention to the possibility of conceptualizing IQ-achievement discrepancies as a feature of learning disability (p. 2).

Since there were no consistent cognitive differences, this strategy provided a rationale for locating the failure of certain children as natural and inherently associated with their identity. Kavale (2001) further refers to Bateman (1965) who introduced the IQ-achievement discrepancy theory and defined a key feature in the present definition of learning disabled (LD) as "an educationally significant discrepancy between estimated intellectual potential and actual level of performance related to basic disorders in the learning processes" (p. 220). This amazing conclusion aligned intellect with achievement and supported locating the source of academic failure within the child, and created new categories, in which subsequent to racial integration, Black students and especially Black males became greatly overrepresented (Orfield, 2001; Smith, 2004).

This approach has formalized differences as deficits in classrooms and schools, which has resulted in continual marginalization and marking of students, special needs students, poor students and students of color as academically “less than” other students in the school context (Kich, 1996). Students of color are often viewed as inferior in intellectual capabilities and this perspective frames diversity as a deficit rather than as an asset. This deficit approach perspective to differences in learning is represented by scholars such as the Bell Curve authors Hernstein and Murray (1994) and Padilla and Lindholm (2001).

In the current period, cultural factors seem to figure more prominently in the explanations for achievement disparities that are proffered by experts and touted in the media. Scholars such as Ogbu (1987) and more recently McWhorter (2000) attribute the lower performance of Black students generally, and the middle-class in particular, to an "oppositional culture"(Ogbu 1978), "anti-intellectualism", and "a culture of victimology" (McWhorter, 2000, pp. 2-25). Despite the fact that such arguments tend to be based on generalized descriptions of "Black American culture", rather than intensive investigations into the experience of Black students in school settings, such theories have been widely embraced by scholars and educators.

Like the genetic theories of intelligence that preceded them, cultural theories that attempt to explain the link between race and academic performance generally locate the cause of the problem within students (i.e. lack of motivation, devaluing academic pursuits, etc.) and in so doing, effectively absolve educational institutions of responsibility for finding solutions (Noguera, 2004; Tatum, 2007). Harpalani (2002) states “Deficit-oriented thinking, combined with a failure to properly consider the

interaction of identity formation, culture, and history are commonplace in attempts to explain the educational experiences of African Americans" (p. 1).

The disparity in educational outcomes within schools has often been used to ignore significant structural and systemic problems, and to consequently place the blame on what are seen as inherit or natural deficits of special needs, poor and minority children, and this stance serves as well to defend the privilege of high- SES, high-performing and predominantly White schools. The achievement gap is a much more complex question with both cultural and structural issues at work (Noguera, 2003; Bishop, 2009).

When the characteristics of the child are used as measures of potential, possibility and "to explain differences between groups" (Betancourt & Lopez, 1993, p. 3) it limits the "understanding of the specific factors" and "leads to interpretations of findings that stimulate or reinforce" previously held conceptions and relationships (p. 3). Individual cultural or racial issues, while important, can also get subsumed by larger structural resistance to addressing sensitive issues related to race, culture and achievement.

The acceptance and maintenance of the current status quo in education may serve to make change difficult. Some "fear reform efforts because they correctly understand them as attempts to challenge and change existing structures of American society" (Hirshland & Steinmo, 2003, p. 345). This resistance may hinder efforts to reform and change schools to serve the needs of all children. In fact, Hirshland and Steinmo (2003) attributes failure of educational reforms to this resistance predicting, "Failure to understand this fundamental aspect of American educational politics as a product of American governing institutions often dooms educational reform efforts" (p. 345).

Research, scholarship and policy have been focused on the racial achievement gap and racially disparate measures of discipline referrals, suspensions, expulsions, special education referrals, graduation rates, tag identification and other measures between groups. Despite this added attention the racial achievement gap remains. Multiple influences, large and small affect the academic success or failure of students at school (Bornfenbrenner, 1986). The success or failure of Black students in school is a consequence of complex personal, historical and institutional influences.

Structural educational research, policies and practice greatly affect students in school. Parents are undeniably a key factor in student success and peers exert powerful influence on the academic effort and performance of each other, inside and outside of school. And yet, the day-to-day interactions of the teacher with a student are still considered the most important factor in the educational success of the child. According to Goodlad (2004), "teachers constitute the one single element of schooling most influencing students' learning" (p. 167). Within the context of larger institutional forces, specific teacher interactions have tremendous impact on student learning and outcomes.

**Teachers Impact Student Achievement**

*"A teacher for one day is like a parent for a lifetime"*. Chinese Proverb

The proverb above emphasizes the important role of the teacher in the educational life of the child. The teacher is as significant as a parent and research has long supported this conclusion. With respect to locating the specific teacher traits that support the educational progress for students, Braun (2003) argues, "It is essentially impossible to fully disentangle the contributions of the different factors in order to isolate the teacher's contribution (i.e. obtain a statistically unbiased estimate of a teacher's effectiveness)" (p.

9). It is a challenge to identify specific teacher traits or practices that support improved student academic achievement.

Imig and Imig (2006) reports that early in the 20th century, "an ambitious study of teacher education" (p. 167) was conducted by William Bagley in 1914 that insisted that "student learning should be the guiding principle for teaching and that teachers should be judged on their effectiveness in promoting student learning" (p. 167) and that "the teacher was key to the learning of all children" (p. 169). This early study was student-centered, and positioned the needs of the student at the heart of the educational enterprise. Getzels (1974) also positioned the student at the center of the learning-teaching process, stating, "The learner-not the teacher-became the center of the learning process. It was the learner rather than the teacher who determined both the stimulus-what was to be learned- and the response-what was learned…the teacher-centered classroom became the pupil-centered classroom", to meet the "needs of the pupil" (as cited in Eisner, 1991, p. 72). Shealey (2006) also recommends making education child-centered, suggesting "A curriculum and environment affirming of the needs of all students and placing the child, not the curriculum, at the center of learning" (p. 11).

The conclusions of Bagley (1919) were challenged by more recent studies on teachers and student achievement conducted by Coleman (1966), Jencks (1972) and others during the 1960s and 1970s that positioned the teacher very low on the scale of influences on a child's education. Their research concluded that there was little, if anything, that schools and teachers could do to counter the negative effects of the home environments of poor and minority students and improve their academic performance at school.

This led to blaming the child, home, parents and communities of children who did not do well or failed in public school, children and communities that tended to be disproportionately children of color and poor children. These studies led to condemning the culture and behaviors of poor and minority children, as well as supported damaging theories such as deficit-culture theories and culture of poverty theories to explain the comprehensive failure of poor and minority children in school (Oakes & Lipton, 2007). Such culturally based arguments enlist either cultural resistance paradigms or cultural deprivation as explanations for "oppositional culture and identity" (Carter, 2000, p. 65; Fordham & Ogbu, 1986; Ogbu, 1978) and consequent "low school achievement, delinquency, and limited job mobility" (Carter, 2000, p. 65). In either case, the blame for failure at school was located in the child or in the family, not at school. Subsequently, most early educators and researchers substantially agreed with the Coleman and Jencks findings respecting the lack of effect of school environment factors, including teachers, on student achievement and learning and resorted to blaming others. This response alleviated teachers and schools of the accountability for the outcomes of education for poor and minority children.

For some time, these opinions about the influences on student achievement were seen as valid, but this viewpoint was not sustainable and as "Harker (2007) said, 'any uni-causal explanation based on socio-economic circumstances is inadequate to explain ethnic differences'" (as cited in Bishop, 2009, p. 114). While not discounting the importance and advantage of having good home support, subsequent and more recent research has recognized the important difference that good teachers and good schools make in the student's learning (Ferguson, 2002; Goodlad, 2004). Current research has

focused on school factors that contribute to student learning, and consistently points to the teacher as a primary influence on student learning and personal achievement in school (Weisberg, Sexton, Mulhern, & Keeling, 2009; Nieto & Bode, 2008).

Studies indicate that the teacher is still one of the most important, if not the most important factor in student academic success. Recent studies with Maori students and families by Bishop (2009),

> examined the relative importance of multiple influences, such as whanau (extended family), home and community, classroom relationships and pedagogy, teachers, schools and school systems, students themselves, and several other contributing factors on learning and achievement, including external socio-economic contexts and systemic and structural conditions (pp. 112, 113).

In both studies, students identified the development of a "caring and learning relationship between teacher and student" (p. 113) as the key factor in their success at school. Students also reported that they believed teachers could make a difference if they used their influence to change teacher-student interactions.

Meta-analysis studies conducted by Hattie (1999) and Alton-Lee (2003) substantiate the findings of Bishop's research and conclusion that, "The most important systemic influence on children's educational achievement is the teacher" (Bishop, 2009, p. 113). Other factors affect the child's learning, but teacher effectiveness is seen as one of the most "alterable factors" (p. 113) from within the school system. Teacher influence can "transcend influences external to the classroom when the student is at school" (Bishop, 2009, p. 113). Teacher interactions can be especially important to students who may face challenges in other parts of their lives. Further, Bishop (2009) suggests that teachers can benefit from professional learning opportunities that are organized within schools and recommends this as a most useful site for the provision of professional

learning opportunities for teachers when seeking to change the learning culture in schools and to" reduce the persistent disparities in educational achievement" (Bishop, 2009, p. 113). The position encouraging the enhancement of teacher training programs and increased opportunities to learn and practice their skills in the classrooms and communities is supported by other research, including Fullan (2003) and Hargreaves and Fink (2006), recommending a critical look at teacher preparation and influence.

Goodlad (2004) stated that, "While teachers do perform the same task of teaching, only some pedagogical practices are universal" (p. 183). There are specific skills that teachers must learn. Maintaining a flexible approach to teaching will allow a teacher to craft specific ways to teach all students. As Eisner (1991) points out, "One of the most insistent outcomes of research on teaching is that the 'same' curriculum is taught in different ways by different teachers, so that how the student experiences the curriculum is inextricably related to the way in which it is taught" (p. 77). Each teacher- student relationship is unique and a critical component to student learning.

But a lack of effective teaching experience is connected to what is called teacher experience gap, which evidence shows is an important factor in the achievement gap. According to Clotfelter, Ladd, and Vigdor (2004) are inexperienced teachers are "less effective in raising student achievement than teachers with more experience" (p.7). Teacher experience relates to teacher quality in the classroom (Greenwald, Hedges, & Laine, 1996) and directly contributes to student academic achievement (Ferguson, 1991).

Opportunity for teachers to practice and develop good teaching skills is important (Whitcomb & Rose, 2008). The National Center for Educational Statistics (NCES) has also documented that specific kinds of teacher learning opportunities correlate with their

students' reading achievement (National Center for Educational Statistics [NCES], 1994). While these relationships were modest, the relationships between specific teaching practices and student achievement were often quite pronounced, and these practices were in turn related to teacher learning opportunities and development of specific skills.

The U.S. education system has provided equal access to schools for all students, yet structural inequality appears to persist in access to opportunities to learn for all students. This disparity occurs within schools and between schools. Within schools, frequently the best teachers are assigned to teach advanced classes. The best teachers are also most often located in successful schools, leaving less-capable teachers in schools that have the neediest students (Prince, 2002). These decisions appear to be objective, but may often be related to race and socioeconomic status and results in less effective teaching and lower academic outcomes for students. More classes in high-poverty and high-minority schools are taught by inexperienced and out-of-field teachers (NCES, 2000). Figures 1 and 2 illustrate the unequal access to high-quality teachers.

NCES, 2000 report Allocation of Experienced Teachers by Minority Status and Poverty indicates that almost one-third (31.2%) of the schools where Black students were the majority reported using long-term or short-term substitutes to fill teacher vacancies, compared to only 5.5% of schools with no Black students. This predicts that students who attend these schools will not benefit from access to the best and most experienced teachers and will likely show less academic success than students who have more experienced teachers.

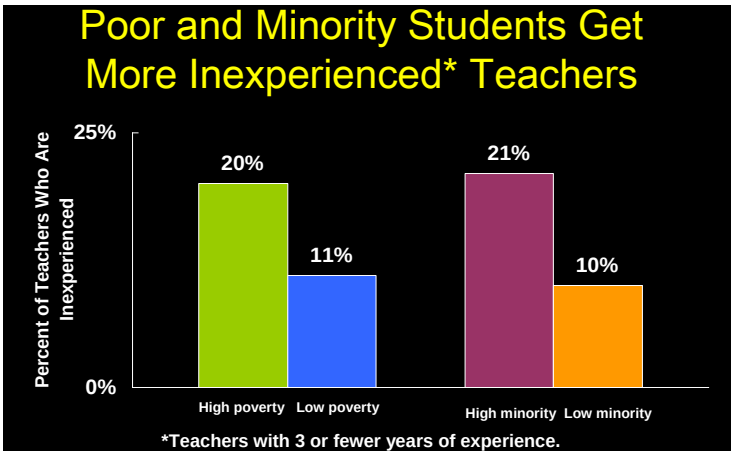



**Figure 1.** Allocation of Experienced Teachers by Poverty and Minority Status (NCES, 2000).

Darling-Hammond and Youngs (2002) said, "Qualified teachers are unequally allocated to students by race, income and location" (p. 17).

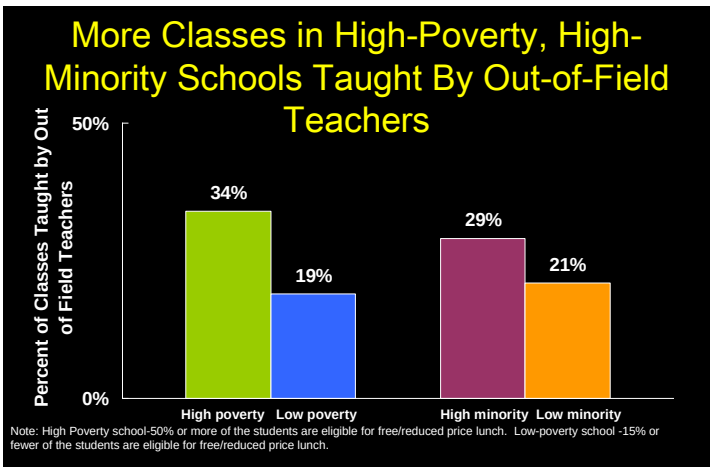



**Figure 2.** Percentage of Classes taught by Out-Of-Field Teachers by Minority Status and Poverty (Ingersoll, 2003).

Variables assumed to represent teachers' behaviors examined for their relationship to student learning include teacher academic ability, years of education, years of teaching experience, content and teaching knowledge, certification status, and teaching behaviors in the classroom (Darling-Hammond, 2010; Ladson-Billings, 1994). These assessments of teacher ability are demanding, but in many cases may lack reference to necessary cultural competence or diversity skills.

Providing opportunities for ongoing teacher learning supports teacher quality. Continuity of teachers' learning may also matter. Research suggests that overall teacher training and preparation is more than just certain academic requirements, primarily degree attainment, certification and proof of content knowledge by testing (Darling-Hammond, 2006; Gitomer & Latham, 2000).

Effective teachers have a statistically significant positive impact on student academic scores and positive influence on student achievement (Nieto, 2008). Studies suggest that there are aspects of teaching effectiveness that may be related to teacher education, certification status, and experience, as well as specific teachers' behaviors or abilities that makes the difference in how their students perform. What teacher actions, behaviors, attitudes and beliefs affect students in the classroom and school? Positive teacher traits such as teacher clarity, passion, task-oriented behavior, variability of lesson approaches, and providing additional learning opportunities directly affect student outcomes in the classroom (Rosenshine & Furst, 1973). The teachers' ability to appropriately organize and structure lessons, integrate student cultural content and ideas, encourage and model critical thinking skills, present challenging questions, and explore and encourage student responses affect student engagement and what they learn in class (Darling-Hammond, Wise, & Pease, 1983; Good & Brophy, 1986).

***What Makes a Good Teacher***

Successful teachers tend to be those who are able to use a range of teaching strategies and who use a range of interaction styles, rather than a single, rigid approach. This finding is consistent with research on effective teaching, which suggests that

effective teachers adjust their teaching to fit the needs of different students and demands of different instructional goals, topics, and methods (Rivkin, Hanushek, & Kain, 2005).

Unbeknownst to some, Hegel, the philosopher successfully taught elementary, middle and high school level students. He considered his teaching to be as important as his university lectureship. Describing himself as a "no reality-oriented man" (Hegel, 1984, p. 226) he said "being a school teacher had been more advantageous to me than even a university lectureship," (p. 332) and described his teaching as a "way to attaining clarity" (p. 331). Hegel was a learner as well as a teacher (Freire, 1986). Lack of resources did not excuse Hegel from his determination to be a good teacher or from making efforts to support students. Teaching in an old building without any toilets, Hegel referred to this experience as a "new dimension of public education", illuminating the drastic conditions, "each time I have to ask parents if their children have enough skill to take care of their needs in a seemly manner without toilets" (Hegel, 1984, p. 190). Hegel resented his setting, but he treasured his relationship with his students and took a personal interest in them. Respecting the teacher-student relationship Hegel said he, "opposed any form of pedagogy which merely advocated learning for its own sake" (Tubbs, 1996, p. 184). He took a "personal interests in the students' reading material" (p. 184) and "interviewed all students before they left the gymnasium (school) whether they were proceeding to the university or not" (p. 184).

Hegel resisted and criticized traditional instruction of his time saying their "only concept of educating the young is the misery of endless inculcating, reprimanding, memorizing- not even learning by heart but the misery of endless repetition, pressure and stupefaction, ceaseless spoon-feeding and stuffing" (Tubbs, 1996, p. 184). Mackenzie

stated, “to regard study as mere receptivity and memory work is to have a most incomplete view of what instruction really means” (as cited in Tubbs, 1996, p. 185). Hegel appreciated culturally responsive teaching and differentiation as he would “teach content which was relevant to his students” and showed that he was prepared “to adapt the content of his courses to the needs and experiences of his students” (Tubbs, 1996, p. 185). Hegel centered his pedagogy on the child and was a successful teacher.

When we center the educational focus on the child it may be useful to include the perspective, the voice and the response of the child. Student voices can help form a foundation for thinking about approaches to improve schools (Rudduck, 1996).

Ron Ferguson has spent many years examining what students think and say about schools and teachers. Teacher evaluations are not generally done by the student, but as Ferguson said, “A student knows good teaching when they experience it” (Dillon, 2010). When students perceive or experience problems in school related to their identity or culture, these problems tend to disrupt the important “teaching-learning process” for the teacher and the student. According to Goodlad (1999) “intense problems experienced in the school and classroom environment by students and teachers negatively influence the quality of education provided, as perceived by students” (p.176). The student perceptions and interactions with the teacher do matter. Teachers have a tremendous impact on student learning and student success. Current conversation about improving student academic progress and success, and closing the achievement gap, often begins and ends with the teacher. Goodlad (2004) reported that his “data showed that students’ perceptions of their teacher’s interest in them as persons were related to their satisfaction in the classroom” (p. 168). While there is no prescription or single set of universal

pedagogical practices, "some aspects of pedagogy are relatively universal" (p. 183); there are clear pedagogical practices that can be considered effective and consistent.

Despite conventional wisdom that school inputs make little difference in student learning, a growing body of research suggests that schools can make a difference, and a substantial portion of that difference is attributable to teachers. Recent studies of teacher effects at the classroom level using the Tennessee Value-Added Assessment System and a similar data base in Texas, have found that differential teacher effectiveness is a strong determinant of differences in student learning, far outweighing the effects of differences in class size and heterogeneity (Sanders & Rivers, 1996; Wright, Horn, & Sanders, 1997). Students who are assigned to several ineffective teachers in a row have significantly lower achievement and gains in achievement than those who are assigned to several highly effective teachers consecutively (Sanders & Rivers, 1996). This study examines the teacher and student relationship and specific teacher interactions that may help Black students to experience greater success in high school. Effective teachers make a difference.

The Federal No Child Left Behind (NCLB) Act of 2001 legislation criteria required all students to be provided highly-qualified teachers, and goes on to specify "particularly minority and disadvantaged students" (107th Congress, 2002). This indicates a consideration of student culture and identity as requirements of the 'highly-qualified teacher". The law reflects our fundamental aspiration that every single student can learn, achieve and succeed. The purpose of NCLB is to close the achievement gap between high- and low-performing students. According to the NCLB Act, all schools receiving Title I funding needed to have "highly qualified" teachers instructing students in core

academic subjects by the end of the 2005-2006 academic year (i.e. the 100% requirement). The NCLB Act contains a lengthy definition of "highly qualified teacher" (107th Congress, 2002). Despite the high aspirations of NCLB, the US Secretary of Education reported that approximately 82% of America's schools could fail to meet education goals set by No Child Left Behind this year (Duncan, 2011).

Literature indicates that a teacher's attitudes and beliefs have much to do with what happens for students in school. In a study investigating classroom teachers and peers effect on individual student achievement Kain (1998) concluded that "individual teachers can have a huge effect on individual student achievement" (p. 20). A similar study conducted by Rivkin, Hanushek, and Kain (1998) estimated that at least 7.5% of the entire variation in a student's academic achievement could be attributed to the contributions of the individual teacher. Considering the teacher-student relationship, the teacher is important to student achievement.

Research indicates that children living in conditions of risk that tend to show better than expected or predicted outcomes exhibits a type of resiliency (Masten & Coatsworth, 1998; Rutter, 1997). This resiliency response occurs because of intervening events or processes. Resiliency is best understood and viewed as a complex process and result of multiple influences, not as a single outcome (Werner, 1989). A primary indicator of risk for Black students used in this study is academic performance. Satisfactory adjustment or better than predicted outcomes for Black students is indicated by academic proficiency represented by individual grades and better performances than the general peer group. Potential protective factors for Black students are complex and can include personal attributes, family resources, and school based support systems, particularly the

teacher. This study is focused on the student perception of the teacher-student relationship and interactions in school, as well as the relationship and effects of these interactions on the academic effort and performance of student.

Student comments can help identify factors that contribute to their academic achievement in high school in a high SES, high performing and predominantly White high school. The responses below were obtained in interviews with minority students (n = 69) who attended a Minority Student Achievement Network (MSAN) conference in 2004-2005. Responses were coded into four different factors. Student comments included statements such as:

- "Lots of it has to do with guidance. I feel like I haven't been helped."
- "Racism shouldn't be tolerated."
- "Each child has the same potential at birth."
- "More colored teachers in the schools."
- "If everyone was made to feel like they have ability. That would be good."
- "We need to take away stereotypes."

Analysis and coding of student responses indicated that 46.3% of student responses reported that students felt that issues related to race or ethnicity affected minority student achievement. Data also showed that 43.4% of students indicate that academic expectations by students or their teacher affect student achievement. According to the students, their race and student and teacher expectations are important factors in the academic achievement for students of color (Lake, 2008, Unpublished research).

Multiple factors support student academic success. The teacher-student relationship is one of the most important. The teacher is one of the most proximal

influences on the child and is a powerful influence on student performance and achievement (Haycock, 2004). Student perception of teacher interactions, behaviors and beliefs affects student responses to the teacher. Research links student learning to the teacher's ability to recognize and understand specific student needs and to create, adapt and implement multiple instructional strategies that support student engagement and learning. By providing a continuum of support teachers provide consistency and continuity to very important interactions as students learn (Klingner, Artiles, Kozleski, Harry, Zion, Tate, Durán, & Riley, 2005). Student perceptions of the teacher actions, such as perceptions of their instructional style, teacher affect and contact, and perceptions of teacher expectations are important. Intended or not, perceptions of teachers' actions drives the quality of the teacher-student relationship (Davis, 2003).

Trifonas (2003) makes an important claim stating that, "the interactions between educators and students (termed micro-interactions) are the most immediate determinant of student success or failure in school" (p. 51). He describes two important lenses through which teacher-student interactions are viewed.

> (1) The lens of the teaching-learning relationship in a narrow sense, represented by the strategies and techniques that teachers use to promote reading development, content knowledge, and cognitive growth; (2) The lens of identity negotiation, which is represented by the messages communicated to students regarding their identities- who they are in the teacher's eyes and who they are capable of becoming.

Both lenses require the teacher to know the student and engage with them effectively in order to successfully teach them. This emphasizes that good teaching is a combination of what a teacher knows, but is also connected to the relationship the teacher is able to foster and maintain, especially with children of color. In fact, Bell (2002-2003) elevates the teacher relationship to a more important factor in successfully teaching students and

closing the achievement gap, by saying that "establishing a caring relationship with every student may be the most important thing a teacher can do to begin teaching to high achievement and closing the 'achievement gap'" (pp. 32-34). Teachers and their relationship with students tremendously impact student success.

***Teaching as a Political Activity***

Most teachers in public schools are female, White, middle-class and monolingual English speakers and will likely continue to be, while students will continue to become increasingly more racially and culturally diverse (Futrell, 2000; Gitomer, 2007b; Goodlad, 2004). Teachers have considerable power and authority in the classroom and school, and as White teachers in predominantly White schools, it is often the teacher who defines the classroom and school context for the Black student and students of color. This places a particular challenge on teachers who may have limited exposure, experience or skills working with other races and cultures besides their own. Some may also struggle with lack of effective awareness and learning opportunities related to race and culture in traditional teacher-training programs. Good teaching is often framed as unrelated to the race or culture of the student, proposing some objective, colorblind conceptualization of teaching in diverse and multicultural schools. Ladson-Billings (1995) responds to these claims by saying, "A common question asked by practitioners is 'Isn't what you described just good teaching?' and while this study does not deny that it is good teaching, a counter question is posed: why does so little of it seem to occur in classrooms populated by African-American students" (p. 484)? This question may cause to teachers seeking out and facing deeper issues of race, class and privilege in our schools and communities.

Delpit (1988) also indicates that there are deeper issues at work in schools. "Strong class-based dynamics are at work here. Most administrators and teachers are middle-class, White people, (women mostly in the case of teachers) where their social relations with poor or working class people are minimal" (p. 244) as with race. But these are the teachers of "others people's children" (p. 244). For this reason it is important for White teachers trying to close the racial achievement gap to recognize that, as Moll and Arnot-Hopffer (2005) bluntly puts it, "teaching is a political activity" (p. 242) and that their interactions with students may be informed by their identity, but they may also be perceived through their efforts and ability to teach and support Black students to succeed and defy race and class based norms of American society. The ability to successfully teach a child should not continue to be a question related to skin color or culture, the teacher's or the child's.

The connection between student and teacher lies at the heart of the teacher-student relationship and can be a challenge for White, middle-class teachers to bridge the cultural and racial divide between themselves and students of color. Teachers must "understand that their students too, come from valued and diverse cultural backgrounds, and if they are to reach each student they must connect with them" (Allen & Labbo, 2001, p. 50). The establishment of what Bryk and Schneider (2002) calls relational trust is "vital in school success". They found that relational trust was a key component related to all student achievement, but especially for students in the achievement gap. The student-teacher relationship is a key factor in the academic performance of the student. Both teacher knowledge and student knowledge contribute to student outcomes (Appendix A.).

The teacher-student relationship may often be viewed as a limited personal relationship by White teachers and based primarily in the educational context of the school. For many Black and minority youth, in predominantly White schools, the educational context itself is experienced in a relational model that begins with and is moderated through the student's interpersonal relationship and interactions with their teachers.

Practices and policies in educational settings are generally reflective of the culture, mores and needs of the dominant culture and class and may be in opposition to the culture and interest of non-dominant groups (Johnson, 1995). Practicing culturally relevant and culturally responsive pedagogy is essential in multicultural classrooms and schools. Effective teachers recognize and adjust teaching approaches to meet the needs of diverse students and employ different instructional goals, topics, and methods, using a wide variety of approaches and styles (Doyle, 1985; Gay, 2000; Hilliard, 1997; Ladson-Billings, 1994; Nieto, 1999; Villegas, 1991).

Sammons and Reynolds (1997) and later Sammons (1999), particularly emphasized this for under-achieving, poor, and minority students. They suggested that the most appropriate type of assessment of teacher and school effectiveness examined the effect of teaching behavior and school and classroom practice on social and affective outcomes along with the traditional focus of student attainment.

Research on specific teachers' personality traits and behaviors has tried to define teacher traits or personality traits that produce consistent and positive results for all students (Schalock, 1979; Druva & Anderson, 1983). This can result in what Shealey (2006) calls "cookie cutter instructional programs" (p. 10) where prescribed teacher

standards and expectations often ignore or minimize diversity and the needs for cultural competence and necessity of teachers to continue to learn about their students and their cultures in order to teach them. But successful teachers come in all shapes, sizes and colors. Palmer (2007) says, “Good teaching cannot be reduced to technique; good teaching comes from the identity and integrity of the teacher” (p. 10).

Teacher education, therefore, is a matter of developing not only the technical competence and solid knowledge of subject matter, but also sociocultural competence in working with the diversity of students that characterize contemporary schooling (Delpit, 1988). Teacher training programs and researchers often approach teaching as if there is just one right way to teach (Tyack, 1974). In contrast teaching, according to Eisner (1991), is more similar to the demanding art of wine-making. He suggests that a child, significantly like a particular wine, is always unique, is never identical to another and should always be considered or “experienced” (p. 64) as individuals. He uses this somewhat playful analogy to craft a powerful argument illustrating the complex art of teaching and refutes the idea that a person can learn to teach effectively in some prescriptive manner that will apply to all children. He makes a comparison between wines and children, suggesting that what he calls “perceptivity- the complex ability to differentiate and to experience the relationships between different characteristics and qualities of wine or children and to experience an interplay of qualitative relationships- is essential for wine tasters and teachers of children” (p. 64). This type of expertise requires what Eisner (1991) calls “qualitative intelligence” (p. 64) or the ability to experience the qualities of the individual wine or appreciate the individual qualities of a child as a “sample of a larger set of qualities” (p. 64), whereby we actually know more than the

qualities of the single wine or the individual child, but we know each of them as a "sample of a larger class" with which we are familiar (p. 64). This viewpoint supports flexibility and creativity in teaching, rather than restricting teaching to a content knowledge or skill test.

NCLB and other teacher assessments have begun to focus on student outcomes, primarily measured by standardized tests scores, and in a continual process that Palmer (2007) calls, "relentless and mindless standardized testing" (p. ix). Moll and Arnot-Hopffer (2005) considers that teaching "is being reduced to preparing students for the test" leaving room for little else (p. 243). The intense pressure of standardized and high stakes testing has overwhelmed many teachers and created a climate that does not embraces learning, but instead as Eisner (1991) says the "culture of evaluation is so pervasive in schools that manifestations of this culture are collectively more powerful in shaping the day-to-day priorities of schools than those special moments devoted to formal testing" (p. 81). Furthermore the "Evaluation processes within schools, including those used in testing, are among the most powerful forces influencing the priorities and climate of schools. Further, Eisner (1991) argues that "evaluation practices, particularly testing practices, operationalize the schools values" (p. 81). The current rigid systems of testing and evaluation of both teacher and student can affect and define the very nature of the teacher-student relationship.

Though students and educators must submit to the demands of standardized testing and evaluation processes, it is still important for teachers to value and nurture a positive teacher-student relationship and to take into consideration what the student perceives and thinks about teachers and school. Studies have long found a persistent

positive relationship between student learning and teacher behaviors that show consideration and recognition of the needs of students, such as flexibility, creativity and adaptability (Rivkin, Hanushek, & Kain, 2005).

Studies show that students respond best to caring, supportive teacher relationships where teachers hold them to high expectations (Banks & Banks, 2004; Noguera, 2008; Darling-Hammond, 2010). Goodlad (2004) also reported from a comprehensive national study of schools that "In [their] data, whether or not teachers were perceived to be concerned about students appeared to be significantly related to student satisfaction with their classes" (p. 111).

In a study by Casteel (1997) when students were asked whom they want to please with their class work, 'teacher" was the answer for 81% of Black females, 62% of Black males, 28% of White females and 32% of White males in eighth and ninth grades (Ferguson, 2003, p. 474). Research also suggests that teachers who use a variety of teaching strategies and flexible interaction styles with students, instead of a particular rigid teaching approach are more successful in the classroom (Darling-Hammond, 1997a; Hamachek, 1969).

This study examines specific teacher interactions that represent the student-teacher relationship from the student perspective, and student experiences at school. The five variables of this study are: (1) teacher expectations, (2) teacher encouragement, (3) student effort, (4) stereotyping threat, and (5) perception of racialized experiences.

***Teacher Expectations***

There are many expectations in school. Teachers believe that they are expected to "stimulate intellectual curiosity and interest in school" (Goodlad, p. 191) for students in

the “academic functions of school” (p. 191) and “perceive themselves as critical to its performance” (p. 191). Teachers communicate their expectations to students in overt and subtle ways. Teacher may not be aware of how closely students observe and respond to their daily messages. Knowles and Prewitt (1969) state that “Children readily perceive their teachers’ attitudes and expectations toward them” (p. 40). But very importantly, a student responds to the expectations and interactions with the teacher, as much as they do to community influences. Kenneth Clark said, “Stimulation and teaching based on positive expectation seem to play an even more important role in a child’s performance in school than does the community environment from which he comes” (as cited in Knowles & Prewitt, 1969, p. 41). Teachers express expectations for students in many ways, consciously and unconsciously, directly impacting student learning.

Literature on teacher and student relationship identifies teacher expectations as a key factor influencing student academic performance, including test scores, grades, self-esteem, locus of control and engagement in school (Persell, 1977; Rist, 1970) and also indicates that student’s beliefs, attitudes and perceptions respecting themselves and education affects academic performance (Cotton, 1989). The quality of the teacher-student relationship is more than just being nice and polite to each other. Gollnick and Chinn (1998) state that “teachers send the message that tells students that they have potential and that they can learn” (p. 312). Ferguson (2003) suggests that both teachers and students are affected by a combination of the student’s race and the teacher’s perception of performance (p. 472). The student tends to live up or down to the teachers expectations for them. Creemers (1994) reports that the effects of teacher instructional skills and student academic attainment are significant and concludes that it is the teacher

supporting students every day at the classroom level that really makes the difference in student academic performance and successful educational outcomes. Teacher expectations, whether communicated subtly or overtly, carry great meaning to students.

Teachers may lower the expectations for low performing Black students seeing it as a way of accommodating or adjusting the instruction to their perceived needs or deficits. Though such actions may be well-intentioned they disserve the student and do not lead to learning or positive outcomes for the student in that class and generally leave the student unprepared for future classes. When teachers make such accommodations on a regular basis it becomes obvious to all students and promotes the belief that Black students are not good academic students and constantly need help. Patronizing actions serve to highlight the assumed deficits and ignore the potential, the abilities and the skills of the student. Students will strive to meet high expectations or they will reconcile themselves to low expectations. Teacher perceptions and expectations of students affect student efforts, performance and learning (Nieto, 2004; Oakes & Lipton, 2007).

There is no prescription for what makes a good teacher. The use of different strategies occurs in a dynamic and interactive context of active teaching that is rigorous, purposeful and focused on the specific learning goals, and responsive to students' needs as well as to the curriculum goals. The quality of the teacher-student relationship affects the quality of the teaching and learning in the classroom. According to Gollnick and Chinn (1998), "the interactions between teachers and students determine the quality of education" (p. 312). Recognizing the importance of teacher-student interaction, teachers need a set of flexible skills to hold and communicate high expectations for all students, and engage and support all students to learn.

In many cases, student have experienced little success in school over time, may hold low expectations and lack of confidence in their abilities that they may feel it is only a matter of time before they fail- once again. Merton (1948) argued that students act in the ways that they learn that the teacher expects them to act. Students, as well as their teachers, are exposed on a daily basis to obvious and subtle messages about the behaviors, intelligence and potential of certain students, both inside and outside of school. These messages, called self-fulfilling prophecies, inform teacher-student interactions and communication. Recognizing the role of these negative beliefs can help teachers to support student success while still holding high expectations for student effort and persistence.

The power of teacher expectations in predicting student behavior continues to be argued, but it has already broadened the conversation about what teachers can do to influence student academic performance. Recognizing that many teachers often have an image of what they perceive as a smart student can challenge a student's perceptions of themselves. In a predominantly White school, the smart student does not typically look like a Black student. The Black student is more likely perceived as a basketball player or an athlete, but not generally seen as the smart academic student. A teacher's held beliefs, expectations and behaviors about a student can affect the academic expectations and performance of the student. The teacher's attitudes and actions are powerful and communicate to the student what the teacher might already think of them (Noguera, 2001; Tatum, 1997). This subtle and daily assessment, reflected in everyday classroom interactions and practices of teachers, carries more influence than teachers often realize. A teacher's belief that students are "not smart" becomes evident in the way they interact

with students, holding low expectations, providing low-level work, excuses for failures, and showing surprise at their academic success. In society and in the school system Black students are often expected to not do well. Many Black students may not withstand the weight and burden of acting in ways that are not expected by their teachers and others, they may skip classes, misbehave and eventually stop coming to school.

### *Teacher Encouragement*

Students prosper in caring, supportive learning environments when they feel and believe that the teacher likes and trusts them (Fishbaugh, Berkeley, & Schroth, 2003). A study by Croninger and Lee (2001) found that trust between teacher and student, as well as formal and informal encouragement, support and guidance, improves the student likelihood of graduating. The positive teacher-student relationship is one where teacher and student develop a reciprocal and shared confidence and belief in each other, what Moll and Arnot-Hopffer (2005) called "confianza" or mutual trust. Noddings (2005) identifies this positive interaction as "a culture of caring" (p. 1) between student and teacher and the "foundation for pedagogical activity" (p. 1). Good teacher-student relationships depend on developing mutual trust and the realization of caring and encouraging interactions between teacher and student. This relationship becomes the very important foundation for encouraging and influencing change in a student's behavior or attitude. Importantly, this interaction will serve to encourage positive student behavior, effort and academic outcomes.

It is very important that teachers provide what Pianta (1997) calls "affordance value" or assets that the teacher offers that assist the social, emotional, and intellectual development, growth and well-being of the student. If the teacher cannot or will not

provide such assets they will likely not be available to the student of color otherwise. Because of this, students of color, who are likely already isolated to an extent, may feel that they do not belong in the class or school and feel excluded because of their identity (Noddings, 2005). The teacher serves as a socializing agent for the classroom, supervising and managing the social and intellectual experiences in the classroom. Because of this, if the teacher is uncomfortable discussing or addressing issues of identity, race and culture in school the students know it immediately. The students will learn to be quickly uncomfortable as well. The teacher models and demonstrates both social and intellectual values that students then learn and practice (Brophy, 1998). To encourage student engagement and learning teachers should find "ways to make subject matter relevant to students, to involve students in setting their own goals, to vary the ways of learning, to use approaches that employ all of the senses, and to be sure that there are opportunities for relating the knowledge to experiences or actually using it" (Goodlad, 2004, p. 231).

Teacher encouragement can be very simple and often subtle. For example, Teacher Miss A taught first grade in an inner city school of poor, minority and immigrant children. Few students from this school went on to college and most never graduated from high school. Surprisingly, Miss A's students made good grades in her class, but also persisted in making better grades the next year and even up through 7$^{th}$ grade, Miss A's students continued to do better academically than other students (Harris, 1998).

Further investigation of adult alumni students of Miss A found that they were doing better as adults than other students who had been taught by other first grade teachers in the same school. When former students were interviewed they made simple

comments such as, “She never lost her temper”; “She would stay after school to help any of her students”; “She would share her lunch with kids whose parents had forgotten”; and “She remembered their names twenty years after they left her classroom” (Harris, 1998, p. 244). These everyday comments reflect the powerful influence of teacher-student interactions, even years afterward. There were adult students who claimed they were in Miss A’s class, even though they had never been. In her interactions, even with children who were not assigned to her, she made a huge impressions and the students felt that they were part of something good and very importantly, that they belonged, even when they were not in her class (Walton & Cohen, 2007).

Harris (1998) suggests that Miss A everyday behaviors and interactions with her students had “buffered them from anti-school attitudes” (p. 246). “Their relationships with students are fluid and equitable and extend beyond the classroom” (Ladson-Billings, 1994, p. 30). Teachers’ showing care and support for students is more important for certain students. According to Gollnick and Chinn (1998), “Warmth of the teacher seems to be especially important with students from low income families and students who are targets of prejudice and discrimination” (p. 313). When asked about what they liked about school, “Students over and over again, raised the issue of care. What they liked best about school was when people, particularly teachers, cared about them” (Institute of Education in Transformation, 1992, p. 22).

There are considerable positive effects of teacher experience on student learning, the relationship between teachers’ encouragement and support, as well as expectations and student achievement. As discussed earlier, this makes sense because the more experience a teacher has working with students, the more likely they will learn how to

interact effectively with diverse students and develop the appropriate and necessary skills to help all students. But generally, the most experienced and expert teachers are teaching the higher performing students, leaving the students that need them most with the least experienced teachers (Delpit, 1995).

Encouraging student success means including students and their families in important decisions about education. According to Noguera (2003) effective schools ensure a safe and respectful learning environment, and effective teachers communicate regularly with students and families, understanding that "important educational decisions…are rarely taken without strong considerations about family economic, role and identity concerns" (Noguera, 2003, p. 450) and they "take pedagogical advantage of the social relationships and cultural resources found in local households and other community settings" (Moll & Arnot-Hopffer, 2005, p. 243).

Teacher attitude and communication with students also define the quality of the teacher student relationship. The teacher can positively affect the attitudes and behaviors of the student by practicing an encouraging and caring attitude for students and showing the same respect for them that the teacher expects the student to show to others (Noddings, 2005). Teachers can practice connecting with Black students in ways that are not patronizing, but do convey respect and caring. Caldwell and Spinks (1992) affirm that it is the quality of teacher-student interactions that determines the environment conducive to effective teaching and learning. The teacher's attitudes and behaviors will define the classroom and school setting. Students need to feel a sense of acceptance, encouragement, belonging and caring. Teachers can invite parents and community to the class and to school and build positive, mutually trusting and supportive relationships.

For Black students a teacher they trust and know cares for them can be a bridge for student success in a predominantly White high school. In a caring relationship, teachers can explicitly teach rules and expectations in a culture of care. By building a trusting and caring relationship, the teacher will be more able to provide instruction, hold students to high expectations, place appropriate demands on students, employ discipline effectively and assist the student in navigating an often unfamiliar and uncomfortable school environment (Klingner, et al., 2005).

***Student Effort***

Student motivation is defined as a "student's desire to participate in the learning process" (Lumsden, 1994, p. 1). Teacher and student interactions are meaningful and can affect perceptions, beliefs, attitudes, behavior and, and consequentially, the academic performance of the students. Increased student effort improves student achievement. According to Strong, Silver and Robinson (1995) teachers can positively support student engagement in schoolwork by encouraging student competence, curiosity and learning, originality and self-confidence, and to build satisfying relationships and interactions with teacher and other students.

Cummins (1986) identifies two important teacher influences on student goals, effort and performance are the students' perceptions of teacher support, and the nature of the student-teacher relationships Explanations regarding the source of motivation can be categorized as either extrinsic (outside the person) or intrinsic (internal to the person). Students respond on a daily basis to the extrinsic motivation or external requirements and demands of parents, teachers and school. Often it is this pressure to perform that serves as the motivation for the student (Vallerand, Fortier, & Guay, 1997).

Extrinsic motivation is what many teachers use to try to increase student motivation and effort in the classroom. This type of motivation, external to the student, comes in various forms of promises, demands and even threats. While some researchers support the use of extrinsic reward systems because it reinforces desired behaviors, other researchers argue that extrinsic motivation is not useful because students tend to quickly revert back to previous behaviors if the rewards or demands are discontinued (Lumsden, 1994, p. 1; Kohn, 1993, p. 784). While this type of motivation is important and necessary, if students are not invested in school, or do not feel they belong, then extrinsic motivators may not be enough to improve student effort. Research indicates that student motivation to learn is better viewed as an internal, rather than an external, state or condition that is informed by the student's own goals, desires and aspirations which operates to energize and direct the student efforts and behaviors. Most definitions of motivation reflect the general consensus that motivation is an internal state or condition (Kleinginna & Kleinginna, 1981).

Good teachers know that helping students develop their own interest and enthusiasm about learning is one of the best ways to increase student motivation and efforts in class. Research indicates that intrinsically motivated students are more independent, resourceful and self-directed in their learning strategies and efforts (Lumsden, 1994). Most successful people employ and respond to a blend of both types of motivation (Miller, 1995). Motivating a student from within is not always an easy or simple task. Finding what interests the student, what they care about and what their goals are will help teachers to better support students. Helping students to set reasonable goals

will also help students to be more successful. Teachers should never hesitate to help students set small, achievable goals. Small successes will lead to greater ones.

While some disagree and suggest that students are only motivated internally and that teachers should work to motivate them extrinsically, there is general agreement that motivation is a necessary characteristic for academic success. In order to be internally motivated, according to choice theory, there are five basic needs that must be met (Glasser, 1999). They include such key motivators as survival, love and belonging, freedom, power. Teachers can engage and motivate students by structuring and incorporating ways to meet these needs in the classroom and curriculum. Providing opportunity for students to have choice and control over their learning also increases student intrinsic motivation and effort. When students are helped to connect their learning to life, they begin to understand the practical benefits of education in their own lives. This increases student interest, effort and desire to cooperate, work hard and succeed in school (Brophy, 1998). It empowers students when they are given opportunities and challenges to demonstrate their abilities, as well as improve their knowledge and skills. Research indicates that as students successfully encounter and experience new and different expectations and school situations it appears that there is significant positive change in their attitudes toward certain contextual factors and influences in school (Nieto & Bode, 2008; Darling-Hammond, 2010). Changes in the student's perceptions about the level of teacher support can influence student motivation and extent of academic effort and social goals of students in the school context.

Students may be placed in similar learning or behavioral groups early in their educational experiences. But because of the "racial imbalance in placements" such

placements or "tracking" is called an "issue of educational civil rights" (Karp, 1994, p. 176). Ability grouping or tracking can quickly increase the distance between high-performers and low-performers and the two groups may quickly develop "different group norms- different behaviors, different attitudes" (Harris, 1998, p. 242). Over time, these different attitudes and behaviors of lower-performing students can become part of the student's ways of coping and can develop into a set pattern of behaviors that become more important to the student's sense of identity than being a good student. Once such marginalization occurs, lower performing students may show resistance to change, to the detriment of the student's academic progress (Karp, 1994; Schwabe, 1994; Oakes, 1985).

While tracking has supporters and detractors, Harris (1998) argues that any separation of children into groups creates problems, especially for children who may be seen as different, such as lower-performing, poor and minority children. "When children in a classroom are split up into smaller groups on the basis of academic achievement, contrasts effects cause the differences between the groups to widen. The effects tend to be more noticeable on the poorer achievers in the class" (p. 247). A more positive view of ability and achievement in school supports Black students' self-esteem. But interestingly, lower-achieving Black students tend to report levels of self-esteem equal to or even higher than higher-performing students and most often evaluate themselves more positively. Harter (1993a) makes an interesting observation, in these cases saying that, "students protected their self-esteem by investing their energy and interest in another area besides school" (p. 60). This defense of self-esteem may be reflected in the lack of academic effort or success for many otherwise brilliant Black students, who instead spend tremendous energy and time creating beats and music, or dedicate hours to their

time learning and competing in complex computer games. Black students "who as a group perform less well in school than Americans of European or Asian descent, do not have lower self-esteem than children in other ethnic groups" (Harris, p. 243). Incorporating the interest of students in the classroom can increase student motivation to be in class, exhibit academic effort and participate.

For lower-performing students, what may be their attempts to protect their self-esteem are generally not acceptable and will often be perceived as disruptive, insubordinate and threatening. Black males are grossly overrepresented in lower-performing student populations, and are disciplined at a disproportionately greater rate than other students for behaviors often described by school as insubordination (Tillman, 2009). If a student is not good at math or reading, in order to protect a fragile self-esteem, they may devalue math or reading and disparage anyone who they perceive to be a better student than they are, especially other Black students.

***Stereotyping Threat***

Black students in predominantly White schools often face many challenges. Some challenges that may affect their performance are related to race and student perceptions of stereotyping behaviors. Du Bois said that his stereotyping and racialized experiences at Harvard left him feeling as an outsider and struggling, battling with what he termed feelings of an "inferiority complex" (Lewis, 1993, p. 80). Du Bois faced a threat toward his intelligence, competence, ability, and skills, yet succeeded. Du Bois knew that he had to work harder than his White peers and did so without complaint. This belief was deeply embedded into the consciousness of generations of Black Americans, and with good cause. Whiteness meant privilege and being Black meant struggle. A perspective of

differences as deficits relegated Black people to second class status obvious in everyday social practice (Kich, 1996).

In 1922 Walter Lippmann coined the term and described sources and the operation of stereotypes, stating, "The subtlest and most pervasive of all influences are those which create and maintain the repertory of stereotypes. We are told about the world before we see it. We imagine most things before we experience them" (p. 59). In this description Lippmann captures two distinctive and troublesome characteristics of the stereotype; subtly and pervasiveness. Interestingly, he recommends education as a means of limiting stereotyping behaviors by adding, "And those preconceptions, unless education has made us acutely aware, govern deeply the whole process of perception (p. 59). Since then, education, at best, may account for some decline in stereotyping, but it has not been able to fully eliminate the harmful practices where, "for the most part we do not see first, and then define, we define first and then see" (Lippmann, pp. 54, 55). Stereotyping actions based on the already-held images and ideas negatively impacts persons, especially persons whose social identity is attached to a negative stereotype (Steele, 2010).

More current conversations around perceptions, identity and stereotyping are related to issues of race and gender, performance and the negative effects of these preconceptions on women and minorities. Steele (1997) developed a theory of domain identification and stereotype threat at Stanford University, and suggests that students, in order to connect positively with the school contextual environment, must be able to identify with the school domain or context. Considering this, being one of the few Black

students in a predominantly White classroom and school may present identity and ability challenges, as well as alienate and marginalize Black students.

In fact, Steele and Aronson (1995) attributes a portion of the underperformance of Black students, especially related to high-stakes testing (standardized testing, ACT, SAT, and college entrance exams), to extreme anxiety and stress related to fear of failure and confirming known stereotypes related to their identity and group. Steele and other scholars have replicated the stereotype experiment across very diverse populations, including women and White males. Results consistently support the theoretical stance that stereotype threat does significantly diminish and affect the student's academic performance. In another experiment Steele (1997) asked students to identify themselves by their race and found that simply requiring students to record their race was sufficient to create a stereotype response for the students of color, even though they were also told that the test was not a measure of their academic ability and was not a high stakes test. Consistent with the evidence that identity threats affects performance, women scored much lower on testing in male-dominated areas of science and math when they were told that the testing was evaluative and high stakes (Spencer, Steele, & Quinn, 1999).

Student awareness and perceptions respecting different racial and cultural interactions in the school environment with teachers and students increase at high school and may play a role in the achievement gap. A study conducted by Dr. Geoffrey Cohen, professor of psychology at the University of Colorado at Boulder with Black students found that feedback from White instructors that was critical of the student was not received well by Black students (Walton & Cohen, 2007). According to Cohen, Black students appeared to resent the message more than White students, but the same message

was communicated with positive and high expectations respecting the Black students' ability, the Black students responded more positively than the White students. This research suggests that if Black students perceive critical feedback from teachers as negative and not instructive and supportive of their success, they will likely not respond positively to that feedback or the teacher. Teacher can immediately impact student attitude, compliance and effort, both positively and negatively.

The stereotype threat and disidentification theories (Steele, 1997) identify individual and structural beliefs, behaviors, and experiences that operate to discourage academic success for Black students and serve to exclude and marginalize them in school. These threats do not preclude White teachers from building positive and caring relationships with Black students. Nor should these challenges prevent White teachers from encouraging, holding high expectations and supporting Black student success in school. The presence of successful Black students in predominantly White schools suggests that stereotype threats do not negatively affect all Black students and that there are effective practices that can be used to assist Black students.

The oppositional culture theory proposed by Ogbu (1978) suggests that Black students practice a type of rejection and resistance of dominant White culture by failing, in order to not be accused of "acting White". When expectancy value theory is considered along with Steele's theory (1997) on the effects of racial stereotypes on academic performance, we see similarities in the explanations for the identity-achievement challenge that students of color face. Through his research on student attitudes toward testing, Steele demonstrated that students of color are vulnerable to general stereotypes that suggest that they are not smart. According to Steele, when

stereotypes threats affect students of color, they undermine the confidence of otherwise capable students and negatively affect their performance on tests. According to Steele (1997), "Ironically, their susceptibility to this threat derives not from internal doubts about their ability but from their identification with the domain and the resulting concern they have about being stereotyped in it" (Steele, p. 614). The debilitating effects of stereotypes can extend beyond particular episodes of testing and can have an effect on overall academic performance. Steele suggests that schools can adopt strategies to reduce the threat and stigma that causes the negative effects of stereotype threats (Steele, 1992). Similar to Steele (2010) and Ogbu's (1978) work, the expectancy value theory suggests that some Black students do not expect to succeed. Thus, their motivation and belief in themselves and their own abilities is challenged. Positive student perception of teacher interactions may serve to counter the effects of stereotype threat and disidentification. Teachers can help students to recognize that successful academic efforts are not related to race or culture, but are essential skills that every student will need to succeed.

Stereotyping negatively affect students and their academic confidence and performance, especially lower-performing students. "The tendency to see two juxtaposed categories as more different than they really are is the source of what social psychologists call groups 'contrasts effects' and "all it takes to produce group contrasts effects is to divide people into two groups" (Harris, 1998, p. 132). Once groups are separated they tend to immediately see themselves as different from other groups, whether it is true or not and notice any small or even meaningless differences, which become much larger or more significant. Though stereotype threat seems to be a universal challenge, Black students seem especially at risk in primarily academic challenges and when they are

compared or referenced in relation to White students. The idea that being smart is "acting White" can create a conflict that may leads to what Ogbu (1978) calls oppositional culture to avoid being accused of "acting White". When Steele informed Black college students that they were being given a test to determine their verbal or intellectual ability, they performed far worse than a matched group of students who were told the identical task measured psychological processes involved in verbal problem solving. Another popular manipulation of evaluation apprehension is to present a measure as a traditional test of achievement or intellect (evaluative) or as a culture-free or non-biased test (non-evaluative) (Steele, 2010).

Research testing potential mediators of stereotype threat has been limited. Walton and Cohen (2007) have pursued studies related to creating a sense of belonging as a possible mediator of stereotype threat and have produced some positive findings. Cohen (2007) said that appropriate, supportive teacher interactions can counter the effects of negative stereotypes and positively affect student performance. In one classroom intervention he was able to lower the number of Black students who were failing from 11% to just 3%. Smith (2004) has also researched multiple mediators to the stereotype threat-poor performance relationship and recommends a multiple mediator approach focused on decreasing anxiety and increasing performance confidence of students.

***Racialized Perceptions***

Educators employ strategies and implement programs in an indirect attempt to address the difficult and sensitive issues around race and diversity that continue to challenge schools and affect the American society as a whole (McLemore & Romo, 1998). "Students of color are often treated significantly differently from White students.

Because many White students share the same European and or middle-class culture with the teacher, they also share the same cultural cues that foster success in the classroom" (Gollnick & Chinn, 1998, p. 320).

Not talking about race and racialized experiences in school may seem appropriate to White teachers who attempt to be "colorblind", but students of color recognize teacher's reluctance to talk honestly and openly about race immediately. Instead of helping, by such "silencing" about race, teachers marginalize and silence Black students and reduce any references to Black students to historical or public characters, special events, holidays and intermittent diversity celebrations. We automatically privilege dominant culture and Whiteness as the norm, while exceptionalizing and naturally marginalizing other racially and culturally diverse groups. Overt diversity efforts tend to essentialize racial and ethnic groups into total and separate exclusive identities and territorialize knowledge and experience within each (Brown, 2002).

This creates a classroom and school context where Black students and even White students find it difficult to talk about experiences that they believe are related to race. Notwithstanding the many programs, events and celebrations about diversity implemented in education, race still remains a very uncomfortable issue in schools. Nieto (2008) states, "most schools are characterized by a curious absence of talk about differences, particularly about race" (p. 74). In a predominantly White school it can be especially obvious to students of color that their race makes teachers and students uncomfortable. In a school setting where Black students are often one of the few Black students, it can be frustrating to not be recognized for such an important part of identity

as race. It remains awkward and uncomfortable to have conversations in schools and the larger society about race and the seemingly intractable effects of racism.

The perception of racialized experiences is common for Black students in predominantly White schools where an issue of different experiences or treatment is often represented by both students and adults as a race or racial issue. Despite what Bonilla-Silva (2010) calls "sincere fictions" (p. 1), the claims of colorblindness within schools are contradicted almost daily by the racialized experiences students of color encounter with teacher and other students. The conflation of race and culture often makes it difficult to engage in honest conversations about cultural issues that might be perceived and understood as racial issues. Teachers are trained in mainstream schools that are primarily White, according to Goodlad (2004) and while there, learning to practice a monocultural approach to teaching and learning. "There is a growing mismatch between teachers' racial, ethnic, and linguistic background and that of K-12 learners" (Whitcomb & Rose, 2008, p. 17).

By engaging and employing a primarily White and middle-class perspective and lens, teachers often are blind to experiences of poor and minority students. Many teachers are taught to ignore or to give token consideration to the influence of race and culture on student performance and achievement. This may lead to a "cultural mismatch" (Shealey, 2006, p. 9) between teacher and students, especially in urban schools. This cultural mismatch between typically White, middle-class female teachers and students of color, especially Black males, can result in inability of the teacher and the student to communicate and learn together, leading to ineffective teaching and teacher flight. As White and middle-class children are more of a cultural match with the teachers, they may

be culturally privileged in the educational context, as reciprocally minority and poor children may be unprivileged in a variety of overt and hidden, simple and complex ways. The "nonverbal behavior" of mainstream teachers and students around race can add to the cultural "dissonance" (Nunes, 1999, p. 18) in multicultural and multiracial contexts.

Established as normative, Whiteness and middle-class status tends to operate as a cultural control in the educational environment. Expectations of success and failure are mediated through this construct, cultural content and specific behaviors are either authorized or rejected and personal identity becomes closely associated with achievement. This cultural context operates pervasively, and students and teachers engage each other in what could be described as a "cultural match" or a "cultural mismatch" (Shealey, 2006, p. 9). Teachers, who are largely White, female, and middle-class are usually more successful with students who are like them and the cultural context-White, middle-class students. They are typically least successful, with the children who are least like them- minority and poor students.

Overt acts of racism are generally what has defined the term racism in America's past. There are few overt racist acts in schools today. What we do encounter on a daily basis is the everyday effects of racial and cultural conflict between teacher and student, called "micro-interactions" as seen in "subtle mismatches in social interaction between minority children and their educators" (Nunes, 1999, p. 16). These interactions, while generic and normative, "not only reflect the relations of culture and power in the society, they constitute these relations and thereby embody a transformative potential" (Cummins 1994, p. 13). This important interaction and relationship between student and teacher should not be underestimated in affecting positive behavior and performance from

students. These "brief and commonplace daily verbal, behavioral, or environmental indignities" are termed microaggressions by Sue (2007) and "whether intentional or unintentional, that communicate hostile, derogatory, or negative racial slights and insults toward people of color" (p. 271). These "slights" may not seem damaging to others, but can negatively impact students every day. Racial microaggressions affect Black students and other students of color, but they also negatively impact all students, including White students. "When Black students do complain about the racial issues or racism they perceive school, White students and teachers are often offended and feel unfairly accused of racism" (Young, 2003, p. 183). Racialized experiences have major detrimental consequences and creates a hostile and invalidating campus for all children and adults.

America is a racialized society and it may be impossible for any person to grow up in America and not be influenced by the racial context. How does race affect the teacher-student relationship? Ferguson (2003) reports that investigation into effects of teacher's racial bias in school typically indicates that "teachers are racially biased" (p. 463) and that in many cases "teachers hold racially biased expectations" when comparing White and Black children (p. 464). In experimental studies cited by Ferguson (2003) that looked at teacher expectations related to race, out of 16 studies related to race, "teachers had higher expectations for White students in 9 of the studies and for Blacks in one of the studies" (p. 463) and "of the 5 studies with statistically significant differences, all favored Whites" (p. 464). This finding of teachers favoring Whites is consistent with other studies. Ferguson (2003) in a review of four studies about teachers' treatment of Black and White students found in every study that "teachers were less supportive of Black than White students" (p. 477). He also discovered that if a teacher has preconceived ideas

about certain students, it is hard to change them and the "estimated effect of teacher perceptions was almost three times as great for African Americans as for Whites" (p. 472). Ferguson (2003) also found it likely that "teachers are less flexible in their expectations for Blacks" (pp. 465, 472). Such negative experiences can create mistrust and conflict between minority students and school staff.

In MetLife's annual survey on teaching, 39% of students indicated that they trust their teachers "only a little or not at all" (p. 449). Disaggregated by race and class, minorities and poor students indicated significantly higher levels of distrust at 47% for minorities and 53% for poor students (Noguera, 2003, p. 449). Mickelson (1990) indicates that "blacks' concrete attitudes are more pessimistic about education than are those of similar whites" (p. 53). Significantly, it is often the students' discouraging "concrete social experiences" (Carter, 2000, p. 68) that cause them to abandon the less concrete and "abstract" (p. 68) beliefs about their chances for success. Ferguson (2003) states that,

> Black and minority students may feel deep frustration at the incidents of racism they experienced in the lower expectations they had perceived from teachers and other students….This was particularly true of the honors-level Black students who reported that each year they had to prove they were capable of doing honors work (p. 475).

These multiple experiences for students of color are structural and functional parts of the educational system, largely normalized, producing these common negative experiences for many students of color as a whole, rather than as independent conditions (Kupermintz, 2002). Bowles and Gintis (1976) states that, "the stability of these economic power relationships require the creation and reinforcement of distinctions based on sex, race, ethnic origin, social class, and hierarchal status" (p. 265). They go on to say that as "schools are destined to legitimate inequality" (p. 266) and "through the

educational encounter, individuals are induced to accept the degree of powerlessness with which they will be faced as mature workers" (p. 265). It is no surprise that Black students conscious of their known culture may resist this process.

### *Student Voices and Student-Centered Perceptions*

This research employs student voices for direction to develop and implement specific interventions at the student-level and school-level that will improve academic performance and school success for Black students in high school. Recognizing the child's agency and cultural identity in schools, Noguera (2003) posits that,

> All students are active participants in their own education and not passive objects whose behavior can be manipulated by adults and reform measures. We should consult with young people on how the structure and culture of schools contribute to low academic achievement and to enlist their input when interventions to improve student performance are being designed and implemented (p. 452).

Students should be seen as active agents in their own educational endeavors and should be given opportunities to participate in their own learning and co-construct knowledge with their teachers and fellow students (Smith-Maddox, 2001).

# CHAPTER II

## BACKGROUND OF STUDY

This study examined key variables of the teacher and student relationship that may influence academic success for Black students in a predominantly White, high SES, high performing, and suburban public high school. Research on racial disparities often focuses on the racial achievement gaps, comparing racial groups. This study examined both between group differences between White and Black students as well as the links between student-teacher variables and academic achievement and within-group differences in these relationships among higher and lower achieving Black students among Black girls and boys.

The study involved secondary analysis of data from the Tripod Project, led by Dr. Ron Ferguson, Harvard University, which involved administration of student and teacher surveys to obtain classroom level data identifying key factors of the teacher and student interactions (Ferguson, 2002). Surveys were conducted in Eugene 4J high schools in 2007 and 2008. Engaging in a secondary analysis of the Tripod Student Survey data of the 4J school district, this project explored the perceptions, beliefs and experiences of Black students with teachers, determine within-group differences, and assess the importance of the differences.

Tripod student survey data regarding student perceptions of teacher-student interactions and student academic performance were utilized to explore teacher-student interactions and influences that may alter educational success of Black students. While differences in student responses may be meaningful or may occur by chance, careful

examination of the student voice can be informative for teachers and adults (Kerlinger, 1986).

This research seeks to locate student perceptions of teacher behaviors and experiences in school and determine their impact on student performance. The answers may help teachers, administrators and school staff to better understand and support all Black students in the classroom and school, and add to research and knowledge for parents, teachers, administrators, schools, school boards, policy makers and legislators to take informed steps to better meet the needs of not only Black students in high school, but for all other students as well.

## Research Questions

This project engaged five research questions; two teacher-centered and three student-centered questions related to variables created to measure student perception of teacher interactions that may affect student's academic motivation and performance. The two teacher-centered questions are focused on (1) teacher expectations, and (2) teacher encouragement, and three student-centered questions focused on (3) student effort (4) stereotyping, and (5) racialized experiences.

Research Question #1: Does student perception of "teacher expectations" predict academic performance of Black students in predominantly White high schools?

Research Question #2: Does student perception of "teacher encouragement" predict the academic performance of Black students in predominantly White high schools?

Research Question #3: Does student's appraisal of "student effort" predict academic performance of Black students in predominantly White high schools?

Research Question #4: Does student's perceptions of "stereotyping" predict academic performance of Black students in predominantly White high schools?

Research Question #5: Does student's perceptions of "racialized experiences" predict academic performance of Black students in predominantly White high schools?

Research Question #6: What links are there between teacher expectations, teacher encouragement, student effort, stereotyping threat, racialized experiences, homework and academic achievement?

## Research Hypotheses

Hypothesis #1: There is a positive relationship between student perception of "teacher expectation" and academic performance of Black students in predominantly White high schools. Hypothesis #2: There is a positive relationship between Black students' perception of "teacher encouragement" and academic performance in predominantly White high schools. Hypothesis #3: There is a positive relationship between student appraisal of "student effort" and academic performance of Black students in predominantly White high schools? Hypothesis #4: There is a negative relationship between student perception of "racialized experiences" and academic performance of Black students in predominantly White high schools? Hypothesis #5: There is a negative relationship between student perception of "stereotyping threat" and academic performance of Black students in predominantly White high schools? Hypothesis #6: Teacher expectations, teacher encouragement, student effort will have positive links with homework and academic achievement and negative links to stereotyping threat, and racialized experiences for White and Black students.

# CHAPTER III

# METHOD, DESIGN, AND PROCEDURES

This study examines the following:

1. Teacher-student relationship
2. Quality of that relationship through the eyes of the student
3. Effects or influence of that relationship on student performance
4. Student perception of school experiences

## Design

This research study employed a non-experimental design examining the relationships between-groups for Black and White students; for higher- and lower-performing Black students; and for male and female Black students in the Eugene 4J school district who participated in the Tripod Project survey in 2008. Utilizing a descriptive design approach this study examines groups' differences by contrasting perceptions of higher-performing Black students and lower-performing Black students (Cook & Campbell, 1979). The criterion for grouping selection is student-reported race for White and Black students, and race, gender and student-reported final class grade for Black students.

## Method

### Study Overview

This study is a secondary analysis of Tripod student survey responses to examine the association between higher- and lower-performing Black student perceptions of teacher interactions, school experiences, student motivation and their academic performance in a predominantly White, high-performing, high-SES high school. The

purpose is to determine if there is a difference between (1) Black and White students' perceptions of teacher expectations, teacher encouragement, school experiences, student motivation and academic performance, and also to determine if there is a difference (2) between academically higher and lower-performing Black students, and male and female Black students' perceptions of, teacher expectations, teacher encouragement, school experiences and student motivation and academic performance.

This study is indebted to the work of the students, teachers and staff in the Eugene, OR 4J school district to improve student academic success and close the racial achievement gap. Goal I of the Eugene, OR 4J School Board Goals for 2008-2009 is "Student Achievement" defined as "Increase achievement for all students and close the achievement gap" (Eugene 4J School Board Goals, 2008). In pursuit of this goal the 4J school district participated in student surveys with the Tripod Project for School Improvement (See www.tripodproject.org), in 2007 and 2008. The administration provided permission for this research to analyzed Tripod data for both years.

The Tripod Project was conceived and designed by Dr. Ron Ferguson, Co-Chair and director of the Achievement Gap at Harvard University. The project is a national collaboration of schools and districts dedicated to improve achievement for all students and to reduce the achievement gaps among students from different racial, ethnic, and social class backgrounds. The Tripod Project is operated as a partnership between Freshpond Education of Cambridge, MA and Dr. Ferguson. The conceptual model of Tripod targets three focus areas of content, pedagogy, and relationships, as important means for teachers to more successfully improve achievement for all students (Ferguson, 2002; Noguera, 2001). These three important areas of teacher student interaction are

defined as:

(1) What they are teaching (content knowledge),

(2) Multiple effective ways of communicating the material to students (pedagogy), and

(3) Need to relate to students (relationships) in ways that motivate and enable them.

This study examines the relationship focus of the Tripod Student survey for 2007 and 2008. The literature recognizes the importance of the teacher-student relationship to academic achievement (Trifonas, 2003; Haycock, 2004; Gay, 2000; Kain, 1998). Student survey responses will be analyzed to explore the link between academic achievement and the student-teacher relationship for Black students in the Eugene 4J school district.

***Tripod Survey Background***

Dr. Ron Ferguson developed a comprehensive Tripod Project student survey + instrument to obtain large scale qualitative responses that indicate student perceptions and attitudes about teachers and school (Ferguson, 2002). This study performed secondary analysis of Tripod survey data to determine student perceptions of specific teacher interactions that may affect academic performance. The self-report of the student may be one of the least considered factors in assessment of variables and efforts that positively affect their academic performance.

The Tripod Project for School Improvement was developed by Ferguson (2002) in response to the research findings from a 2000-2001 school year survey of 40,000 students from 95 schools in 15 school districts participating in the Minority Student Achievement Network (MSAN). The survey measured student perceptions, attitudes, and experiences in school. The findings suggested that student input could provide important

information about what teachers and schools could do to improve student achievement and close the achievement gap.

MSAN is a national coalition of multiracial, suburban-urban school districts that have come together to discover, develop and implement strategies to change school practices and structures, raise achievement and close the achievement gaps that exist in their districts, especially for Black and Latino students. Typical MSAN districts have student populations between 3,000 and 33,000, and are characterized by location in suburbs or small to mid-size cities, records of high academic achievement for most students, association with major research universities, and generally affluent districts. Researchers and scholars consider such districts to be well-situated to actually close the seemingly intractable racial achievement gap between Black and White students. The Eugene, OR 4J district superintendent, George Russell and the school board has shown full support for the Tripod and MSAN work in the district. They have sent students, teachers and administrators to conferences to learn strategies and skills for implementing MSAN. Eugene 4J school district has many expert educators and a strong commitment to closing the achievement gap. This district offers a good example of recent efforts to close the achievement gap. This study utilizes the Eugene 4J Tripod Student Survey data to examine the student perception of the teacher interactions, school experiences and the relationship to the academic performance for Black students.

## Data Collection

This study utilizes extant data from the Tripod Project surveys conducted in Eugene 4J schools during the years of 2007 and 2008. The surveys were conducted across the district in three traditional high schools, and their alternative and international

schools. It was given in one high school that is a small-school community of three high schools. The surveys were also conducted in three other alternative high schools in the 4J district.

Several weeks before the survey, parents were sent letters of notification describing the survey procedure and were offered a copy of the survey for their review. Parents were asked to encourage their child to participate. Parents were also instructed that they could ask questions that they had of the school principal and were advised that, if they desired, they could exempt their child from the survey. There was no parent signature required.

The survey was given to the entire student body, during the regular school day in the student's regular classroom setting. It took approximately 20-30 minutes to complete the survey. The survey was confidential with no personally identifiable student information associated with each survey. Surveys were provided in envelopes and were sealed back in the envelopes without anyone reading them. Surveys included student identification numbers, but no names. The identification numbers were used for analysis by Tripod to ensure that all surveys arrived and were linked to the correct school.

The Student Survey instrument has three sections with 117 questions (See Tripod survey instrument in Appendix B). Section I has 41 items related to classroom, teacher, peers and student with answers reported on a five-point Likert scales. The response scale went from 1-"Totally Untrue", 2-"Hardly at all", 3-"Somewhat" and 4-"Mostly", to 5-"Totally True". Section II is made up of 56 items related to classroom, teacher, peers and student, with 49 items scored on a five-point Likert scale, with the same response scale as above. Question 50 is a question about homework completion and is on a six-point Likert

scale. Questions 51 and 56 are questions about student-reported grades and are on twelve-point Likert scale representing grades A-F. Question 52 asks how much time spent studying or on homework for the class and is on a seven-point Likert scale. Questions 53 and 54 asks if this is a science or advanced class and both are dichotomous with "yes" and "no" choices. Question 55 asks for student grade and is on an eight-point Likert scale with grade 5 through 12 as choices.

Section III has 20 items. Items 1-15 report demographic, family and personal information, with one "yes", "no" or "I don't know" choice and all others were categorical or ordinal scales. Items 16-20, scored on a 4 different five-point Likert response scales, report interactions and perceptions about race, language, peer interactions, opinions, personal preferences, habits, and attitudes about self and others. The Likert response scales used were 1-"None", 2- "A Few", 3-"Some", 4-"Most", and 5-"All". The second scale used in Section III was 1-"Never", 2-"Less than monthly", 3-"Once a month", 4-"Twice a month", and 5-"Weekly". The third scale was 1-"Disagree Strongly", 2-"Disagree", 3-"Agree", 4-"Agree Strongly", and 5-"No opinion". The fourth scale employed in Section III was 1-"Never", 2- "Usually not", 3-"Sometimes", 4-"Usually", and 5-"Always". All items were single questions except that item 18 is made up of two questions, item 19 is made up of 8 questions and item 20 is made up of 25 questions. A complete copy of the Tripod Student Survey can be found in Appendix B.

## Participants and Setting

The participants and data for this study were drawn from the larger sample of participants who completed a district wide Tripod Project student survey in the Eugene, OR 4J school district, 3937 students completed it in 2008. The demographics of

participants by race were 64.2% White, 2.8% Black, 6.5% Hispanic, 5.1% Asian, 4.6% Native American, 1.4% Pacific Islander, 1.2% Arabic, 0.2% West Indian, 0.5% East Indian, 1.8% Other, 7.1% Multi-racial, and 4.9% Unreported.

The sample of interest for this study consists of the population of Black male and female students between 9$^{th}$ grade and 12$^{th}$ grade from four local high schools in Eugene, Oregon who participated in the Tripod Project survey in 2007 and 2008. There were approximately 107 Black participants who completed the survey in 2008.

There is a small population of Black students (n = 195) in Eugene 4J high schools in the 2008 school year A smaller population of Black students (107) completed the Tripod survey. Overall the survey participants were 66.8% White (n = 2482) and 2.9% Black (n = 107). Hispanic/Latino (n = 251) students made up 6.8% of survey participants. There were eleven racial categories of participant in the Tripod survey, including categories of "Other" at 3.2% (n = 118) and "Mixed" at 6.9% (n = 257). Increasing complexities of racial identity, as well as the social and cultural meanings of race in school, suggests that the two categories of "Other" and "Mixed" also included biracial Black students who did not identify as such, and thus reduced the number of students who identified solely as Black in this study.

Because of greater consistency and reliability in the data, only the 2008 data set is used in this study. Discrepancies in the race variables in the 2007 data could not be reconciled. Some students marked every available racial category or all but Other or White. We split the files and have one file for each year (one for 2007 and one for 2008). Race is a critical variable and the 2008 data set presented the most consistency and reliability to the scoring for race. The district that became 4J started in 1854, five years

before Oregon attained statehood. Eugene is 86.0% White, and 1.5% Black according to the 2005-2009 census estimates. Asian population is 5.1%, Latino is 6.6%, Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander is 0.2% and persons reporting two or more races are 3.8%.

The Eugene 4J school district is in the southern Willamette Valley of Oregon and with an enrollment for 2007-2008 of 17,896 students in 26 elementary school programs, 13 middle school programs (including a K–8 program), eight high school programs, and three charter schools. Student to teacher ratio is 23 to 1. As in Eugene, in the 4J schools the majority of students are White. Black enrollment in 2008 was 281 elementary, 136 middle school and 195 high school students. October 1, 2000 2.6% (474) students in 4J school district were Black and the percentage had increased over forty percent by October 1, 2008 to 3.7% (612) of students was Black. Between 1997-1998 and 2007-2008 school year total student population increase was 4.8% and White student population declined over this same period by 13.4%. Economically disadvantaged students make up 30.8% of students. Racial demographics breakdown in all 4J schools is: White, 72.7%; Black, 2.6%; Hispanic, 7.2%; Asian/Pacific Islander, 5.3%; and American Indian/Alaska Native, 2.2% (See 2009 ethnicity enrollments percentages in Figure 3).

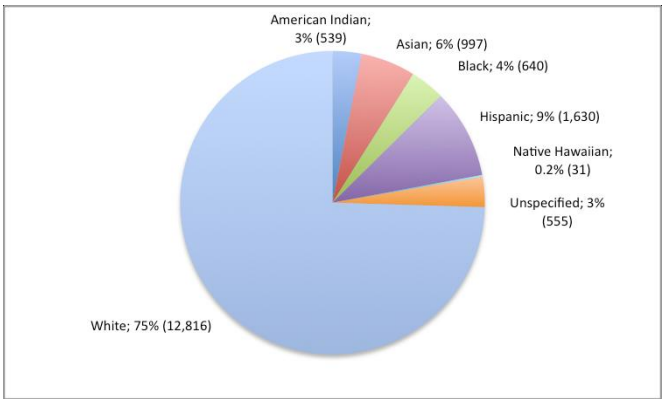



**Figure 3.** Eugene District 4J Student Ethnicity as Percentages of Enrollment 2009

## Grouping Variables

This study employs a between-group approach for analyzing the perceptions of teacher interactions, schools experiences and academic performance of White and Black student groups, by race. The second step uses a within-group research approach for analyzing perceptions of teacher interactions, schools experiences and academic performance for higher- and lower performing Black students and for Black male and female students. This approach supports a descriptive assessment of student perceptions of key factors affecting academic performance in public high school. Comparative analysis was used to investigate the differences, similarities and relationships between students, both between and within groups, as well as between factors or variables. Means tests were used to assess differences between groups, and correlational comparisons and structural equation models were used to examine the relationships between variables of teacher interactions, school experiences and student academic effort and performance. Survey data was used to describe and determine Black and White student perceptions, beliefs, and perspectives and to analyze the relationship to academic performance criteria.

This study employed quantitative methodology to assess and measure the perceptions and attitudinal effects of multiple student-centered factors related to the academic performance of Black and White students in high school. Examination of grades, by student-reported final class grade, was used as a measure of student performance and achievement. Student perceptions of contextual school factors and their comprehension of the interactions and events that may influence their academic goals and performance were also of primary interest as these related to teacher interactions and specific perceptions of experiences students reported in the school setting (Mansfield,

2001).

Subjects: High school students who self-identified as Black and White in grades 9-12. Within-group subjects included higher- and lower-performing Black students and Black male and female students. Subjects will be assigned to group by (1) race, (2) self-reported final class grade, and (3) gender. Grades were self-reported by students on the survey from A-F and with each grade reported as grade, - grade or + grade, yielding a possible 12 grade choices. Group 1, the higher-performing group, grades will range from A- to B-. Group 2 , the lower-performing group, will range from C+ to F. Higher-Performing Group 1 will include student-reported grades of A, A-, B+, B, and B-. The lower-performing Group 2 will include student-reported grades of C+, C, C-, D+, D, D-, and F.

## Measures

Items from the Tripod Student survey were used to construct the measures for this research. Measures include: Teacher Expectations, Teacher Encouragement, Student Effort, Stereotyping Threat, and Perception of Racialized Experiences. The Tripod student surveys were completed in 2007 and 2008. Data and permission was obtained from Tripod project director, Ronald J. Ferguson, to access and utilized data for secondary analysis.

Dependent Variable- Academic achievement is represented by student-reported final class grade and homework completion. Independent Variables- Teacher Expectations, Teacher Encouragement teacher-student relationship. Three student-centered independent variables are used in this study: student appraisals of Student Effort, Stereotyping Threat and Perceptions of Racialized Experiences.

The final measures included: Teacher expectation scale, composed of 6 items, including items such as (1) My teacher in this class makes me feel that he/she truly cares for me (.78 factor loading), (2) The teacher in this class shows that he/she will help me succeed in class (.82 factor loading), (3) my teacher makes learning enjoyable (.82 factor loading). Teacher encouragement scale, composed of 16 items, with questions such as (1) In this class my teacher accepts nothing less than our full effort (.71 factor loading), (2) My teacher doesn't let people give up when the work gets hard (.75 factor loading), (3) My teacher wants us to use our critical thinking skills, not just memorize things (.71 factor loading). Student effort scale, composed of 5 items, including items such as (1) In this class it is important for me to thoroughly understand my class work (.76 factor loading), (2) One of my goals in this class has been to learn as much as I can (.81 factor loading), (3) I have pushed myself hard to completely understand my lessons in this class (.75 factor loading). Stereotyping scale, composed of 5 items, with questions such as (1) One of my goals in this class is to show others that class work is easy for me (.79 factor loading), (2) It is important to me that others do not think I'm dumb in this class (.72 factor loading), and (3) One of my goals in this class has been to show others that I am good at class work (.71 factor loading). Racialized experience Scale is composed of 4 items, including items such as (1) Because of race I get disciplined harder or less fairly in school (.87 factor loading), (2) Because of race, some teachers think I'm less smart than I am (.86 factor loading), and (3) at our school, my race does not affect how the adults treat me (. 66 factor loading). The five (5) measures grouped items that reflect student perception of specific teacher interactions and school experiences.

***Teacher Expectation***

This scale included 6 self-report Likert-scale items (maximum scale range was 1-5) assessing student perception of teacher interactions that represents teacher expectations about student academic effort and performance. The teacher expectation scale demonstrated adequate internal consistency scores (Cronbach's alpha was .76). Items listed below. Factor loadings ranged from .64 to .75. Descriptive statistics for this measure is summarized in Table 1.

***Teacher Encouragement***

This scale included 16 self-report Likert-scale items (maximum scale range was 1-5) assessing student perception of teacher interactions that encouraged and supported student academic effort and performance. The teacher encouragement scale demonstrated strong internal consistency scores (Cronbach's alpha was .94). Items and alphas listed below. Factor loadings ranged from .50 to .82. Descriptive statistics for this measure is summarized in Table 1.

***Student Effort***

This scale included 5 self-report Likert-scale items (maximum scale range was 1-5) assessing student self-perception of student beliefs and attitudes about efforts that impact academic performance and success. The Teacher Expectation scale demonstrated adequate internal consistency scores (Cronbach's alpha was .76). Items listed below. Factor loadings ranged from .56 to .81. Descriptive statistics for this measure is summarized in Table 1.

### *Stereotyping Threat*

This scale included 5 self-report Likert-scale items (maximum scale range was 1-5) assessing student self-perception beliefs and behaviors that indicated considerable effort to counter or influence positively others beliefs about their academic skill and ability. The stereotyping scale demonstrated adequate internal consistency scores (Cronbach's alpha was .76) Items listed below. Factor loadings ranged from .65 to .79. Descriptive statistics for this measure is summarized in Table 1.

### *Racialized Experiences*

This scale included 4 self-report Likert-scale items (maximum scale range was 1-5, one item recorded for direction) assessing student self-perception of experiences they believe are related to their race and teacher interactions that represents teacher expectations about student academic effort and performance. The racialized experiences scale demonstrated adequate internal consistency scores. Reliability as determined by Cronbach's alpha is 0.84. Items listed below. Factor loadings ranged from .61 to .87. Descriptive statistics for this measure is summarized in Table 1.

### *Homework Completion and Final Class Grade*

Due to limitations in the data and the survey, student academic achievement was measured using the response to two single items, Homework Completion and Final Class Grade. Homework completion is a single 6-point Lickert Scale item assessing student homework completion. This item asked; "When homework is assigned in this class how much if it do you usually complete"? Possible responses included, "Never assigned", "None of it", "Some of it", "Most of it", "All", and "All, plus some extra".

The second item is Final Class Grade. It is on a 12-point Likert Scale assessing student report of final grade for the class. This item has possible choices of "A", "A-", "B+", "B", "B-", "C+", "C", "C-", "D+", "D", "D-", and "F-".

***Race***

This measure is created based on student-report of their racial category. The item for race in the instrument provided eight choices, including White, Black or African American, Hispanic, Asian, Native American, Pacific Islander, Arabic/Middle Eastern and a category of Other, followed by a space for entering a different race or ethnicity.

***Gender***

This measure is created based on student-report of their gender category. The item for gender in the instrument provided two choices, male and female.

## Analytic Approach

Analyses were conducted with SPSS 14 and AMOS 18 statistical programs. For reporting purposes, the critical level for statistical significance *(p*) was set at 0.05. This analytic approach is a secondary analysis of student survey response data from one year of the Tripod project conducted in Eugene 4J high schools in 2008. The analysis occurred in three phases: (1) group comparative analyses (employing t-tests), (2) structural equation modeling analyses to examine the unique contributions of the aspects of the teacher-student relationship in predicting achievement for Black and White students, and (3) correlational association tests to explore differences in aspects of teacher-student relationship quality for (a) Black and White students, (b) higher-performing and lowering-performing Black students, and (c) Black males and females. Outcome

variables are organized by two conceptual domains of focus: (1) teacher-centered variables, and (2) student-centered variables.

Items were sorted into thematic categories based on the literature and theories of action in the Tripod survey, identifying teacher-centered items and student-centered items to explore student perceptions of teacher-student interactions and student experiences at school. Content analysis and face validity evaluation of items in the student survey was employed to group the items into reasonable constructs (Anastasi, 1988). Strength of association and relationship was completed between items. Confirmatory principal component factor analysis of selected items was done, followed by a varimax rotation to summarize data and assess the structure and strength of the scale. An internal consistency analysis of the scales and constructed final measures from items that exhibited both high factor loading and reliability scores was performed. This enabled a reduction of items to determine one primary factor for each measure (See Table 3). Comparative analysis was used to investigate differences, similarities and relationships between the student perceptions, as well as between factors or variables. This approach utilizes quantitative methodology, to assess and measure the qualitative perceptions and attitudinal effects of multiple student-centered factors related to the academic performance of students in high school. Examination of grades, by final class grade, was used as a measure of student performance and success.

# CHAPTER IV

# RESULTS

## Step 1: Results for Black and White Students

### *Differences Between Group*

Table 1 shows the results of analyses comparing White and Black high school students for differences in teacher interactions, school experiences, and academic performance. No significant difference was detected between White and Black students in terms of perceptions of teacher expectations and teacher encouragement. White students reported higher levels of expected final class grade ($p < .01$) compared to Black students. A marginally significant difference ($p < .10$) was detected for homework completion between the two groups with White students showing a trend toward higher homework completion. For racialized experiences, Black students reported much higher levels of racialized experiences than White students ($p < .001$). White students reported a marginally higher rate of homework completion and a much higher perception of final class grade Black students.

**Table 1.** Mean Scores and standard deviations evaluations of Tripod student survey responses by race, Black and White only.

| | White Students | | Black Students | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Variables | M(SD) | n | M(SD) | n | t |
| Teacher-Centered | | | | | |
| Teacher Expectations | 3.8 (.68) | 2440 | 3.8 (.64) | 105 | -.10 |
| Teacher Encouragement | 3.9 (.75) | 2472 | 3.9 (.65) | 105 | -.13 |
| Student-Centered | | | | | |
| Student Effort | 3.8 (.66) | 2474 | 3.7 (.74) | 107 | 1.5 |
| Stereotyping | 2.2 (.83) | 2464 | 2.3 (.92) | 105 | -.11 |
| Racialized Experiences | 1.4 (.53) | 2322 | 2.4 (.99) | 94 | -8.9*** |
| Homework Completion | 3.4 (.98) | 2345 | 3.2 (1.0) | 92 | 1.9t |
| Final Class Grade | 4.4 (.76) | 2444 | 4.2 (.92) | 105 | 3.0** |

*$p$ <.05, ** $p$ <.01, *** $p$ <.001

### *Associations Between Key Study Variables*

Table 2 shows higher teacher expectation was associated with increased perceptions of teacher encouragement for Black (r = .64, $p$ < .001) and White students (r = .71, $p$ < .001.), higher for White students. Teacher expectation was significantly associated with student effort for Black (r = .42, $p$ < .001) and for White students (r = .52, $p$ < .001), higher for White students. Higher perceptions of teacher expectations were marginally (r = .52, $p$ < .00) associated with higher reports of stereotyping threat for White students. Higher perceptions of teacher expectations resulted in lower perceptions of racialized experiences for White students (r = .04, $p$ < .10) but showed no association for Black students. Higher perceptions of teacher expectations was associated with higher reports of homework completion (r = .16, $p$ < .001) and final class grade (r = .13, $p$ < .001) for White students, but showed no association for Black students. Higher perceptions of teacher encouragement was associated with increased student effort for

White students (r = .56, $p < .001$) and for Black students (r = .51, $p < .001$). Teacher encouragement is not related to stereotyping threat for Black or White students. Higher teacher encouragement was related to lower perceptions of racialized experiences for White students (r = -.15, $p < .001$) and for Black students (r = -.23, $p < .05$). Higher perceptions of teacher encouragement was associated with higher reports of homework completion (r = .15, $p < .001$) and final class grade (r = .20, $p < .001$) for White students and showed marginal association (r = .19, $p < 1.0$) between teacher encouragement and homework completion for Black students. Increased student effort was related to lower perceptions of stereotyping threat for White students (r = -.10, $p < .001$) but not related for Black students. Increased student effort was associated with lower perception of racialized experiences for White students (r = -.11, $p < .001$) and not related for Black students. Increased student effort was related to higher reports of homework completion (r = .34, $p < .001$) and final class grade (r = .36, $p < .001$) for White students and also related to Black students' homework completion (r = .29, $p < .01$) and final class grade (r = .26, $p < .01$). Higher perceptions of stereotyping threat was related to increased perceptions of racilized experiences for White (r = .10, $p < .001$) and Black students (r = .28, $p < .01$). Higher perceptions of stereotyping threat was related to increased homework completion (r = .04, $p < .05$) and decreased final class grade (r = -.03, $p < .10$) for White students and decreased homework completion (r = -.20, $p < .10$) for Black students. Higher perceptions of racialized experiences is related to lower homework completion (r = -.08, $p < .001$) and lower final grade (r = -.08, $p < .001$) for White students, but was not related for Black students. Increased homework completion was

associated with higher final class grade (r = .34, $p < .001$) for White students and for Black students (r = .29, $p < .01$).

**Table 2.** Black and White Students: Correlations on Measures of Student-Teacher Interactions and Student Achievement

| Measure | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1. Teacher Expectations | --- | .64*** | .42*** | .07 | -.16 | .11 | .12 |
| 2. Teacher Encouragement | .71*** | --- | .51*** | -.10 | -.23* | .19t | .03 |
| 3. Student Effort | .52*** | .56*** | --- | .18t | -.12 | .29** | .26** |
| 4. Stereotyping | .04t | .003 | .10*** | --- | .28** | -.20t | -.13 |
| 5. Racialized Experiences | -.12*** | -.15*** | -.11*** | .10*** | --- | .10 | -.05 |
| 6. Homework Completion | .16*** | .15*** | .34*** | .04* | -.08*** | --- | .29** |
| 7. Final Grade | .13*** | .20*** | .36*** | -.03t | -.08*** | .34*** | --- |

Note: Correlations among variables for White students (n=2482) are presented below the diagonal and correlations among variables for Black students (n=107) are presented above the diagonal.

### *Links Between Student-Teacher Variables and Academic Outcomes*

Separate structural equation models were conducted for Black and White students to examine links between teacher-student relationship variables and student outcomes. Figure 4 shows that for White students, higher levels of teacher expectation and teacher encouragement were significantly and independently associated with higher levels of homework completion ($\beta = 10$, $p < .05$; $\beta = .08$, $p < .001$, respectively). It also shows teacher encouragement and teacher expectation is related to greater student effort ($\beta = .24$, $p < .001$; $\beta = 38$, $p < .001$). A higher perception of racialized experiences was related to lower levels of teacher encouragement ($\beta = -.15$, $p < .001$) and lower teacher expectation ($\beta = -.12$, $p < .001$) for White students. Also, for White students', higher teacher encouragement was related to higher final class grade ($\beta = .11$, $p < .001$) even controlling for the effects of student effort and homework completion. However, higher teacher expectations was associated with lower final class grade ($\beta = -.14$, $p < .001$).

Increased racialized experiences was only marginally associated with less student effort (β = -.03, $p < .10$), but was related to less homework completion (β = -.06, $p < .01$) for White students and had no relationship to final class grade. Increased student effort (β = .30, $p < .001$) and increased homework completion (β = .27, $p < .001$) both were related to higher finals class grade.

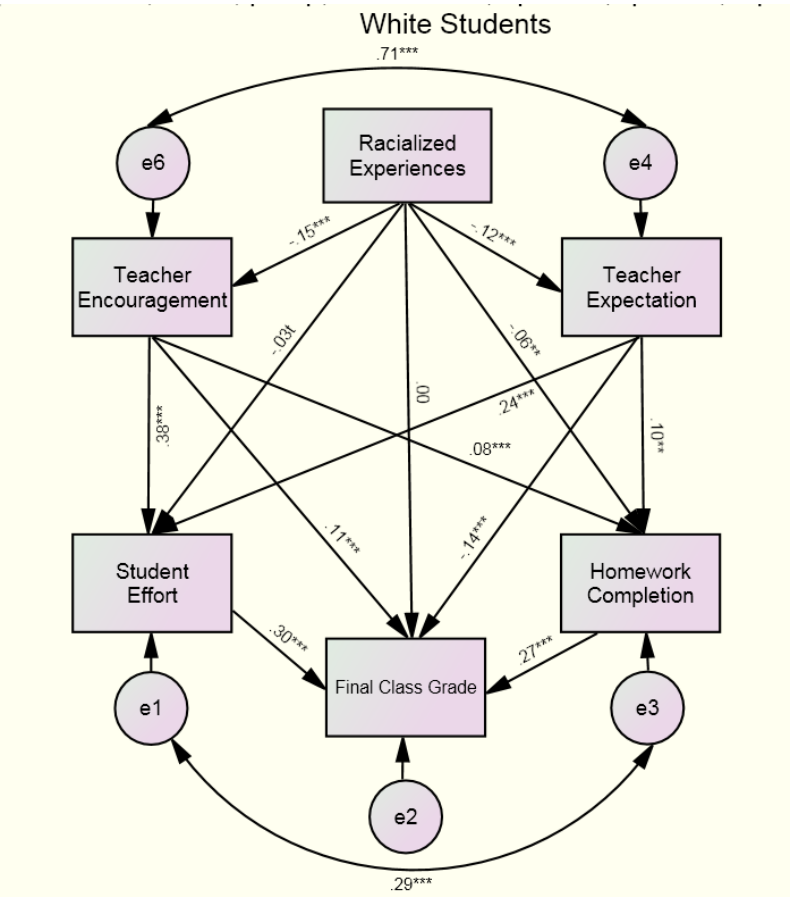



**Figure 4.** SEM linking student, teacher and school experiences to achievement outcomes for White Students

Figure 5 reveals that, Black students reported higher levels of teacher encouragement that was related to increased student effort (β = .39, $p < .001$), but was not related to homework completion. In contrast to White students, Black students' perceptions of higher teacher expectation were not associated with homework completion

or student effort. Similar to White students, Black students' higher perceptions of racialized experiences were related to lower perceptions of teacher expectations and teacher encouragement. For Black students, increased teacher encouragement was related to lower student final class grade (β = -.27, $p < .05$). Increased homework completion (β = .33, $p < .01$) and student effort (β = .24, $p < .05$) were associated with higher final class grades for Black students.

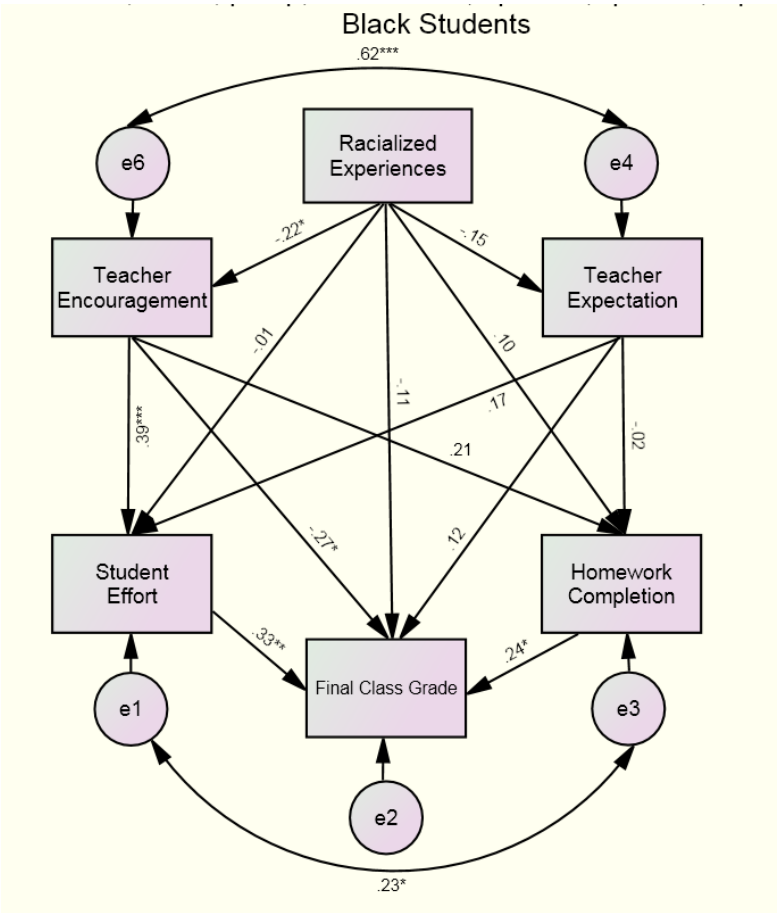



**Figure 5.** Black Students

## Step 2: Results for Higher- and Lower Performing Black Students

### *Differences Within Group*

Table 3 shows the results of analyses comparing higher- and lower-performing Black high school students for differences in teacher interactions, school experiences, and

academic performance. No significant difference was detected between higher- and lower-performing Black students' perceptions of teacher expectations and teacher encouragement. Higher-performing Black students reported higher levels of student effort ($p < .01$) and expected homework completion ($p < .01$) compared to lower-performing Black students. There was no difference detected in the perceptions of stereotyping and racialized experiences for higher- or lower-performing Black students.

**Table 3.** Black Students: Mean Scores and standard deviations evaluations of Tripod student survey responses by race, Black and academic achievement.

| | Academic Achievement Level | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Higher-Performing Black Students | | Lower-Performing Black Students | | |
| Variables | M(SD) | n | M(SD) | n | t |
| Teacher-Centered | | | | | |
| Teacher Expectations | 3.8 (.62) | 54 | 3.7 (.63) | 46 | .89 |
| Teacher Encouragement | 4.0 (.60) | 53 | 3.9 (.72) | 46 | .87 |
| Student-Centered | | | | | |
| Student Effort | 3.9 (.74) | 54 | 3.5 (.78) | 47 | 3.0** |
| Stereotyping | 2.3 (1.0) | 53 | 2.3 (85) | 46 | -.04 |
| Racialized Experiences | 2.3 (.92) | 47 | 2.4 (1.1) | 43 | -.48 |
| Homework Completion | 3.5 (1.1) | 48 | 2.8 (.92) | 40 | 2.9** |

*$p$ <.05, ** $p$ <.01, *** $p$ <.001

### *Associations Between Key Study Variables*

Results from Table 4 show that higher teacher expectations was associated with increased perceptions of teacher encouragement for higher- (r = .58, $p < .001$) and lower-performing students (r = .70, $p < .001$), with stronger association for lower-performing Black students. Higher teacher expectation was associated with increased student effort for higher- (r = .35, $p < .01$) and for lower-performing Black students (r = .45, $p < .001$),

again with stronger association for lower-performing Black students. Teacher expectations were not significantly related to stereotyping threat or racialized experiences for higher- or lower-performing Black students. Higher teacher expectations was associated with increased homework completion ($r = .31$, $p < .05$) for higher-performing Black students.

Increased teacher encouragement was associated with increased student effort for higher- performing Black students ($r = .54$, $p < .001$) and lower-performing Black students ($r = .48$, $p < .01$), higher-performing Black students show a greater association. No significant association was observed between teacher encouragement and stereotyping threat for higher- and lower-performing Black students. Higher perceptions of teacher encouragement was related to lower perceptions of racialized experiences for higher-performing Black students ($r = -.43$, $p < .01$) but not for lower-performing Black students. Higher teacher encouragement was associated with increased homework completion ($r = .42$, $p < .01$) for higher-performing Black students.

Higher perceptions of student effort were associated with increased perceptions of stereotyping threat for lower-performing Black students ($r = .42$, $p < .01$) but not for higher-performing Black students. Student effort is not associated with racialized perceptions for lower- or higher-performing students. Increased student effort was marginally associated with homework completion ($r = .25$, $p < .10$) for higher-performing Black students, but not lower-performing.

Higher perception of stereotyping threat was associated with higher perceptions of racialized experiences for lower-performing Black students ($r = .37$, $p < .05$), but not for

higher performing. Increased stereotyping threat was marginally associated with decreased homework completion (r = -.27, $p < .10$) for higher-performing Black students.

Racilized perceptions are not associated with homework completion for higher- or lower-performing Black students.

**Table 4.** Higher-performing and lower-performing Black Students (higher performing- grades A, B+, B, B-) (lower-performing- grades C+, C, C-, D+, D-, F): Correlations for scores on Measures of Student-Teacher Interactions and Student Achievement

| Measure | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1. Teacher Expectations | --- | .70*** | .45** | .16 | -.11 | -.25 |
| 2. Teacher Encouragement | .58*** | --- | .48** | -.06 | -.08 | -.14 |
| 3. Student Effort | .35** | .54*** | --- | .42** | -.03 | .15 |
| 4. Stereotyping | .01 | -.12 | .02 | --- | .37* | -.11 |
| 5. Racialized Experiences | -.15 | -.43** | -.21 | .24 | --- | .07 |
| 6. Homework Completion | .31* | .42** | .25t | -.27t | .03 | ---- |

Note: Correlations among variables for higher-performing Black students (n=54) are presented below the diagonal. Correlations among variables for lower-performing Black students Group 2 (n=47) are presented above the diagonal.

## Step 3: Results for Black Males and Females

### *Differences Within Group*

Table 5 shows the results of analyses comparing male and female Black high school students for differences in teacher interactions, school experiences, and academic performance. No significant difference was detected between Black male and female students in terms of perceptions of teacher expectations. This suggests that Black male and female students are having and perceiving similar teacher interactions. Interestingly, Black females reported higher levels of teacher encouragement ($p < .05$) than Black males. As discussed earlier, teacher encouragement may encompass more caring interactions with students than teacher expectations. This may indicate a higher perception of caring interactions and relationship with teachers for Black females than for

Black males. Black female students also reported higher levels of student effort ($p < .05$) compared to Black males, though final class grades were reported the same for both groups. For racialized experiences, Black male students reported much higher levels of racialized experiences than Black female students ($p < .05$).

**Table 5.** Black Students: Mean Scores and Standard Deviation Evaluations of Tripod Student Survey Responses by Race and Gender

| | Female Black Students | | Male Black Students | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Variables | M(SD) | n | M(SD) | n | t |
| Teacher-Centered | | | | | |
| Teacher Expectations | 3.8 (.68) | 37 | 3.7 (.61) | 61 | .58 |
| Teacher Encouragement | 4.1 (.60) | 38 | 3.8 (.64) | 60 | 2.6* |
| Student-Centered | | | | | |
| Student Effort | 3.9 (.69) | 39 | 3.6 (.75) | 61 | 2.5* |
| Stereotyping | 2.1 (.95) | 38 | 2.3 (.82) | 60 | -1.1 |
| Racialized Experiences | 2.0 (.90) | 35 | 2.6 (1.0) | 53 | -2.6* |
| Homework Completion | 3.2 (1.2) | 37 | 3.2 (.97) | 50 | -.14 |
| Final Class Grade | 4.2 (.93) | 39 | 4.2 (.82) | 59 | -.56 |

*p <.05,** p <.01,*** p <.001

### *Associations Between Key Study Variables*

Results from Table 6 show that higher teacher expectations was associated with increased perceptions of teacher encouragement for Black male students (r = .69, $p <$ .001) and Black female students (r = .54, $p < .001$.), with an apparent trend toward stronger association for Black male students. Higher student appraisals of teacher expectations were related to greater student effort for females (r(39) =.42, $p < .01$) and males (r(61) = .42, $p < .05$), with stronger significance for females. Teacher expectations were not significantly related to stereotyping threat or racialized experiences for Black

females and males. Teacher expectations were not significantly related to homework completion or final class grade for Black females and males.

Higher teacher encouragement is associated with increased student effort for Black males (r = .48, $p < .001$) and for Black females (r = .50, $p < .01$). Teacher encouragement is not associated with stereotyping threat or racialized experiences for Black males and females. Higher appraisals of teacher encouragement are associated with higher rates of homework completion for Black females (r = .38, $p < .05$), but not for Black males. Teacher encouragement is not associated with final class grade for Black males or females.

Increased student effort was marginally associated (r = .30, $p < 1.0$) with higher perceptions of stereotyping threat for Black females, but not for males. (r = .12, $p$ = ns). Student effort was not significantly related to racialized experiences for Black female and male students. Higher student effort is associated with lower homework completion for Black males (r = -.43, $p < .01$), but is not associated for Black females. Higher student effort is associated with higher final class grade (r = .40, $p < .01$) for Black males and for Black females (r = .34, $p < .05$).

Increased perceptions of stereotyping threat is related to increased perceptions of racialized experiences (r = .35, $p < .05$) for Black males, but not for Black females. The impact of stereotyping threat related to Black females may be related to lower appraisal of homework completion because higher stereotyping threat is associated with lower homework completion (r = -.34, $p < .05$) for Black females, but is not associated for Black males. Stereotyping threat is not associated with final class grade for Black males and females.

Higher homework completion is significantly associated with higher final grade for Black females (r = .46, $p < .01$), but only marginally associated with higher final grade (r = .24, $p < .10$) for Black males. The additional impacts of stereotyping threat and racialized experiences related to Black males may be related to lower appraisal of final class grade.

**Table 6.** Black Males-Black Females: Correlations for Scores on Measures of Student-Teacher Interactions and Student Achievement

| Measure | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Teacher Expectations | --- | .69*** | .42** | .04 | -.19 | .07 | .10 |
| Teacher Encouragement | .54*** | --- | .48*** | -.16 | -.18 | .02 | -.10 |
| Student Effort | .42* | .50** | --- | .12 | -.07 | -.43** | .40** |
| Stereotyping | .16 | .04 | .30t | --- | .35* | -.11 | .10 |
| Racialized Perceptions | -.06 | -.16 | -.08 | .10 | --- | .03 | .02 |
| Homework Completion | .18 | .38* | .26 | -.34* | .07 | ---- | .24t |
| Final Class Grade | .10 | .14 | .34* | -.18 | -.09 | .46** | ---- |

Note: Correlations among variables for Black female students (n=39) are presented below the diagonal. Correlations among variables for Black male students (n=61) are presented above the diagonal.

# CHAPTER V

# DISCUSSION

This study evaluates the role of student perceptions of specific teacher-student interactions and school experiences related to the academic performance of a sample of Black and White students who attended a suburban, high-SES, high-performing, predominantly White public high school.

There were significant differences in patterns of student responses and relationships to predictors of achievement. Direct race and gender effects on student perceptions of teacher interactions and school experiences related to achievement were observed. Findings provided support that both teacher-student interactions and school experiences related to student effort and achievement and suggest that Black and White students, as well as Black higher- and lower performing students and Black male and female students do not share similar appraisals of teacher interactions and school experiences or similar academic outcomes. Generally effects of teacher expectations and teacher encouragement were more positive for White students than for Black students; more positive for higher-performing students than lower- performing students; and more positive for Black females than for Black males. These day-to-day interactions may seem inconsequential or trivial, but student reports suggest that these interactions may reflect a school environment that is perceived to be more supportive of some students than others.

While findings were similar in many ways, overall there were important differences. Particularly, the differences reported respecting student perception of teacher encouragement and teacher expectation supports the important conclusion of Delpit

(1995) that indicates, “Good teaching is not thought of in the same way in all communities” (p. 139) and students may see the same school differently.

Study findings support research that “learning takes place as people interact” (Oakes & Lipton, 2007, p. 170) and teachers interactions with the student directly affect academic performance (Gitomer, 2007; Goodlad, 2004; Darling-Hammond, 2010). This study aligns with recent efforts to identify “specific aspects of a teacher’s practice to support teacher growth and development” such as the Learning About Teaching project sponsored by Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, and led by more than a dozen academic organizations and nonprofits, focused on a close study of specific teacher interactions that impacted teacher effectiveness.

According to Pollack (2008) educators often engage in “shallow cultural analyses” (p. 369) of students and teachers to explain the achievement gap. The findings of this study confirms that there are specific teacher interactions and behaviors that support student academic effort and achievement, and indicates that teachers’ interactions may serve as a protective factor for students exposed to stereotyping and racialized experiences. There are teacher strengths and vulnerabilities identified by students in this study. The central prediction of this study was confirmed and findings supported the hypotheses that students with more positive perceptions of teacher expectation and teacher encouragement would also report more positive perceptions of student effort, lower perceptions of stereotyping threat and racialized experiences, leading to a higher perception of achievement.

***Black and White Students***

Black and White students report no difference in the perceptions of teacher interactions, such as teacher expectations and teacher encouragement. This is consistent with other studies related to student reports of interactions with teachers where White and black students report similar perceptions (Ferguson, 2002). Studies have shown that both teacher encouragement and teacher expectations have a direct relationship to student academic performance (Oakes, 1985; Hallinan, 1994; Banks & Banks, 2004; Delpit, 1995).

As predicted, both Black and White students reported that increased appraisals of teacher expectations were associated with increased perceptions of teacher encouragement, with a slightly higher report for White students. A strong positive and significant correlation was observed between teacher expectations and student effort for Black students and for White students. White students reported higher positive effect of teacher expectations related to student effort than Black students. There is a positive relationship between teachers' expectations and student achievement (Irvine & Irvine, 1995; Polite, 1999). Teachers often work hard to bridge the cultural and racial divide between themselves and students of color. Cultural competence and culturally responsive teaching allude to the efforts predominantly White, middle-class teachers and schools may make to understand, communicate and encourage the achievement of an increasingly diverse student body.

Greater teacher expectations were not significantly associated with stereotyping threat for Black students, but were marginally associated with increased perceptions of

stereotyping threat for White students. Greater teacher expectations were related to less perception of racialized experiences for White students, but not Black students.

Cultural differences may affect the way students and teachers interact, especially for students who are from different cultural or racial groups. Black students may also communicate, perceive and receive instructions differently than White students. Teacher interactions and teacher-student relationship appear to be more important for Black students than for White as discussed earlier in the study by Casteel (1997) where Black students named the teacher as the person they wanted to please the most at a much greater rate than White students (Ferguson, 2003, p. 474). Student's expectations or personal aspirations are often related to perceptions of teacher expectations, yet there may be little variation between educational expectations and aspirations for Black and White students.

As Oakes and Lipton (2007) argue, "history and culture shape and constrain teaching and learning in school" (p. 36). The history of education, intelligence testing and assessments of achievement has been historically influenced by racism and sexism. Teacher and school expectations affect students' performance. Tatum (2007) said that it is likely that Black children "will enter school situations in which they are disadvantaged from the beginning by a teacher's lowered expectations" as compared to White children (p. 51). Research by Singham (2003) reports that Black and Latino students experience three times greater impact from teacher expectations than White students. Nieto (2008) said that "student achievement is related directly to the conditions and contexts in which students learn" (p. 13) and calls the achievement gap an "expectations gap" indicating a lack of resources and fewer opportunities for some students to learn compared to other

students. Tharp (1989) suggests that when teachers become more attuned with the student's culture it supports improved academic achievement.

Teacher expectations may be communicated in various ways and teachers may unknowingly express low expectations for Black students, in covert and overt messages. Expectancy theory explored by Rosenthal and Jacobson (1968) and Merton's (1957) self-fulfilling prophecy suggests that when Black students are aware of teacher's low expectations they tend to expect to perform lower and subsequently perform in ways that tends to confirm the teacher's beliefs . According to a study by Van Den Bergh, Denessen, Hornstra, Voeten, and Holland (2010) teacher show "more negative expectations" (p. 5) toward Black students relative to White students. They also report that teachers "direct less positive speech, including less encouragement" (p. 5) toward Black students when compared to Whites". Importantly, McKown and Weinstein (2008) reported that student achievement is affected by the student's perceptions of teacher's expectations related to diversity.

Black and White students engage their class-work and lessons through the teacher interactions and relationship. Higher perceptions of teacher expectations were associated with higher reports of homework completion and final class grade for White students, but showed no association for Black students. Teacher-student communications can be complex and related to the context in which they occur and "shapes in powerful ways how we think and act" (Tatum, 2007, p. 40). Verbal and nonverbal exchanges between teacher and student greatly affect communication and interactions (Gay, 2000).

Black and White students reported that higher student appraisal of teacher encouragement was associated with higher appraisal of student effort, with a slightly

higher report for White students than for Black. Findings indicate that teacher encouragement is important to all students and is associated with greater student effort. Teacher expectations and teacher encouragement are similar interactions, but there were considerable differences in Black and White student perceptions of teacher expectations, with a generally more positive response from students to teacher encouragement. Teacher encouragement appears to communicate more sense of teacher caring about the student. This sense of caring is at the heart of the teacher student relationship. Students often "linked their achievement to their caring relationships with teachers" (Darling-Hammond, 2010, p. 248). All students report a positive and significant perception of teacher encouragement related to their efforts in school. Teacher encouragement is not related to stereotyping threat for Black or White students. This was a surprising finding considering that the all students reported high levels of teacher encouragement and teacher encouragement that would likely serve as a protective factor for students who experience stereotyping threat.

For Black and White students, teacher encouragement is associated with lower reports of racialized experiences. Positive teacher behaviors appear to reduce student perceptions of racialized experiences at school. This finding suggests that teachers can affect students' perceptions of racialized experiences indirectly by encouraging the student in multiple everyday ways that may have little to do with race or confronting issues of racialized experiences. This protective factor can be important, even more important to students who report high levels of perceptions of racialized experiences at school. Higher perceptions of teacher encouragement was associated with higher reports of homework completion and final class grade for White students and showed marginal

association between teacher encouragement and homework completion for Black students.

Interactions with teachers and school experiences may affect the academic outcomes of all students. If we look at the achievement gap as an opportunity gap between classrooms and schools, we may discover ways to improve achievement and decrease opportunity disparities in school environment, resources and teachers (Oakes & Lipton, 2007; Nieto, 2008; Darling-Hammond, 2010). A teacher in predominantly White schools can show initial support by welcoming Black students to the classroom and the school, recognizing their culture and identity, as well as providing support for them respecting any difficulties and challenges that may come up in the setting and context. What happens in the classroom between the teacher and student sets the tone for the student and tremendously affects student success or student failure in class and in school.

Encouragement and support from a teacher can motivate Black students, as well as elicit their participation and cooperation. To believe in your students and to let them know that you do is important. Teacher encouragement can help students to seek appropriate and useful goals and provide helpful motivation to succeed. It is important to recognize the contextual challenges students may face as their motivation to learn and to change depends on the characteristics of the learning environment around them, especially teachers (Midgley, 1993). All adolescents, minority and White, rich and poor, go through a struggle in the effort to find their own identity and to gain approval and acceptance (Harpalani, 2002). The teacher serves an important role in helping Black students overcome challenges. Donovan and Cross (2002) indicates the reciprocity and

influence of teacher support, as "the child can perform very differently depending on the level of teacher support" (p. 3).

Teacher expectations were not associated with academic achievement for Black students, as it was for White students, and teacher encouragement was positively linked to final class grade for White students, but was negatively linked for Black students. Findings suggests that the teacher student relationship may be much more important to Black students than to White students, related to academic performance. As reported earlier here Casteel (1997) indicated that Black students named the teacher as the person they wanted to please the most at a much greater rate than White students (Ferguson, 2003, p. 474). Children of color appear to be more aware and sensitive to their interactions with White teachers, and tend to according to Delpit (1995) "value the social aspects of an environment to a greater extent than do 'mainstream students' and tend to put an emphasis on feelings, acceptance and emotional closeness" (p. 140) than do White students. Research has also indicated that Black children's motivation and effort in school is more affected by a need for affiliation, the sense of belonging and their perceptions of the school environment than White students (Walton & Cohen, 2007; Delpit, 1995; Steele, 2010). In predominantly White schools, Black students may be worried about whether or not they belong, or ever could belong (Steele, 2010) resulting in Black students struggling to fit in and suffering a "sense of marginalization" (p. 24). Steele (2010) goes further to suggest larger environmental practices, saying that Black students "were affected more by the ways campus life was racially organized than by the racism of particular people" (p. 24) and that "friendships and social life organized by race" may prevent Black students from feeling a sense of fitting in or belonging. and He

describes a "campus culture…prevailing values, social norms, preferences, modes of dress, images of beauty, musical preferences, modes of religious expression…was dominated by whites" (p. 25) that may exclude Black students. Further addressing the structural and environmental nature of the challenge for Black students in predominantly white schools, Andrews (2009) states that "racial and ethnic minority youth construct and understand racial and achievement identities in relation to the socio-cultural context in which they learn". Because of larger institutional issues, teachers play a crucial role in helping Black students successfully learn about identity issues related to race and culture, as well as encouraging student sense of belonging and student academic achievement (Tatum, 2007; Delpit, 1995; Harter, 1990, 1993a). Importantly, the student perception of increased teacher encouragement appears to be highly related to improved school experiences and greater student achievement fr all students, but may be more important for Black students, and especially Black males.

White children experience no difference in perceptions of how hard they work at school compared to Black students, only marginally greater homework completion, but report a much stronger perception of higher grades than Black students. Given the typically worse performance of Black students, as a group, compared to Whites, Eccleston, Smyth and Lopoo (2009) suggests that Black students "are challenged with seeing themselves positively" (p. 3) in the academic setting. Tatum (2007) concurs stating that "it is often harder for those students who have been historically marginalized in our culture to see themselves reflected positively in school" (p. 114).

White students may "see themselves reflected in the environment around them, in the curriculum, among the faculty and staff, and in the faces of their classmates" (Tatum,

2007, p. 21), Black student may suffer severe isolation in the same classrooms and schools (Lewis, p. 80). Although there were no statistically significant differences between Black and White students on teacher interactions measures, Black students would likely benefit from greater teacher encouragement and support. Positive teacher interactions, while important to all students, may hold greater meaning and importance to Black students in predominantly White schools than it does for White students.

Lower perceptions of stereotyping threat was related to higher appraisals of student effort with similar magnitude for Black and White students, but not significantly related for Black students. This finding indicates that White students may be at risk of stereotype threat and would benefit from less exposure to stereotyping threat. Steele (2010) indicates that stereotype threat can negatively affects many types of performances, including White students and the primary prerequisite is simply that "the person care about the performance in question" (p. 98). Lower student reports of racialized experiences were related to higher appraisal of student effort for White students, but not for Black students. Increased student effort was related to higher reports of homework completion and final class grade for White students and for Black students.

In correlation results both Black and White students reported that higher appraisals of stereotyping threat related to increased perceptions of racialized experiences. Surprisingly, White students reported perceptions of stereotyping threat that was significantly related to racilalized experiences in school. This finding, while surprising, indicates that White children may also endure negative consequences related to already-held-beliefs about them as White children and their work in school. Steele (2010) demonstrated that all students are vulnerable and likely to experience negative

outcomes when they are exposed to stereotype threats in school. Nevertheless, Black students reported a much greater appraisal of stereotyping associated with racialized experiences than White students. Lower reports of racialized experiences may be representative of the current attempts to be colorblind. At the same time that segregation is increasing and the achievement gap widens we see less reports of racism and racialized experience. White students will tend to not report racilaized school experiences as racilized experiences because of "colorblind racism". Many Whites "explains contemporary racial inequality as the outcomes of nonracial dynamics" (Bonilla-Silva, 2010, p. 2). Whites tend to "rationalize minority contemporary status" (p. 2) even while condemning the continuing disparate failure of Black students compared to Whites. Bonilla-Silva (2010) also posits that Whites' racial attitudes are a mix of tolerance and intolerance, where Whites may espouse acceptance and support of equality, reject overt racism, yet decline to participate in policies or practices that would actually make the stated principles a reality. This may result in confusing and mixed messages about racial issues and serves to makes policies and practices ineffective in supporting change.

American society, and especially the news and entertainment media, and educational professionals often present very negative pictures and images of Black Americans. When we take into account the negative information and statistical data about Black Americans, we may be led to make conclusions about individual behavior drawn from the data or messages about the aggregate group. This information may, consciously and unconsciously support our beliefs or generalizations about the attitudes, behaviors, successes, and failures of Black students. Broad generalizations and stereotypes also support the expectations in many schools that Black students will not be smart, will break

rules and will get into trouble in school (Adams, 2008). Such generalizations can result in what Steele (1997) describes as stereotype threat for all Black students, ones who are successful, as well as for the ones who are not. Despite these negative messages, positive messages and experiences from teachers and schools should support positive self-esteem and positive behaviors for Black students. Expectancy value theory suggests that "people orient themselves to the world according to their expectations (beliefs) and evaluations" (Palmgreen, 1984). The expectancy-value model of achievement choice is a framework for understanding how student performance and choice are related motivational beliefs and values. Educational transitions influence student expectations and values, and expectations and values influence the choice of activities and affects student performance in different academic areas. Therefore, expressing and holding positive beliefs, expectations and perceptions for Black students will affect their academic outcomes positively; conversely continual exposure to negative beliefs and expectations affect student outcomes negatively. The reciprocal nature of this theory suggests that the academic expectations and beliefs of students, whether positive or negative, will affect their academic performance. Reciprocally, academic performance, whether positive or negative, affects a student's ongoing academic expectations and beliefs. Thus, academic success will likely breed more academic success. This supports the focus of this study in identifying important contextual influences, such as "teacher expectations" and "teacher encouragement" on student academic performance and further consideration of various interventions supporting academic performance factors with Black students.

Positive relationships with teachers, in the class and outside, have been shown to increase student success in school and reduce dropouts. Students need to feel a sense of

acceptance, belonging and caring (Delpit, 1995). One student stated that "I needed someone to be there to show they care about me for me to be motivated" (Oakes & Lipton, 2007, p. 248). Everyday classroom life is richly informed by complex interactions and relationships between student and teachers. Teachers convey either respect or disrespect for student identity and their potential for learning.

Higher perceptions of stereotyping threat were related to increased homework completion and decreased final class grade for White students and decreased homework completion for Black students. Higher perceptions of racialized experiences were related to lower homework completion and lower final grade for White students. Increased homework completion was associated with higher final class grade for White students and for Black students.

The consistent association of negative experiences with lower academic consequences indicates children who face racialized experiences at school are at greater risk of poor academic achievement when compared with their peers (Dovidio, 2001; Salvatore & Shelton, 2007). Teachers and peers may be unaware or unwilling to recognize or intervene. As the diversity of our schools continue to increase, so will the demand for racially and culturally competent teachers (Young, 2003; Darling-Hammond, 2010). Improving the racial climate of school will likely improve the academic opportunity, effort and performance of all children. These disturbing findings about race mirror other research about the ongoing impact and consequence of what Sue (2005) calls "racial microaggressions", the subtle, but devastating effects of perceived negative treatment based in race (Steele, Spencer, & Aronson, 2002). Analyses to identify differences in students' reports revealed very similar reports on the face of it.

Conversations with other colleagues suggested that they have also found that many young people are hesitant to speak up about issues of race in school (Tatum, 2007; Bell, 2002-2003; Yoshino, 2006). Most students reported very positive perceptions of teacher interactions related to teacher expectations and teacher encouragement. This predicts a more positive school climate and assets that can be employed to continue to work with students to improve the racial and cultural context in which many of our teachers and children struggle. Our schools are intense sites of cultural and racial interactions.

***Black Students- Higher-Performing Versus Lower-Performing***

This research project started with the question of whether teachers make a difference in the achievement of students, particularly Black students in high performing schools, high-SES, predominantly White high schools. The perspectives of the students included in this study indicate that teachers do matter and that their every day practices are impacting children in a positive manner (Clotfelter, et al., 2004). This also suggests that improving the teacher-student relationship in the identified areas would decrease the negative experiences for student and support increased student effort and academic performance (Tatum, 2007). Considerable research does support the conclusion, as this study does, that teachers are important (Grant & Sleeter, 2007; Nieto, 2008). But it still remains difficult to define what makes a good teacher. The everyday interactions utilized in this study presented specific and key teacher-student interactions that can inform future research.

As predicted, for both higher- and lower-performing Black students' greater teacher expectations were associated with increased teacher encouragement. Interestingly, lower-performing students reporting a higher effect suggesting that teacher

expectations and teacher encouragement may be more important for lower-performing students. For higher-and lower-performing Black students, a higher appraisal of teacher expectations is related to greater student motivation, with lower-performing Black students again reporting a higher perception. This unusual finding suggests that lower-performing students, while perceived as demonstrating less concern or interests in teacher interactions may actually be more concerned and affected by teacher student interactions.

Teacher expectation was not significantly related to stereotyping threat or racialized experiences for higher- or lower-performing Black students. Higher teacher expectations were associated with increased homework completion or higher-performing Black students. Teachers can better prepare themselves for success in the classroom by learning about and understanding their own culture and identity and recognizing how it interacts with Black students and their families. Many White teachers find themselves in the dilemma described by Palmer (2007); Palmer while teaching in Appalachia stated, "I was unprepared for the depth of the culture gap between my students and me, and I was often unable to teach across it. My own 'capacity for connectedness'– a key concept in the courage to teach - frequently failed because I lacked knowledge of 'the other'" (p. xi). The teacher student relationship is likely to be very important to both lower- and higher-performing Black students. A teacher in a multicultural context not only needs strong teaching skills, but also needs meaningful knowledge of the students they intend to teach. Eisner (1991) said, "Educational connoisseurship is enhanced and perceptions made more acute as the context is known" (p. 78). The better a teacher knows and understands the context in which they teach, the more likely they will successfully teach the students.

Increased teacher encouragement was associated with increased student effort for both higher- and lower-performing Black students, with higher-performing Black students showing a stronger association. Increased student appraisal of teacher encouragement was negatively, but not significantly related to stereotyping threat for higher-performing or lower-performing Black students. This is an interesting finding as it suggests that both higher- and lower-performing Black students are sharing similar experiences related to race in school. Increased appraisal of teacher encouragement is related to decreased student reports of racialized experiences for the higher-performing Black students. Higher teacher encouragement was associated with increased homework completion for higher-performing Black students. Teachers can reinforce for students that they believe they are capable and smart. This simple act is powerful and encouraging to student performance (Cohen, 2007). Effective teachers help educate Black students about the meaning of their behaviors, how they are perceived and develop ways to encourage student identification and bonding with school and schoolwork. Schools and classrooms often practice what Darling-Hammond (2010) describes as "control of behavior rather than development of community" (p. 63) and in such settings "students are likely to experience such schools as noncaring, even adversarial environments" (p. 63). Teachers can help students understand the importance of educational success, and work to create a rigorous and nurturing culture that operates with the belief that all children can learn (Verdugo, 2002).

Higher appraisal of student effort is related to increased reports of stereotyping threat in a positive and significant correlation for lower-performing Black students. Steele (2010) suggests that, "Under some circumstances, the motivation to disprove stereotypes

can have a constructive effect" (p. 112), but he also reports that some students resisting stereotype may over exert themselves to defy the stereotype and engage in what he calls "over-efforting" (p. 104). Some higher-performing Black students may work extremely hard to distinguish themselves from lower-performing students and other students who may be perceived or accused of acting what may be considered ghetto or unacceptable behaviors in school. Steele (2010) warns that such intense efforts to counter or overcome stereotypes or attitudes and beliefs that "downwardly constitute" (p. 26) Black students, and may result in "underperformance" for some Black students (p. 105). The story of John Henry, the mythical figure who contested a steam-driven machine, is used as a frame to explain the concept of over-efforting. "There he saw Black students- in an effort to succeed where their abilities are negatively stereotyped- following a strategy of intense, isolated effort, a strategy that often set them up for defeats and discouragements (p. 103).

According to Steele (2010) over-efforting, can backfire on students and cause "highly inefficient strategies and rigidities" resulting in underachievement for students resisting negative stereotypes (p. 111). Very importantly, this dilemma challenges lower-performing students when they are attempting to learn or master new knowledge and skills, which is also the time these students need teachers the most. Recognizing the complex struggle Black students may face respecting racialized experiences and stereotyping threats can help teachers to better support and guide lower-performing Black students and other students to greater success. Student effort was not significantly related to racialized experiences for higher-performing and lower-performing Black students.

Increased student effort was marginally associated with homework completion for higher-performing Black students.

Teachers can encourage less competitive interactions or comparisons between students. It also supports the development of more responsive and adaptive patterns of learning, helping student to recognize, engage and understand different learning styles and modalities, employ new strategies and skills, experience less fear of failure or embarrassment, and exhibit more willingness to admit to seek help when needed. This results in a more active and engage classroom, more willing to engage challenges, and experiencing more positive feelings about school and themselves as a learner (Anderman & Maehr, 1994; Ryan, Hicks, & Midgley, 1997). Teacher practices, communication, rules and expectations in the classroom and in school can support students by not segregating or grouping students by ability and by not relying on standardized tests as the primary or only measure of learning. In a report concerning testing very young children, Lorrie A. Shepherd (1994), a distinguished scholar in the field at the University of Colorado, declared: “Developmental and pre-academic skills tests are based on outmoded theories of aptitude and learning that originated in the 1930s. The excessive use of these tests and the negative consequences of being judged unready focused a spotlight on the tests' substantive inadequacies”.

Each student will bring something special to the class of learners, if we create a safe and supportive learning environment. Teachers can encourage a rigorous learning community by assigning group tasks and activities, by not promoting competition between individual students, and by creating classroom challenges that provides opportunities for all students to participate and to succeed.

Black students can feel trapped in the negative expectations and messages from teachers and school, leading to low self-esteem and low expectations (Van Den Bergh, et al., 2010). The encouragement often provided for young Black students are admonitions about what not to do, and warnings against acting out negative perceptions, behaviors and attitudes. To support Black students to have more confidence, increased self-esteem and high expectations, teachers should encourage student choice respecting their education and encourage their input on classroom decisions and decision making. Opportunity to have an active role in decisions that are made can increase the investment and interest. Students often express a desire to be included in making decisions and having a sense of control over their activities, but research suggests that typically there are fewer opportunities for self-determination in school (Midgley & Feldlaufer, 1987). By creating opportunities for student voice and participation in classroom and school level decisions, teachers may positively influence the sense of belonging and empower Black students to engage and enjoy greater academic success in school.

Increased appraisals of stereotyping threat related to increased reports of racialized experiences for lower-performing Black students, but not for higher-performing Black students. Increased stereotyping threat was marginally associated with decreased homework completion for higher-performing Black students. Lower-performing students appear to be more aware, as well as more vulnerable to stereotyping threat and also have greater perceptions of racialized experiences in school than higher-performing Black students. Lower-performing student likely perceive their lack of academic success to be related to their identity, but stereotyping threat is also marginally related to higher-performing students respecting less homework completion (Steele,

2010). Lessening the impact of stereotyping threats would likely provide more opportunity for lower- and higher-performing Black students to improve achievement.

***Black Male and Female Students***

Consistent with the literature, in this study, Black females experienced a more positive school environment than Black males in public high schools (Noguera, 2004). While both groups reported similar perceptions of teacher expectation, Black females reported perceptions of higher teacher encouragement than was reported by Black males. They also reported higher perceptions of levels of student effort and homework completion than Black males. Consistent with previous studies, increased teacher encouragement is associated with improved student behaviors that support academic achievement, such as greater student effort and greater completion of homework (Noguera, 2008). Student reports respecting racialized experiences in school were considerable different based on their race and gender, and suggested that students of color, and particularly Black males, still occupy a school environment very different than what White and Black female children experience (Lewis, 1995).

Education and schools shape lives, both positively and negatively. Calling school a "contradictory resource" Levinson and Holland (1996) further reflects on the conflicted outcomes where school do provide freedom and opportunity, but also operates to reproduce class, gender and racial inequality, stating "Ironically, school knowledges and disciplines may, while offering certain freedoms and opportunities" also "bind them even more tightly to systems of class, gender and race inequality" (p. 1).

Two recent national studies highlight the continued, potentially worsening educational plight, particularly for Black males in American schools. In their report

entitled A Call for Change: The Social and Educational Factors Contributing to the Outcomes of Black Males in Urban Schools, authors Lewis, Simon, Uzzell, Horwitz and Casserly (2010) call the current state of affairs for Black male students a "national catastrophe" (p. 2). The prognosis is just as bleak according to the results of The Schott 50 State Report on Public Education and Black Males (Schott Foundation for Public Education, 2010). The report shows that, with few exceptions, Black males across the United States, in both rural and urban public school districts, are less likely to graduate from high school than their White classmates. The news is still troubling in states with high rates of Black high school graduates, however. In Maine, for example, Black males are still over-represented in disciplinary action and special education, under-represented in AP courses, and attain lower reading and math scores than their White peers. That this occurs in a context where Black males are supposedly graduating from high school at higher rates than Whites puts the seemingly good news from states like Maine in doubt and brings up serious questions about the possibility of social promotion.

Internationally, the situation of minority males in education seems to be just as critical. Munns (2000); Marie, Fergusson, and Boden (2008); Gazeley and Dunne (2007); as well as Caldas, Bernier, and Marceau (2009) attest to similar difficulties facing minority and/or indigenous males in Australia, New Zealand, the U.K. and Canada respectively. This research indicates that, insofar as modern, industrialized, standardized public education shares many features throughout the colonized, developed world, the effects on non-Whites in its midst will likewise be similar.

As predicted, for Black female and male students, higher appraisals of teacher expectations significantly related to increased appraisals of teacher encouragement for

Black females and Black males, with males reporting a higher effect. Higher student appraisals of teacher expectations were related to greater student effort for Black females and males, with stronger significance for females. Teacher expectations were not significantly related to stereotyping threat or racialized experiences for Black females and Black males. Teacher expectations were not significantly related to homework completion or final class grade for Black females or males.

Higher student appraisal of teacher encouragement related to increased appraisal of student effort for Black females and males, with females reporting higher. Teacher encouragement was not significantly related to stereotyping threat or racialized experiences for Black females and males. Higher appraisals of teacher encouragement are associated with higher rates of homework completion for Black females, but not for Black males. Teacher encouragement is not associated with final class grade for Black males or females. Again increased teacher encouragement is reported as an important positive link for girls related to greater student effort, increased homework completion and decreased racialized experiences for Black females than for Black males.

For Black female students higher appraisals of student effort was marginally related to increased reports of stereotyping threat. Student effort was not significantly related to racialized experiences for Black female and male students. Higher student effort is associated with lower homework completion for Black males, but is not associated for Black females. Higher student effort is associated with higher final class grade for Black males and for Black females.

Black males reported much higher and more significantly related appraisals of an association between stereotyping threats and racialized experiences than Black females.

This may reflect gender differences associated with student perceptions and experiences of stereotyping threat and racilized experiences in school, and the greater challenges that Black males face in school. Current research indicates that Black males are in a crisis in public schools, in relationship to other students, even other Black female students (Noguera, 2004; Smith, 2004). Higher stereotyping threat is associated with lower homework completion for Black females, but is not associated for Black males. Stereotyping threat is not associated with final class grade for Black males and females. Student perceptions of racialized experiences are not associated with homework completion or final class grade. Higher homework completion is significantly associated with higher final grade for Black females, but only marginally associated with higher final grade for Black males.

Thus, through the lens of race and achievement, the rejection of the academic setting and school in general may seem appropriate and related to maintaining self-esteem, group cohesion and racial identity to Black males. When being smart, in the context of a predominantly White high school, is defined as being "White" then Black males may struggle to find alternative ways to be seen as, smart or successful and still maintain their racial and cultural identity (Kelley, 1994; Ogbu, 1990). Achievement may be something different than what is expected for lower-performing students, who may define higher-performing students as "White". If it is true as Harris (1998) proposes, then "Self-esteem is a function of status within the group" (p. 243) and one of the ways that Black students, as a group, may maintain self-esteem is by resisting "acting White" and severely criticizing other Blacks exhibit characteristics or behaviors that are considered "acting White."

Minority student achievement gaps have multiple causes, ranging from socio-economic disadvantage and family dislocation to unsupportive subcultures and many extensive school reform efforts have failed to make even a dent in these gaps. Recognizing Black students' behaviors, especially Black males', as related to a struggle related to self-esteem may help teachers to intervene in more positive ways that can assist Black students to find more positive ways to protect self-esteem and maintain a healthy self-identity in predominantly White schools. Creating opportunities for all students to work cooperatively together can help to build a community of learners who can come to know each other and support each other. Cooperative learning, as a teaching strategy, can help reduce the competitive cost of learning, cultural or racial conflicts, and provide positive learning opportunities and interactions for all students. Students who do well in school and are motivated to be successful may positively influence their peers who may not be as motivated to succeed in school (Brophy, 1998).

West (1999) has suggested that issues related to race may be very difficult for students and adults to understand because "They don't have that thicker historical context" (p. 31) in which current racial inequity in school is grounded. The historical context informs and frames the present perspective and reality of the educational context. We cannot separate an event or interaction from the history and context of the interactions and experiences for students in school. In order to understand an event or interaction, and the perceptions of students respecting specific events or interactions "we have to consider the surrounding events, we have to consider the way in which this part event is embedded in the sequence of events" (p. 34), experienced by the student.

Because of changes in American society the context has shifted and changed tremendously over the past 50 years, but significantly the structures, resources, advantages and outcomes in education are still related to race. Historical forces do serve to define the present, but we are also participants in the creation of the present and already-held-beliefs and perspectives define what we see and believe. Lippmann (1922) said that "for the most part we do not see first, and then define, we define first and then see" (pp. 54, 55). The historical representations do affect our perceptions and experiences, but "Not only immediately preceding happenings can influence the interpretation of this pattern; also stereotypes may play this role" (Hamilton, 2005, p. 34).

Constructing success alludes to a process, complex, organized and clearly articulated to multiple participants. This describes the nature of this argument. Too often in the intense dialogue about educational success and failure it appears to be a blame game or some contest between characters. If by chance we can find a likely culprit, such as a teacher, we often neglect to continue to interrogate the system, work hard to "fix" the teachers, and assume that this will create success for the child. As articulated here, the teacher is one of the most important components of the system of education, especially from the perspective of the child. But the teacher is only one component of a complex system, in an "array" or "concentration" of factors that despite our best efforts seems only to yield modest or temporary improvements for certain children. Rather than independent components, it is helpful to analyze the system as a whole and when making recommendations, adjustments, and corrections to remember that all parts of this system are connected or related. As with the analogy of the chain, it is only as strong as its weakest link, so is our efforts to educate every child, whether they are Black or White,

rich or poor, abled or differently-abled. As emergence theory suggest, the various components of a system are integrated and each affects the operation of the other. The outcomes of the system are the result of the interactions of all of its parts. Any single part of the system is necessarily also a part of the whole and shares equally in the responsibility for the shared outcomes (Ferris, 2003). Individually, teachers, parents, school leaders, scholars, teacher programs, departments of education and politicians may claim that they are doing their jobs for all students, but ultimately we are all in the same boat, and it is all of us, including our students, who are responsible for the continuing failure within our systems of education across this country. We cannot continue to lay blame at each other's feet while we still fail. In order to be more successful we must dig deep, according to Dr. Paul Ruiz of Education Trust, all "teachers, like archaeologist, must keep discovering, keep uncovering new knowledge" and "must be sensitive to the needs of the students we have", especially the children who need good teachers the most (Ruiz, conference presentation, Portland, OR 2006).

This study was prompted by the very nature of the racial achievement gap, especially between White children and Black children, which exists in almost every public school in every state in America. The persistence of an academic gap between children who have even slightly darker skin than another child cannot be explained by referring to the fragile and unstable biological claims. Even in very successful, high performing, high-SES, predominantly White schools, where we find the best teachers and best resources, we still find a racial achievement gap. This remains puzzling and disturbing. If this achievement gap is not related to skin color what are the persistent causes of disparity in achievement for children in the same schools, in the classrooms and

with the same teachers? Definable reasons exist for this disparity in academic achievement. The voice of the student may prove to be a valuable resource in understanding and addressing the causes of the racial achievement gap.

But neither teachers nor schools exist in a vacuum. As Tatum (2007) states, "We are all products of our culture and its history" (p. 51) and undoubtedly affected by the racial climate around us. Baldwin (1988) says that "the whole process of education occurs within a social framework" (p. 4), and results in what Oakes and Lipton (2007) calls "unequal patterns of school opportunities and results" (p. 35), that significantly mirror the societal inequalities prevalent outside schools (Apple, 1982; Anyon, 1981; Bourdieu, 1974). For a society that is becoming more and more unequally divided this is a concern. Schools serve as a socializing agent for our children. As Levinson and Holland (1996) state "modern schools are central to the social and cultural shaping of the young" (p. 1). Education and schools shape lives, both positively and negatively. Ferguson (2002) observes that after racial integration we still find "racial and ethnic achievement disparities in places where schools are reputedly excellent" (p. 1). Schools, as part of the larger society, are key sites of social reproduction, but are also key sites of potential learning, growth and change. For this reason Levinson and Holland (1996) describes schools as "one of the major sites of struggle" (p. 2) and teachers find themselves "struggling against the history and culture that constrains teaching and learning in today's diverse schools" (Oakes & Lipton, 2007, p. 36). Regarding stereotypes, Tatum (2007) advises that "Unless we are consciously working to counter their influence on our behaviors, it is likely that they will shape (subtly perhaps) our interactions with those who have been so stereotyped" (p. 52). Educators must be actively engaged in

understanding and countering their own stereotypes and helping students to resist and defy already held-beliefs that may negatively affect their academic success.

Race, as a perceived biological reality and construct, should be at the periphery of conversations about improving the academic performance of Black students. Racial categories should be viewed as distinctly social constructions, not predictors or determinants of academic performance. They can be useful statistical means to locate and track student performance, reports, experiences, results and outcomes of specific interventions, but should not be permanent markers of achievement or failure in schools.

Everyday interactions can "not only reflect the relations of culture and power in the society, they constitute these relations and thereby embody a transformative potential" (Cummins, 1994, p. 13). These subtle interactions may represent a way of maintaining the status quo or they can be the means of developing improved teacher/student interactions and relationships that affect positive behavior change and be a foundation for improved academic performance for Black students. The voices of Black and White students may prove to be important input for developing more effective approaches to improve the academic efforts and success for themselves and others.

Ultimately teachers have great influence on the academic success for all students, but the teacher is not the sole problem. The teacher, like the student is inside a larger system of education where multiple influences and factors affect teacher practices. Institutional and systemic challenges can stifle even good teachers and make it more difficult to successful help all children. The teacher may likely be a canary for the system. When the teachers are healthy then our children will likely be healthier. Students in this study reported a consistent achievement gap between White and Black students,

Black higher- and lower-performing and Black male and female students. That this response is consistent with what may be considered more objective research is rather startling. For students to report their own situation indicates that students are accurately aware of the teacher interactions, school experiences and academic outcomes in school. If the students were permitted to report their own grades, why would every single student not predict brightest success for themselves in school? Desegregation has failed in public schools and the best schools are still predictably White and middle to upper class. Thus, we find the high-SES, high-performing, suburban, predominantly White schools proving to be sites of good educational opportunities for White children, at the same time as Black children suffer an academic achievement gap within the same good schools. This should cause us all to pause and re-evaluate our own posture on race and education, individually and institutionally. The children are not running schools that reproduce the historic patterns of failure. The critical work that must be done to close the Black and White achievement gap will require structural and systemic changes that we educators and adults have not been willing or able to make. That is no excuse.

Would this research project result in the same findings within predominantly Black or minority schools or would students report similarly respecting teacher student interactions in schools with more Black or minority teachers? Schools do not exist in a vacuum, but reflect the community around them. In a more racially diverse school and setting there would likely be different challenges and outcomes for Black students. Black or minority teachers may likely be, or may be perceived by students as more sensitive, aware and skilled at addressing issues of the students. While many of the objective requirements demanded for teachers focus on skills and academic practices, but as

(Delpit, 1995) suggests, many teachers of colors believe that "teaching begins instead with the establishment of relationships between themselves and their students" (p. 139). Interactions between Black teachers and Black students may be more culturally related or bound, depending on both student and teacher background. Teachers of color may face greater scrutiny than White teachers because even though they may "be responding to their student's real needs" they may find themselves negatively assessed by evaluators of their skills in delivering content (Delpit, 1995). Despite these considerations, there is much evidence to support a strong belief that all teachers can hold high expectations for all students, encourage and support all students and develop positive teacher-student relationships with all students, despite the differences of race, class or gender presented in a diverse school setting (Verdugo, 2002). As the title of this project alludes, constructing the success of Black children and other marginalized children will not happen as a coincidence or in coordination with or as some side effect of the education provided to White children, but will likely be a purposeful act of deconstruction of complex and often subtle barriers, and the development and effective implementation of ways and means to deliver excellent educational opportunities to Black children, at least as well as we do to White children. We will then likely see the closing of the racial achievement gap.

# CHAPTER VI

## LIMITATIONS OF STUDY

The population of Black students in the sample is very small, in comparison to the much larger population of White students, which challenge the methodological procedures and limited the scope of this project. And a smaller population actually completed the survey, meaning that the sample was not a truly random sample, but was a selected group who had participated in the survey. The use of a self-reported survey also requires that the responses be carefully analyzed and considered. The development of variables to represent constructs of teacher behavior is at best a crude proxy for the actual teacher behaviors that students might be assessing and reporting. This limits finding to be indicators or suggestions for future research and future investigation. The secondary analysis of extant data added another level of complexity and potential confounds to the project. There were interesting findings that may guide future research in continuing to determine what makes a good teacher for all children.

The results are from a unique school district and community that presents a set of unique circumstances that situates this project in a larger conversation related to race, culture and change in education. This research model offers an objective perspective of teacher student interactions that will likely be useful in other settings, but would need to take into considerations the unique characteristics of another setting.

While not exposed to many of the same issues as inner-city or urban Black students, there are particular risks of failure for Black students in predominantly White, high-SES and high-performing schools. This study is limited in generalizability by unique characteristics of the schools and the population under study. While there may be

similar challenges facing Black students in each school, there are also considerable differences in each school, including teaching staff and students that affect student outcomes. In schools with larger populations of black students there would be different contextual issues related to race and identity, as well as related to teacher makeup and relationships. The reference group for Black students in a predominantly Black school would most likely be other Black students. References to "acting white" or "being smart" would likely be more related to actual cultural practices rather than aligned to actual racial identities. If White students were not the overwhelming majority as in this study, there would likely be stronger influences of other racial and cultural groups on the schools norms and perceptions of success.

The lack of consistency in definitions, meanings and concepts related to race and teacher-student interactions will likely influence the results of survey reports and likely differ from school to school. Establishing a common set of definitions and language for these issues across the district may be a useful strategy to establish consistent definitions and understanding of the outcomes and goals. The results may also be affected by unique school factors; therefore the finding will not be generalizable from district to district, or school to school. Such factors include the student group, staff, teachers, parents, and administrators who will differ at each high school. Outcomes of this report may prove to be specific the 4J school district, but likely to be comparable or to other schools or communities.

# CHAPTER VII

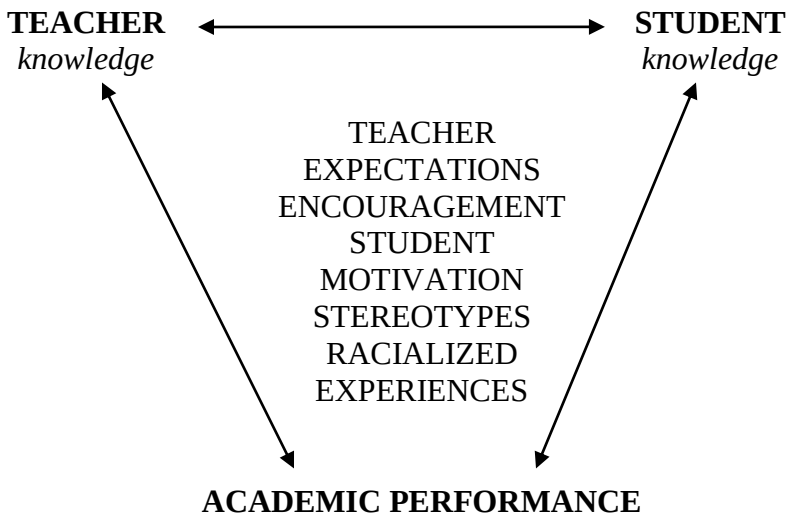
## SIGNIFICANCE OF STUDY

The results of the data analysis should provide a close look at specific teacher and student interactions in the 4J school district. Subjects for this study were limited by the small number of Black students in the high school and though the majority of the group took the Tripod survey, it resulted in a small sample of participants. Despite the small numbers, this research may offer some added knowledge and insight to ongoing discussions respecting the teacher and student relationship and the influence of teacher attitudes and behaviors on academic performance of Black students, as well as others. Students of color will make up almost half (46%) of the nation's school-age youth by 2020, and about 27% of those students will be victims of poverty (Pallas, Natriello, & McDill, 1989).

Andrews (2009) advises that "It is important to understand these students' experiences and identity constructions because nearly 30 percent of Black students still attend predominantly white suburban public schools resulting from desegregation efforts in many large U.S. cities" (p. 299). This study may also help to inform the conversation and add insight respecting the racial achievement gap and the efforts to reduce or eliminate it. This report will be provided to the school district under study and the author will be available to the leadership team of the school and to the students and teachers in the classroom.

APPENDIX A

MODEL TEACHER STUDENT RELATIONSHIP (FREIRE, 1970)



APPENDIX B

TRIPOD STUDENT SURVEY INSTRUMENT (FOUR PAGES)

## *Tripod Project*

### *Survey for Secondary School Students (version 3)*

| Please indicate how true each statement below is for you in THIS class. The reason that some questions are very similar to others is to help make it really clear what you think. There are no right or wrong answers. Your answers will be combined with other students' answers, so no one will ever know how you as an individual answered. Please be completely honest. Thanks. | | Totally Untrue | Hardly at all | Some-what | Mostly | Totally True |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Section 1.** | | | | | | |
| 1. | In this class, it is important to me to thoroughly understand my class work. | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| 2. | One of my goals in this class has been to learn as much as I can. | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| 3. | My behavior in this class is good. | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| 4. | I like the topics we learn about in this class. | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| 5. | I don't like asking the teacher in this class for help, even if I need it. | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| 6. | When I work hard in this class, an important reason is the teacher demands it. | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| 7. | I would ask the teacher for help, if I needed it. | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| 8. | I sometimes skip coming to this class when I'm supposed to be here. | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| 9. | Even if the work in this class is hard, I can learn it. | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| 10. | My teacher in this class makes me feel that he/she truly cares about me. | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| 11. | When I work hard for this class, an important reason is because I enjoy it. | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| 12. | One of my goals is to show others that class work is easy for me. | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| 13. | I have pushed myself hard to completely understand my lessons in this class. | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| 14. | In this class, I worry that I might not do as well as other students. | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| 15. | I could do much better in this class if I worked harder. | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| 16. | It's important to me that others do not think I'm dumb in this class. | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| 17. | I sometimes hold back from doing my best in this class, because of what others might say or think. | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| 18. | When I work hard, an important reason is that the teacher encourages me. | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| 19. | If I were confused in this class, I would handle it by myself, not ask for help. | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| 20. | One of my goals in this class has been to show others that I am good at class work. | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| 21. | I'm certain I can master the skills taught in this class. | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| 22. | I don't really care whether I arrive on time to this class. | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| 23. | My behavior in this class sometimes annoys the teacher. | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| 24. | Trying to be popular sometimes distracts me from my work in this class. | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| 25. | Sometimes I pretend to be working hard for this class, when I'm really not. | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| 26. | I enjoy doing the work for this class. | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| 27. | My behavior is a problem for the teacher in this class. | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| 28. | I have done my best quality work in this class all year long. | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| 29. | Sometimes I pretend I'm not trying hard in this class, when I really am. | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| 30. | One of my goals in this class is to keep others from thinking I'm not smart. | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| 31. | For this class, I try hard to be on time and not to be absent. | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| 32. | I don't mind asking questions in this class if I need to. | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| 33. | I wish my teacher in this class would push me harder to do my best. | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| 34. | I can do almost all the work in this class if I don't give up. | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| 35. | I have been able to figure out the most difficult work in this class. | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| 36. | Sometimes in this class, I worry about not looking smart. | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| 37. | I care about pleasing my teacher in this class. | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| 38. | I am satisfied with what I have achieved in this class. | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| 39. | I feel close to my teacher in this class. | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| 40. | I feel out of place in this class, like I don't really fit in. | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| 41. | I would like to work on assignments in groups with other students in this class. | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |

(1)

| Section II: | | Totally Untrue | Hardly at all | Some-what | Mostly | Totally True |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1. | If you don't understand something, my teacher explains it another way. | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| 2. | My teacher in this class likes it when we ask questions. | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| 3. | My teacher in this class treats the students with respect. | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| 4. | My teacher in this class cares a lot about how much all of us learn. | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| 5. | The teacher in this class demands that the students work hard. | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| 6. | Our class stays busy and doesn't waste time. | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| 7. | In this class, it is obvious when certain students are not doing well. | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| 8. | If I didn't understand something, my classmates would be happy to help me. | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| 9. | In this class, students get teased for making mistakes. | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| 10. | I can count on my teacher to help me before or after school, if I need it. | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| 11. | My teacher encourages us to share ideas with one another in class. | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| 12. | The hardest lessons in this class are very difficult for me. | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| 13. | Things I am learning in this class will help me in my life. | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| 14. | My teacher is enthusiastic about what he/she is teaching. | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| 15. | In this class, really understanding the material is the main goal. | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| 16. | Problems outside of school sometimes keep me from doing work for this class. | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| 17. | My teacher has several good ways to explain each topic that we cover. | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| 18. | My teacher never makes people who ask questions feel stupid. | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| 19. | The teacher in this class shows that he/she will help me succeed in class. | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| 20. | My teacher works hard to make sure we learn a lot. | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| 21. | In this class, my teacher accepts nothing less than our full effort. | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| 22. | In this class, getting the right answers is very important. | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| 23. | In this class, some students try to keep others from working hard. | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| 24. | Students in this class tease people who get wrong answers. | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| 25. | In this class, students tell you if they do better than you. | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| 26. | You can't get a good grade in this class unless you attend regularly. | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| 27. | My teacher encourages us to be helpful to other students with their work. | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| 28. | Other students understand the lessons in this class better than I do. | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| 29. | My teacher makes learning enjoyable. | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| 30. | In this class, it's important not to do worse than other students. | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| 31. | My classmates behave better in here than in their other classes. | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| 32. | The teacher in this class welcomes questions if anyone gets confused. | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| 33. | In this class, you must re-do some assignments on which you do poorly. | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| 34. | My teacher really tries to understand how students feel about things. | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| 35. | The teacher in this class encourages me to do my best. | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| 36. | My teacher doesn't let people give up when the work gets hard. | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| 37. | In this class, getting good grades is the main goal. | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| 38. | Some classmates think it's not cool for others to work harder than they do. | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| 39. | In this class, students get teased if they study hard to get good grades. | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| 40. | If I need help after school for this class, I can usually get the help I need. | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| 41. | That students arrive on time to this class is really important to the teacher. | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| 42. | For most students, this class is harder than other classes. | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| 43. | My teacher grades me fairly. | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| 44. | My teacher makes lessons interesting. | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| 45. | My teacher wants us to use our thinking skills, not just memorize things. | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| 46. | My classmates behave the way my teacher wants them to. | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| 47. | We sometimes work in groups on things that will not be graded. | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| 48. | If you don't like your grade on an assignment, you can re-do work to raise it. | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| 49. | Students in this class treat the teacher with respect. | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |

| 50. When homework is assigned for this class, how much of it do you usually COMPLETE? (darken one choice) | Never assigned | None of it | Some of it | Most of it | All | All plus some extra |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |

51. What is the FINAL GRADE you think you will get IN THIS CLASS? (darken one choice)

| A | A- | B+ | B | B- | C+ | C | C- | D+ | D | D- | F |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |

52. About how much time IN A WEEK do you usually spend studying or doing homework FOR THIS CLASS? (darken one choice)

| No time | Half an hour | 1 hour | 2 hours | 3 to 4 hours | 5 to 7 hours | 8+ hours |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |

53. Is this a science class or math class? (darken one choice) Yes ○ No ○

54. Is this an advanced class (for example, an honors class or advanced placement)? (darken one choice) Yes ○ No ○

55. What grade are you in? (darken one choice)

| 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 | 11 | 12 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |

56. What was your GRADE POINT AVERAGE last term for all of your classes? (darken one choice).

| A | A- | B+ | B | B- | C+ | C | C- | D+ | D | D- | F |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |

## Section III.

1. Are you a female or male? ○ Male ○ Female

2. Which parent(s) or guardians do you live with during the school year? (mark all that apply)
   ○ My mother(s) ○ Stepmother ○ Other relative/guardian or foster parent
   ○ My father(s) ○ Stepfather ○ Alone or with friends

3. How many books are there in your home?
   ○ 0-10 ○ 11-24 ○ 25-100 ○ 100-250 ○ more than 250

4. Is there a personal computer at home that you have access to? (mark one circle)
   ○ No ○ Yes, one ○ Yes, two ○ Yes, three or more

5. What is your race/ethnicity? (mark all that apply)
   ○ White ○ Black or African American ○ Hispanic ○ Asian ○ Native American
   ○ Pacific Islander ○ Arabic/Middle Eastern ○ Other _____

6. How many brothers and sisters do you live with?
   ○ None ○ 1 ○ 2 ○ 3 ○ 4 ○ 5 or more

7. Do your parents speak a language other than English at home?
   ○ No ○ Seldom ○ Half the time ○ Mostly ○ Always

8. Indicate *ONLY THE HIGHEST* education level completed by your parent(s) or guardian(s).

| | 8a. Mother (or Stepmother) (Mark only the *HIGHEST* level) | 8b. Father (or Stepfather) (Mark only the *HIGHEST* level) |
|---|---|---|
| Mark here if you don't know: | ○ | ○ |
| Did not finish high school: | ○ | ○ |
| Finished high school: | ○ | ○ |
| Some college or 2-year degree: | ○ | ○ |
| 4-year college graduate: | ○ | ○ |
| Some school beyond college: | ○ | ○ |
| Professional or graduate degree: | ○ | ○ |

| 9. Class Number | 10. Student Number | 11. School Number |
|---|---|---|
| ⓪ ⓪ ⓪ | ⓪ ⓪ ⓪ ⓪ ⓪ ⓪ | ⓪ ⓪ ⓪ |
| ① ① ① | ① ① ① ① ① ① | ① ① ① |
| ② ② ② | ② ② ② ② ② ② | ② ② ② |
| ③ ③ ③ | ③ ③ ③ ③ ③ ③ | ③ ③ ③ |
| ④ ④ ④ | ④ ④ ④ ④ ④ ④ | ④ ④ ④ |
| ⑤ ⑤ ⑤ | ⑤ ⑤ ⑤ ⑤ ⑤ ⑤ | ⑤ ⑤ ⑤ |
| ⑥ ⑥ ⑥ | ⑥ ⑥ ⑥ ⑥ ⑥ ⑥ | ⑥ ⑥ ⑥ |
| ⑦ ⑦ ⑦ | ⑦ ⑦ ⑦ ⑦ ⑦ ⑦ | ⑦ ⑦ ⑦ |
| ⑧ ⑧ ⑧ | ⑧ ⑧ ⑧ ⑧ ⑧ ⑧ | ⑧ ⑧ ⑧ |
| ⑨ ⑨ ⑨ | ⑨ ⑨ ⑨ ⑨ ⑨ ⑨ | ⑨ ⑨ ⑨ |

If you *have not* already completed this page in another class, please continue and do so now. If you have already completed it in another class, you are finished. Thank you.

12. Please indicate whether you are a member of any of the following school teams or activities. (mark all that apply):

○Soccer team ○Basketball team ○Football team ○Track team ○Lacrosse team ○Tennis team
○Gymnastics team ○Swimming team ○Cross Country team ○Theater/Drama team ○Wrestling
○Debating team/club ○Band/Orchestra ○Dance club/group/ team ○Race/ethnic/cultural club(s)/groups
○Academic decathlon ○Academic subject-related club(s) ○ _____ (a) ○ _____ (b)

13. How tall are you? (Select the height nearest to your own; for example, 5'4" means five feet four inches)

| 5' or less | 5'2" | 5'4" | 5'6" | 5'8" | 5'10" | 6'0" | 6'2" | 6'4" | 6'6" | 6'8" | 6'10" |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |

14. What is your weight?

○Under 110 lbs. ○111-130 lbs. ○131-150 lbs. ○151-175 lbs. ○176-200 lbs. ○Over 200 lbs.

15. Was either of your parents a varsity athlete in high school? ○Yes ○No ○I don't know

| | None | A few | Some | Most | All |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 16. How many of your friends are of a different racial group? | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |

17. How often do you hang out or socialize with someone of a different racial/ethnic group outside of class?

○Never ○Less than once a month ○Once or twice a month ○Once a week ○Almost every day

| 18. Please rate how often you think each of the following happens to you *because of your race or ethnicity* | Never | Less than monthly | Once a month | Twice a month | Weekly |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Because of race, I get disciplined harder or less fairly in school. | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| Because of race, some teachers think I'm less smart than I am. | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |

| 19. For each of the following statements, indicate whether you agree or disagree. (Please mark one circle on each line.) | Disagree Strongly | Disagree | Agree | Agree Strongly | No opinion |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| To live in a racially diverse community is important to me. | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| At our school, my race does not affect how the adults here treat me. | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| Race has almost NO effect on how students treat each other. | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| My opinions are more like the Republican than the Democratic Party. | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| To live in a racially diverse community is very important to my parent(s). | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| People of my race have to work harder than other races to get ahead. | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| Affirmative action is justified if it ensures diversity on college campuses. | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| Our school would be better if we talked more about race and ethnicity. | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |

| 20. How often is each of the following true for you? | Never | Usually not | Sometimes | Usually | Always |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| I speak proper English, even with my friends outside of school. | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| I tease or make fun of people when they make mistakes. | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| On the whole, I am satisfied with myself. | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| I worry that people might think I am too serious about my schoolwork. | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| People would probably describe my *behavior* style as "*ghetto*." | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| In my opinion, kids who get the highest grades think they are *too special*. | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| I let my friends keep me from paying attention or doing my homework. | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| I feel that I am a person of worth, at least on an equal basis with others. | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| I stay up too late at night and then get really sleepy in class. | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| I get nervous if I know that a test is going to be hard. | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| My friends think it's important to work hard to get high grades. | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| Some teachers seem afraid of me. | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| I trust the people I hang around with at school. | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| Rock music is an important part of my life. | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| I fool around the night before a test instead of studying like I should. | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| I trust other students at this school, even if I don't know them. | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| Hip-Hop or rap music is an important part of my life. | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| I spend a lot of time taking care of my hair. | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| At this school, people like me get accused of "acting white." | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| At this school, I must be ready to fight to defend myself. | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| On a typical day, I read a paper, magazine or book just for fun or pleasure. | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| On a typical day, I chat (or use instant messaging) on my home computer. | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| I would quiet down if someone said I was talking too loudly in the hallway. | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| I take a positive attitude towards myself. | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| I start my homework too late to be able to finish it. | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |

# APPENDIX C

## FACTOR LOADING MATRIX, WITH FACTOR LOADING AND CRONBACH'S ALPHAS FOR TEACHER STUDENT RELATIONSHIP MEASURE

| Item | Factor Loading |
|---|---|
| *Factor 1: Teacher Expectations* | |
| My teacher in this class likes it when we ask questions | .64 |
| The teacher in the class demands that the students work hard | .61 |
| In this class, my teacher accepts nothing less than our full effort | .71 |
| My teacher doesn't let people give up when the work gets hard | .75 |
| My teacher wants us to use our critical thinking skills, not just memorize things | .71 |
| My teacher wants me to explain my answers- why I think what I think | .65 |
| SCALE-ITEMS (6): Cronbach's Alpha: .76 | |
| *Factor 2: Teacher Encouragement* | |
| My teacher in this class makes me feel that he/she truly cares about me | .78 |
| I feel close to my teacher in this class | .67 |
| If a student does not understand something, my teacher explains it another way | .73 |
| I can count on my teacher to help me before or after school, if I need it. | .66 |
| My teacher encourages us to share ideas with one another in class. | .66 |
| My teacher is enthusiastic about what he/she is teaching. | .72 |
| My teacher has several good ways to explain each topic that we cover | .78 |
| My teacher never makes people who ask questions feel stupid | .50 |
| The teacher in this class shows that he/she will help me succeed in class | .82 |
| My teacher encourages us to be helpful to other students with their work | .68 |
| My teacher makes learning enjoyable | .82 |
| The teacher in this class welcomes questions if anyone gets confused | .73 |
| My teacher really tries to understand how students feel about things | .76 |
| The teacher in this class encourages me to do my best. | .78 |
| My teacher grades me fairly. | .66 |
| My teacher makes lessons interesting. | .79 |
| SCALE-ITEMS (16): Cronbach's Alpha: .94 | |
| *Factor 4: Student Effort* | |
| In this class it is important to me to thoroughly understand my class work | .76 |
| One of my goals in this class has been to learn as much as I can | .81 |
| Even if the work in this class is hard, I can learn it. | .56 |
| I have pushed myself hard to completely understand my lessons in this class | .75 |
| I have done my best quality work in this class all year long. | .69 |
| SCALE-ITEMS (5): Cronbach's Alpha: .76 | |
| *Factor 5: Stereotyping* | |
| One of my goals in this class is to show others that class work is easy for me | .79 |
| It is important to me that others do not think I'm dumb in this class. | .72 |
| One of my goals in this class has been show others that I am good at class work. | .71 |
| One of my goals in this class is to keep others from thinking I am not smart | .68 |
| Sometimes in this class, I worry about not looking smart. | .65 |
| SCALE-ITEMS (5): Cronbach's Alpha: .76 | |
| *Factor 6: Perceptions of Racialized Experiences* | |
| Because of race, I get disciplined harder or less fairly in school. | .87 |
| Because of race, some teachers think I'm less smart than I am. | .86 |
| People of my race have to work harder than other races to get ahead. | .61 |
| (recode) At our school, my race does not affect how the adults here treat me. | .66 |
| SCALE-ITEMS (4): Cronbach's Alpha: .72 | |

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