

CHARACTERISTICS OF EFFECTIVE TEACHERS AS
IDENTIFIED BY ACADEMICALLY SUCCESSFUL
AFRICAN-AMERICAN STUDENTS

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Give me your tired, your poor,
Your huddled masses, yearning to breathe free,
The wretched refuse of your teeming shore,
Send these, the homeless, tempest tossed to me:
I lift my lamp beside the golden door.

Emma Lazarus
Inscription on the Statue of Liberty
New York Harbor

This inscription on the Statue of Liberty in New York Harbor has greeted millions of immigrants to America. Unlike their European counterparts, however, the African-Americans did not come to America seeking a better life, yearning to breathe free. On the contrary, they were free before they were snatched from a land where there was no need to yearn for freedom. They became huddled masses in the hulls of slave ships. Their eyes never saw the lamp lifted beside the golden door. They became the wretched refuse on America's teeming shore.

Kofi Lomotey (1990), Assistant Professor of Educational Administration at the State University of New York at Buffalo, wrote in his book Going to School that

Academic success continues to be an elusive goal for the large majority of African-American

students at all levels--from elementary to higher education. Despite students' aims and copious oratory with regard to equal educational opportunity, America has frequently failed to educate African-American children effectively.

(p. 2)

This failure to educate African-American children effectively is directly related to the beliefs surrounding their presence in America. African-Americans were not brought to this country to become educated. John F. Kennedy said "Knowledge is power." Knowledge and power were two things that the slaveholders did not want African-Americans to have.

Carter G. Woodson wrote in The Mis-Education of the Negro (1977) that education that imparts information only to the black person is not enough. According to Woodson, an adequate education for black people is one which causes them to think and do for themselves. Thus, Woodson believed that education must do for the black person what it did for the Jews. Indeed, Woodson did not advocate a different kind of education for blacks and whites, but he did feel that the education of black people has "served the oppressor" (p. ii).

As early as 1916, the first U. S. Office of Education Survey presented optimistic data on the beginnings and promise of black education. Likewise, Woodson pointed out

in his first edition of The Negro in Our History (1917) that the credit for progress must be given to the schools. Therefore, Woodson concludes, "for remaking of Negroes most credit must be given to the schools at work among them. The teacher has made the school, the school has figured largely in making the home, and the home has produced a new civilization" (p. iii).

The National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) Condition of Education Report (1993) reveals that African-Americans are making some progress. The discrepancy between Caucasian and African-American students' success is highlighted throughout the report. The data suggests gains in math and science.

Review of the data suggests that Reading Proficiency Scale scores for African-American 17-year-olds were 267 as compared to 297 for Caucasian 17-year-olds. According to the report the average reading proficiency of African-Americans who were 17 years old is somewhat higher in 1990 than in 1971. The data suggests that between 1971 and 1988 13- and 17-year old African-Americans narrowed gaps between their reading proficiency scores and those of their Caucasian counterparts. Even though gains are shown for African-Americans the report acknowledges that African-Americans did not continue to narrow the gap in 1990.

Since 1973 the NCES reports that Caucasian, African-American, and Hispanic 9-year-olds have shown improvement in

average mathematics proficiency (10, 18, 12 scale points, respectively). According to the report, most of this improvement occurred between 1982 and 1990. Although, in 1990, large gaps existed between the mathematics proficiency of Caucasians and their African-American and Hispanic peers, for African-Americans the gaps were narrower than they had been in 1973.

The overall achievement in science for African-Americans remained approximately the same. Between 1977 and 1990 the average science proficiency of 9- and 13-year-olds increased in all three ethnic groups. The average science proficiency of 17-year-olds in all racial/ethnic groups increased between 1982 and 1990. The average performance of African-Americans was still slightly below that of Caucasian students in 1990.

In addition, the dropout rate among African-Americans was 17% compared to 11% among Caucasians. The high school completion rate for Caucasian 19- to 20-year-olds in 1991 was 87% while only 72% for African-Americans.

Statement of the Problem

Even though educators acknowledge that the underachievement of African-American students in public schools is persistent, pervasive, and disproportionate, few studies focus on the successful academic achievement of African-American students (Lomotey, 1990).

R. R. Edmonds (1979) emphasized that too much research has focused on the problems of African-American students who are low achievers in the public schools. Teacher characteristics that promote academic success for African-American students merit attention because, as Felix Boateng (1990) observed, "the heart of the educational process is in the interaction between teacher and student" (p. 73). Likewise, Charles E. Silberman (1970) advanced the notion that "educators must realize it is how they teach and how they act that may be more important than what they teach" (p. 10). Therefore, this study is designed to answer the following question: What are the characteristics of effective teachers identified by academically successful African-American high school students?

Ornstein (1990) stated, "Many researchers feel that certain teacher characteristics can be defined, validated, and generalized from one study to another, that recommendations can be made from the generalizations, and that the recommendations can be used in a practical way" (p. 547). With this in mind, this investigator analyzed responses from African-American students and made recommendations that may contribute to the continuing success of African-American students.

Eva W. Chunn (Smith & Chunn, 1989, p. 95) surmised that "Throughout the life of a student, the teacher is a major force. A student's scholastic performance can be influenced

by a teacher in either a negative or a positive direction." This researcher sought to discover teacher characteristics that influence African-American students in a positive direction.

Significance of the Study

According to Donald M. Medley (1979) the effect of schooling on individual pupils depends considerably on who the teacher is. Moreover, Gary D. Borich (1992) suggested that "despite decades of experience and research, one of the most difficult tasks in education today is defining an effective teacher" (p. 2). What we do not know is the degree to which effective teachers have contributed to the success of a group previously identified as low achieving who now show signs of significant gains in math and science (National Center for Education Statistics [NCES], 1992). This research provided information regarding effective teacher characteristics as identified by students who perceived specific instructors as effective teachers.

Jere Brophy and Thomas Good (1986) suggested that more research on teaching in general and on teacher effect in particular is needed. Brophy and Good reported in their study, "The myth that teachers do not make a difference has been refuted, and programmatic research reflecting the description-correlation-experimentation loop called for by Rosenshine and Furst (1973) has begun to appear" (p. 370).

This study viewed effective teachers through the eyes of academically successful African-American students. Examining effective teacher characteristics through the eyes of students demanded a research methodology that departed from traditional research approaches most common to education. Consequently, qualitative methods and procedures were used.

According to Stainback and Stainback (1988) the purpose of qualitative research is to understand people's interpretation of the issues being studied. For this research to be worthwhile the values and perceptions of the students must be understood and taken into account when conducting research. The qualitative approach provided in-depth and comprehensive information about the perceptions and relationships which are central in understanding the link between successful African-American students and their teachers.

The researcher also looked to C. Wright Mills (1959) and his Sociological Imagination for help in supporting the theory of mental freedom. Mills suggests:

Since one can be trained only in what is already known, training sometimes incapacitates one from learning new ways; it makes one rebel against what is bound to be at first loose and even sloppy. But you must cling to such vague images and notions, if they are yours, and you must work them

out. For it is in such forms that original ideas, if any, almost always first appear. (p. 212)

Mills also believes that floundering responses and often vague notions of direction eventually expose reality. He continues by discussing methods stimulating the sociological imagination:

On the most concrete level, the rearranging of the files, as I have already said, is one way to invite imagination. You simply dump out heretofore disconnected folders, mixing up their contents, and then resort them. You try to do it in a more or less relaxed way. How often and how extensively you rearrange the files will of course vary with different problems and with how well they are developing. But the mechanics of it are as simple as that. Of course, you will have in mind the several problems on which you are actively working, but you will also try to be passively receptive to unforeseen and unplanned linkages. (p. 213)

Thus it was to these "unforeseen and unplanned linkages" (Mills, 1959, p. 213) that this research was directed and to the discovery of the hidden perceptions the African-American students have of effective teachers. The open-ended interview was the chosen procedure. Mills (1959) offered justification for this procedure:

Be a good craftsman: avoid any rigid set of procedures. Above all, seek to develop and to use the sociological imagination. Avoid the fetishism of method and technique. Urge the rehabilitation of the unpretentious intellectual craftsman, and try to become such a craftsman yourself. Let every man be his own methodologist; let every man be his own theorist; let theory and method again become part of the practice of the craft. Stand for the primacy of the individual scholar; stand opposed to the ascendancy of research teams of technicians. Be one mind that is on its own confronting the problems of man and society. (p. 215)

Consequently, this study was conducted within a research framework regarded not as confining and restraining but rather as a flexible arena in which to observe and understand the changes of personal environment and beyond.

The public's continuing dissatisfaction with the performance of our public schools can be mitigated by a study that presents effective teachers and successful students. Determining teacher characteristics that promote student success provides constructive information for educating future teachers.

Background

A review of the literature on characteristics of teachers and their impact on student achievement reveals one overriding variable: the expectations which the teachers possess for students strongly influence and determine success or failure (Berry & Asamen, 1989). In recent years a small percentage of African-American students have been steadily narrowing the achievement gap between themselves and their Caucasian peers. Yet, few researchers have investigated the components that encourage high academic achievement among African-Americans.

William D. Parham and Thomas A. Parham (1989) extended the notion that continued research into a study of the positive and negative factors influencing academic achievement is needed. Parham and Parham proposed that a child's ability to cultivate and receive emotional nourishment, support and encouragement from parents and significant others and the ability to dream and set goals beyond one's current life circumstances seem to be factors related to academic achievement.

Borich (1992) listed five key behaviors which have been consistently supported by research studies as contributing to effective teaching over the past two decades. Borich wrote, "These are called key behaviors because they are considered essential for effective teaching." They are:

1. Lesson clarity

2. Instructional variety
3. Task orientation
4. Student engagement in the learning process
5. Student success (p. 9)

Borich suggested, "It is risky to identify only five behaviors because it makes teaching appear deceptively simple" (p. 15). This researcher asked students to identify teacher characteristics which they considered effective. This researcher sought to ascertain if African-American students attribute their success, or some portion of it, to a teacher or teachers with certain characteristics.

Definition of Terms

In this study a consistent interpretation of terms will be provided by implementation of the following definitions.

1. Academically successful students - For this study principals and teachers selected students based on academics, service and scholarship.
2. African-American - This study surveyed those academically successful students who are Americans of African, especially Negroid, descent.
3. Attitude - Attitude for this study focused on what a teacher having a particular attitude actually did in the classroom (Borich, 1990).
5. Behavior - Overt, observable acts constitute behavior.

6. Beliefs - Beliefs are tenets formed on the basis of information received from subsidiary sources, from direct observation, or by way of various inference processes.

7. Caucasian - Students who belong to the white race as classified according to physical features will be designated Caucasian students.

8. Effective teaching - Effective teaching involves the careful orchestration and integration of teaching behaviors into meaningful patterns to achieve specified goals.

9. Perception - A perception is an observation or concept.

10. Teacher characteristics - For this study the traits that are distinctive to persons who successfully assist students to learn were the focus of attention.

Assumptions

1. Effective teaching cannot be defined simply (Borich, 1992).

2. The relationship between student and teacher affects the learning process (Ornstein, 1990).

3. Academic success is not significantly affected by the race of the teacher (Patchen, 1982).

Scope and Limitations

The totality of an individual's beliefs serves as the informational base that ultimately determines one's attitudes, intentions, and behaviors. Behavior can generally be measured by assessing beliefs. The beliefs of African-American students as they relate to teacher characteristics were the focus of this study.

Summary

This chapter introduces the study, its importance and the procedure to be used. It also contains a list of terms and assumptions relevant to this study.

Chapter II presents an historical review of the education of African-Americans in America. A review of current literature on teacher characteristics and research on effective teaching practices is also included.

Chapter III presents the data concerning the perceptions of African-American students of the characteristics of a teacher or teachers who have contributed to their academic success. It also reports the perceptions of why a particular teacher contributes more than some other.

Chapter IV analyzes these data based on the research and perceptions which emerged. Chapter V offers a summary, conclusions, and recommendations.

CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

Introduction

Real education means to inspire people to live more abundantly, to learn to begin with life as they find it and make it better, but the instruction so far given Negroes....has worked to the contrary.

This quotation from Carter G. Woodson's classic work The Mis-Education of the Negro (1977) reflects the dilemma that African-Americans faced as they attempted to educate themselves. American society has long viewed education as a key to progress and success. However, this assumption has not always proved true for African-Americans.

Pre-Civil War

Maxine Greene (1988) acknowledges that African-Americans were "among the first newcomers to come" to a country they did not choose (p. 87). Similarly, Gerald L. Gutek (1988) of Loyola University describes the African-Americans as a group that was "uprooted from their homeland, their culture, their traditions and values" (p. 30). These

people were forced on slave ships to be sold as chattel to plantation owners.

Many justifications were provided for treating the African-Americans as chattel or property. Gilbert Osofsky (1967) made this observation regarding the prevailing mentality during the time of slavery:

The Negro was never a slave...The Negro is an ape; hence his status in the universe, his relation to man, like any other animal, was fixed irrevocably by God in the creation, and no act upon man's part...can change it. (p. 184)

Kierstead and Wagner (1993) note that the harsh and inhumane treatment of African-Americans by many people in America seemed justified to them because they somehow believed the African-American was "subhuman" (p. 90). Therefore, slavery became a carefully regulated institution in the South. There were many laws governing the lives of the slaves. Slaves were forbidden to own property and to bear firearms.

Likewise, laws governing the education of slaves were made very clear. For example, a law was passed in Mississippi in 1832 which made it illegal to assemble slaves for the purpose of teaching them to read or write. In the same way, the Louisiana legislature passed a law in 1830 which stated:

...all persons who shall teach, or permit or cause to be taught, any slave in this state to read or write, shall upon conviction thereof,...be imprisoned not less than one month nor more than twelve months. (Boateng, 1990, p. 71)

The prevailing philosophy on educating slaves during this period indicates that an educated slave populace would be more apt to rebel than one that was kept ignorant.

"Insurrections were a real problem and a dread" (Button & Provenzo, 1983, p. 141). In North Carolina a slave that was found guilty of teaching another slave to read could expect to receive no less than twenty lashes with a whip.

John Ogbu, noted anthropologist, concludes that there are three main reasons why African-Americans were excluded from formal education prior to 1861. First, Ogbu observes that most whites believed that African-Americans were inferior and would not benefit from such an education. Second, it was feared that African-Americans would become unproductive if they were educated. Third, the old fears of rebellion and insurrection were always present. Ogbu additionally points out that the popular white sentiment against educating African-Americans was evident in the anti-slave legislation in all slave states which prohibited the instruction of African-Americans (Ogbu, 1978).

In spite of the many attempts to keep the slaves from learning, many received education even when it meant

breaking the laws. The education the African-Americans received was not meant to prepare them for some noted position in white society. Quite the contrary, they were simply prepared to maintain their lowly lifestyle.

Post Civil War

"The Civil War profoundly redefined the condition of the African-American" (Warner, Havighurst, & Loeb, 1983, p. 143). The Emancipation Proclamation of 1862 legally freed the slaves in the Confederacy. Although slaves were legally free they were not totally free until the ratification of the Thirteenth Amendment in 1865.

As the war ended, General Sherman and other northerners recognized the great need to help the slaves in the South. While support was solicited from many philanthropic organizations to help with resettlement and schooling, African-Americans also contributed a great deal to their own education (Boateng, 1990, p. 82). The Freedman's Bureau was established in 1865 to help hospitals and schools. Hundreds of teachers were sent to the South to teach the freed slaves (Lomotey, 1990, p. 143).

Although the Freedman's Bureau was established to help with the schooling of African-Americans, it also helped to separate them from whites, primarily in the southern states. The infamous Supreme Court case of Plessy v. Ferguson (1896) is a grim reminder of how the separate-but-equal doctrine

became entrenched in American society. The ruling in this case allowed separate but equal educational facilities and services for African-Americans, thereby insuring that African-Americans were to endure decades of discrimination and inequality (Osofsky, 1967, pp. 90-91).

Many common-school leaders were generally sympathetic to the educational plight of the former slaves. The general attitude was that African-American children should learn reading, writing, and arithmetic as well as be introduced to the white Anglo-Saxon culture. African-American legislators made significant contributions during the Reconstruction Era to the establishment of public schools in the South (Gutek, 1988, p. 76).

The common-school experience for the African-American ranged from schooling in the homes of African-American leaders to secondary training in institutions that were later to be named among the most renowned institutions of higher education for African-Americans (Button & Provenzo, 1983, p. 143). Some outstanding schools were Fisk University in Nashville, Tennessee; Talledega College in Talledega, Alabama; Atlanta University in Atlanta, Georgia; and Hampton Institute in Hampton, Virginia.

Educational Experiences of African-Americans

Segregation--1865-1954

Because American society never seriously intended that African-Americans receive equal treatment with whites it is imperative to examine what an American education actually consisted of for African-Americans. For many years America has provided inferior education for African-Americans (Ogbu, 1978, p. 105). African-Americans have been defined as being inferior to whites and thus not in need of the same kind of education.

With the passage of the Fourteenth Amendment to the United States Constitution in 1866, the type of education considered adequate for African-Americans was significantly affected. The passage of the Fourteenth Amendment changed curricular goals and methods and created public school systems for whites and blacks by the state legislatures. After 1877, however, many state legislatures established new state constitutions and laws which limited the rights of African-Americans as full citizens (Ogbu, 1978, pp. 107-109).

Jim Crow Laws or Black Codes facilitated segregation in public facilities and institutions such as trains, buses, restaurants, churches and schools. As previously mentioned, the Plessy v. Ferguson case of 1896 gave segregation in

America a tremendous boost along with the Civil Rights cases of 1883 (Button & Provenzo, 1983, p. 147).

Carter G. Woodson (1977) decries the effects of segregation on the African-American as he speaks of the meager contributions made by African-Americans to literature, science and philosophy. In short, he says, "They have not risen to the heights of black men farther removed from the influences of slavery and segregation" (p. 15). Woodson continues his discourse on the effects of segregation saying, "What Negroes are now being taught does not bring their lives into harmony with life as they must face it" (p. 38).

Maxine Green, in The Dialectic of Freedom, explains how W. E. B. DuBois, a contemporary of Carter G. Woodson "wrote with prescience about the weakness of the common school system where blacks were concerned." Green points out how DuBois compares schooling in a segregated situation to "training before the gate of toil" (Green, 1988, p.92).

Toiling for equal educational opportunities took on new meaning for the African-American in 1954. The old Jim Crow laws which perpetuated segregation and endorsed the separate-but-equal provisions were struck down in the Supreme Court decision of Brown v. The Board of Education of Topeka (1954). Speaking for the court, Chief Justice Earl Warren made the following comments regarding the segregation of school children:

To separate them from others of similar age and qualifications solely because of their race generates a feeling of inferiority as to their status in the community that may affect their hearts and minds in a way unlikely ever to be undone. (Parkay & Standford, 1992, p. 186)

Although the Supreme Court ruling did not end segregation immediately, it did clear the way for desegregation.

Desegregation--1954 to the Present

Daniel U. Levine and Robert J. Havighurst (1992) divide the history of public school desegregation into three parts. They contend that little desegregation occurred during the first phase which was mainly the period from 1954 through 1965. Similarly, desegregation in the South and smaller cities in the North was achieved with more rapid pace during the period between 1966 and 1973. In the meantime, since 1973, progress toward desegregation continues to be made outside the largest cities (p. 299).

In 1955 the Supreme Court issued a mandate for all public schools to desegregate with "all deliberate speed" (Levine & Havighurst, 1992, p. 300). Prior to this order, there were two major stumbling blocks that had slowed the process. The first is known as "de jure" segregation, or that segregation which is brought on by government action. The second is known as "de facto" segregation, or that

segregation which is caused by private rather than government decision. Even though the courts had ruled that segregated schools should move toward desegregation with "all deliberate speed," de facto segregation contributed much to the slow progress of desegregation.

Levine and Havighurst (1992) show that during the period between 1966 and 1973 much desegregation occurred (p. 300). Much of the success of desegregation during this time can be attributed to the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965. The Civil Rights Act of 1964 required all state and local agencies, as well as private citizens who receive federal funds, to give written assurance that "no person shall be excluded from participation, denied any benefits, or subjected to discrimination on the basis of race, color, or national origin" (p. 302). This requirement of compliance gave desegregation a tremendous boost.

The "assurance of compliance" served to expedite desegregation in the Deep South. Together with the Southern cities, border and Northern cities began to move quickly toward desegregation. Furthermore, the late 1960s saw an increase of positive moves toward desegregation due mainly to court decision. Consequently, desegregation made its way across the country in an attempt to fulfill the Supreme Court mandate of 1955 to desegregate "with all deliberate speed."

The third phase that Levine and Havighurst (1992) emphasize is the period between 1974 and 1992. Again, efforts to desegregate were becoming more successful. In fact, the courts continued to figure prominently in these efforts. In 1973 the U. S. Supreme Court's decision in Keys v. School District No. 1, Denver, ruled that "clear evidence of intentional segregation in one part of a district suggests that other instances of segregation are also intentional" (p. 302). In other words, the courts upheld the old adage that "where there's smoke, there's fire."

In the 1990s desegregation is faced with a new challenge. Jonathan Kozal (1991) points out in his book Savage Inequalities how "The two tiers--Bluffs and Bottoms--have long represented...different worlds" (p. 9). According to Kozal, these different worlds are representative of a carefully orchestrated plan to separate, and keep separated, the "haves" from the "have nots." Kozal investigated schools in America and found many of them operating under inexplicable circumstances (p. 17). For example, de facto segregation of the 1950s and 1960s is evidenced in Kozal's account of the unequal treatment that children now receive due largely in part to where they live.

Characteristics of an Effective Teacher

Despite decades of experience and research, one of the most difficult tasks in education is defining an effective

teacher. In a review of the literature three areas pertinent to determining teacher characteristics emerged; 1)the characteristics that constitute successful teaching, 2)how to categorize teacher characteristics, and 3)how to define teacher characteristics (Bourke, 1986). Bruce Biddle and William Ellena (1964) conclude that many researchers are indecisive regarding what makes a "good" or "poor" teacher-- an "effective" or an "ineffective" teacher. In fact, Allan C. Ornstein (1986) reveals that it is very difficult to measure teacher competence because no one knows for sure or agrees on what the competent teacher is. Furthermore, reports Ornstein, the "disagreement over terms, problems in measurement, and the complexity of the teaching act are major reasons for the negligible results in judging teacher behavior" (p. 3).

During the days of Benjamin Franklin, Thomas Jefferson, and Noah Webster, an effective teacher was a role model in the community, an honest, hard-working individual with good morals (Baksh & Martin, 1984). In short, as Gary D. Borich (1992) laments, "All a beginning teacher needed was King Solomon's wisdom, Sigmund Freud's insight, Albert Einstein's knowledge, and Florence Nightingale's dedication" (p. 23).

Teacher Characteristics Constituting Successful Teaching

A. S. Barr (1958) and David Ryan (1960) conducted the most comprehensive studies on teacher characteristics.

After reviewing some 50 years of research, Barr organized recommended behaviors into a manageable list. Barr's research yielded 12 characteristics of successful teachers. In the same way, David Ryan conducted the single most comprehensive study on desirable teacher characteristics. Ryan's study involved more than 6,000 teachers in 1,700 schools over a six-year period (p. 13). Ryan's subjects were asked to identify and describe a teaching act that they felt made a difference between success and failure. Next, these critical behaviors were reduced to a list of 25 effective behaviors and 25 ineffective behaviors. Ryan's and Barr's lists serve as guidelines for experienced as well as inexperienced teachers.

In yet another study, Bruce Tuckman (1986) developed a list of teacher characteristics which involved a feedback system for stimulating change in teacher behavior. Tuckman's list was divided into four teacher dimensions as follows; 1) creative; 2) dynamic; 3) organized and 4) warm.

Research on Effective Teaching Practices

Effective teaching practices have been researched, reviewed, and studied for many years. There are researchers who believe that effective teaching can be defined. Leading proponents of this theory are David Berliner (1984), Jere Brophy (1986), Thomas Good (1986), N. L. Gage (1978), Barak Rosenshine (1971), Walter Doyle (1978), Carolyn Evertson

(1986), and Don Medley (1979). The research of these men and women tends to focus on the products or outcomes of teaching (Bash, Coulby & Jones, 1985). Consequently, their research concludes that the kinds of question teachers ask, the ways students respond, their attitudes and expectations toward students all make a difference (Bell, 1980).

Likewise, Russell Dobson, Judith Dobson, and John Kessinger stress in Staff Development: A Humanistic Approach that teachers can and do make a difference in how students learn (Dobson, Dobson, & Kessinger, 1980, p. 89). Moreover, they maintain that teachers should not rely upon one method of teaching to be effective teachers in all situations.

Neil Postman, Professor of Communication at New York University, affirms that in a sense the following aphorism is true: "The dumber the teacher, the better the student" (Ornstein, 1990, p. 546). Postman contends that teachers are intimidating and their knowledge can be a barrier to learning. Even so, states Postman, "the teacher who is truly a learned person knows how ignorant he is and, in teaching, simply gives more prominence and emphasis to what he does not know than to what he does" (Ornstein, 1990, p. 546). Furthermore, good teachers are never afraid to admit the unknown and to make that the focus of their lessons. Therefore, it is important that teachers realize and find strength in the fact that they can and do make a difference in the lives of students (Brophy & Good, 1986).

Daniel Levine and Allan Ornstein (1989) reviewed 10 years of research in their quest to find what effective teachers do. According to Levine and Ornstein the following results were revealed.

1. Classroom management--Effective teachers develop good managerial techniques.
2. Direct instruction--Effective teachers have a clear, systematic method of teaching called direct instruction or explicit teaching.
3. Time on task--Effective teachers provide students with relevant academic activities and see to it that students spend an adequate amount of time engaged in these activities.
4. Questioning--Effective teachers ask appropriate questions.
5. Comprehension instruction--Effective teachers emphasize independent learning and learning to learn.
6. Level of cognitive instruction--Effective teachers try to move toward high-order thinking skills.
7. Grouping--Effective teachers are able to group students for individualized and small-group instruction. (pp. 18-19)

Barak V. Rosenshine and Norma F. Furst (1971) conclude in their process-product study that there are 11 teacher

processes (behaviors or variables) strongly and consistently related to products (outcomes or student achievement).

Furst and Rosenshine list the following five teacher processes as having the strongest correlation to positive student outcomes; 1) clarity, 2) variability, 3) enthusiasm, 4) task orientation, and 5) student opportunity to learn.

Critics of the Rosenshine and Furst study were quick to point out that this study contained many technical problems and that results based on such flawed research was very dangerous (Ornstein, 1990). The fact remains, however, that this study is a valuable source on the relationship of teacher processes to student products.

Thomas Good and Jere Brophy (1988) identified several factors related to effective teaching and student learning. The 15 principles of teaching which they contend are essential to effective teaching are; 1) clarity, 2) knowledge, 3) variety, 4) "with-it-ness", 5) "overlapping", 6) "smoothness", 7) seatwork, 8) holding students accountable, 9) realistic expectations, 10) realistic praise, 11) flexibility, 12) task orientation, 13) monitoring, 14) providing opportunity to learn, and 15) making comments that help structure learning.

N. L. Gage (1978) analyzed 49 process-product studies. Gage identified four clusters of behavior that show a strong relationship to student outcomes; 1) teacher indirectness, 2) teacher praise, 3) teacher acceptance, and 4) teacher

criticism. Gage revealed common sense strategies which provide guidelines for education students or beginning teachers who say, "Just tell me how to teach." They are as follows:

1. Teachers should have a system of rules that allow students to attend to their personal and procedural needs without having to check with the teacher.
2. A teacher should move around the room, monitoring students' seatwork and communicating an awareness of their behavior while also attending to their academic needs.
3. To ensure productive independent work by students, teachers should be sure that the assignments are interesting and worthwhile, yet still easy enough to be completed by each student without teacher direction.
4. Teachers should keep to a minimum such activities as giving directions and organizing the class for instruction. Teachers can do this by writing the daily schedule on the board and establishing general procedures so students know where to go and what to do.
5. In selecting students to respond to questions, teachers should call on volunteers and nonvolunteers by name before asking questions to

give all students a chance to answer and to alert the student to be called upon.

6. Teachers should always aim at getting less academically oriented students to give some kind of response to a question. Rephrasing, giving clues, or asking leading questions can be useful techniques for bringing forth some answer from a silent student, one who says 'I don't know,' or one who answers incorrectly.

7. During reading group instruction, teachers should give a maximum amount of brief feedback and provide fast-paced activities of the "drill" type.

(p. 559)

Likewise, Gage (1978) maintained that experienced teachers often cited their years of teaching as having given them extensive repertoires of skills to deal with the myriad of teaching concerns that many confront daily. Nonetheless, Gage expressed the need for more research on teaching that would "yield better ways of teaching a specific skill (such as long division) to a specific kind of pupil (an anxious fifth grader)" (p. 273).

David Berliner (1987) reaffirms Gage's decree that more research on teaching is needed. Berliner reasons that "The result of federally supported and independent research efforts over the last 20 years has been an enormous increase in our knowledge about sensible, effective, and efficient

teaching practices" (p. 33). Even so, recounts Berliner, "teaching is recognized as a highly cognitive activity which requires a great deal of competence in complex and divergent environments" (p. 33).

In short, Berliner (1984) views research as a "review of factors that can be controlled or influenced by teachers and that are known to affect student behavior, attitudes, and achievement" (p. 52). For this reason, Berliner explains research is used as a well documented way for teachers to make sensible choices about how they will teach. Finally, Berliner asserts that each decision a teacher makes is known to affect the attitudes, behaviors and achievement of students.

Walter Doyle (1978) held that "research appears to be at the threshold of fundamental conceptual reorganization." Furthermore, noted Doyle, research "provides a powerful analytic tool for investigating student response variables that mediate instructional effects" (p. 183). Moreover, Doyle's research focused on teaching effectiveness and student responses. (p. 184) In summary, Doyle argued that a framework for understanding classrooms should include the following features:

1. A concept of reciprocal causality in classroom relationships.

2. An information-processing view of the mediational strategies students use to navigate classroom environments.
3. A differential perspective for the analysis of effects in classrooms.
4. A systematic view of the natural classroom environment. (p. 187-188)

All in all, Doyle proclaims that research on teaching should include a comprehensive model of how classrooms work. Therefore, such a model could be used to guide inquiry and interpretation in the field.

Don Medley (1979) examined 289 empirical studies of teacher effectiveness (p. 16). According to Medley, of the 289 studies researched, only those in which teacher effectiveness was measured in terms of student gains over several months were regarded as valid studies; all others were eliminated. With this in mind, Medley concludes that "it is the teachers who produce permanent changes in pupils who deserve to be called effective" (p. 17).

As the concept of effective teaching is more widely accepted, research on the effectiveness of teaching receives greater prominence. "Teachers are not hired to cram information into students' heads to be remembered only long enough to pass a test," states Medley (1979, p. 17). On the contrary, "teachers are hired to educate children to produce important, lasting changes in their behavior, not short term

changes in test scores". "The teaching of facts," alleges Medley, "is a means, not the end, of education" (p. 17). In short, Medley implies that "teachers are supposed to teach children to read, to communicate, to reason, to become happy, productive, responsible members of this democracy" (p. 17).

The research of Carolyn Evertson is based on nearly 15 years of collaborative work with Jere Brophy and Edmund Emmer. Evertson (1986) set forth nine basic teaching principles:

1. Rules and procedures. Rules and procedures are established and enforced and students are monitored for compliance.
2. Consistency. Similar expectations are maintained for activities and behavior at all times for all students. Inconsistency causes confusion in students about what is acceptable.
3. Prompt management of inappropriate behavior. Inappropriate behavior is attended to quickly to stop it and prevent its spread.
4. Checking student work. All student work including seatwork, homework, and papers, is corrected, errors are discussed, and feedback is provided promptly.
5. Interactive teaching. This takes several forms and includes presenting and explaining new

materials, question sessions, discussion, checking for student understanding, actively moving among students to correct work, providing feedback, and, if necessary, reteaching materials.

6. Academic instruction, sometimes referred to as "academic learning time" or "academic engaged time." Attention is focused on the management of student work.

7. Pacing. Information is presented at a rate appropriate to the students' ability to comprehend it, not too rapidly or too slowly.

8. Transitions. Transitions from one activity to another are made rapidly, with minimum confusion about what to do next.

9. Clarity. Lessons are presented logically and sequentially. Clarity is enhanced by the use of instructional objectives and adequate illustrations and by keeping in touch with students. (p. 198)

Carl Rogers and H. Jerome Freiberg (1994) maintained that, "Research is more than numbers; it includes the systematic collection of ideas and experiences to identify trends and test patterns and to develop directions upon which new learnings may be channeled" (p. 249).

Furthermore, Rogers & Freiberg pointed out that, "Research on person-centered education has been ignored by policy

makers, the general public, and the teaching profession" (p. 249). Likewise, said Rogers & Freiberg, "The person-centered approach to learning is most threatening" (p. 214). For instance, person-centered education forced students to take responsibility for their actions. The learner is the center. In short, "this process represents a revolutionary about-face from the politics of traditional education" (p. 214).

Therefore, the advocates of person-centered education announced that, "The day is now passed when teachers or administrators can dismiss the person-centered approach as an impossible mode of conducting education or as ineffective in promoting learning" (p. 215). Thus, research demonstrated that a humane approach to learning fostered all kinds of constructive learning, both personal and intellectual.

Summary

Research confirms that it is still a difficult if not an impossible task to identify characteristics which apply to all teachers. According to David Elkind (1981), teachers have different personal characteristics which have a primary effect on how well they teach. Each individual teacher brings his or her philosophy of teaching to the classroom.

The characteristic that appears to be lacking in most teachers is a humanistic approach to learning. Research

appears to clearly define methodology. However, research fails to show how lists and tables transfer into the development of creative, free-thinking beings who understand what they need for themselves much better than those who would seek to impose their own brand of ideology on them.

Educators who perceive themselves as effective should be careful that their perceptions are not based on an imposed reality. It is personal reality that counts. Dobson, Dobson, and Kessinger (1980) say it best: "Things are pretty well the way they seem depending on who is doing the 'seeming'" (p. 30). If teachers see themselves as having more sense than their students this is how they will approach learning. On the other hand, if teachers believe that to teach another is to learn themselves then and only then can they begin to view themselves as becoming effective teachers.

CHAPTER III

METHOD

Introduction

An understanding of students' perceptions of their teachers' characteristics is essential to gain a full understanding of how student success is evaluated. Throughout the history of education, educators have chosen for students and have decided for them based on what educators believed was right. Educators often have ignored students' views and have developed schools for miniature adults. This has produced a system which is based on assembly line learning where students are treated like products, each waiting a turn to be filled or molded to the specifications of the manufacturer.

In this chapter the researcher presents a description of the research approach used in this study. A combination of procedures and methodologies was employed including field study, interviews, and historical research. Additionally, a description of the research site, participants, data collection, research procedure, and data interpretation was presented.

Procedure

The interview process best served this study as the researcher sought to identify teacher characteristics which students observe as producing effective teachers. One of the most definitive texts of our time which employs the interview as one of its techniques is Philip Cusick's (1983) The Egalitarian Ideal and the American High School. In this study Cusick seeks to answer the question: "What do black and white students do together, and how does this affect the school?" He finds that blacks and whites do very little together: "Biracialism was too sensitive an issue to talk about rationally in either of our urban schools. One could not even discuss its potentially good effects such as increasing racial tolerance and mutual understanding..." (pp. 104-105).

Cusick (1983) writes, "There are a number of methods useful for answering questions about human issues, and the job of the researcher is to select a method or combination of methods compatible with the logic of the question." Field or ethnographic methods are increasingly gaining status as legitimate tools for use in educational research. Cusick defends the field study in simple terms:

A field study, after all, is only an individual's attempt to unravel and explain a human event giving particular attention to the collective understandings of those who created the

event. If the event is significant, and the account is intelligible and plausible, then the result can be of value to those interested and involved in similar events. While such a defense is alarmingly simple, to deny it is to deny that one may attempt to understand and account for the actions of others or that another may learn from a written account of that attempt. (p. 135)

Recent research (NCES, 1992) shows significant gains by African-American students in math and science. The prospect of finding contributing factors to this success was exciting to this researcher.

Judith P. Goetz, a social science professor at the University of Georgia, and Margaret D. LeCompte of the Houston Independent School District wrote in their 1984 book Ethnography and Qualitative Design in Educational Research that interviews include the following specialized forms: key-informant interviews, career or life histories, and surveys. They described key informants as individuals who possess special knowledge, status, or communicative skills and who are willing to share that knowledge and skill with the researcher.

African-American students were the key informants for this research. These students were selected because this researcher sought to determine whether or not race was a factor. The researcher believed that information based on

current experiences was more valuable than retrospective information.

Good (Levine & Wang, 1983, p. 127) observed that "One especially important point is that different students define success in varied ways. Through conversations with students, teachers should attempt to increase their understanding of these differences and perhaps broaden the range of success possible in the classroom in order to accommodate these individual definitions." Additionally Good asserted that "We need much more research which employs interview techniques in order to determine how students interpret teacher behavior" (p. 136). He suggests that "It might be instructive to tape students who are spontaneously talking with one or two peers after receiving an important paper or test" (p. 137). Good's observations and proposals for future research in the area of student perceptions of teachers are exciting and challenging. As a result, this researcher used taped interviews to ascertain students' perceptions concerning teacher characteristics that positively influenced their academic success.

Permission to conduct qualitative research of successful African-American students was obtained from the participating district and the Institutional Review Board (IRB) of OSU. Both the participating district and the IRB of OSU required that consent forms from parents be secured

before any research was begun. For examples of forms and permission request letters see Appendix B.

Research Sites

The research site in which this study was conducted is a large urban school district located in the center of a large metropolitan city. The researcher has enjoyed a long, amicable relationship with the district. The researcher's first contact with the district was during the years the researcher was a student in the district. In later years, the researcher was hired as an employee and later became a patron of the district, having children of her own who attended district schools. Although this study was not then planned, or even thought of, the researcher began to form views on education generally and the education of her children specifically which provide a framework for this analysis.

It was not until the researcher began to search the literature for a dissertation topic that the researcher saw that teacher characteristics possibly influenced academic success for African-Americans. The researcher came across data from the NCES (1993) which said that in recent years a small percentage of African-American students have been steadily narrowing the achievement gap between themselves and their Caucasian peers. This researcher wanted to investigate the phenomena which may have encouraged high

academic achievement among African-Americans. Charles Silberman (1970) had advanced the notion that it is perhaps how teachers act and how they teach that may be more important than what they teach (p. 10). With this in mind, the researcher set out to select a topic and a site where these ideas could be investigated.

As soon as permission was granted from Oklahoma State University Institutional Review Board and the participating district, the study was begun. Three high schools were selected and given pseudonyms. The schools were identified as Enterprise One, Enterprise Two, and Enterprise Three. The name Enterprise was selected because the researcher came to view the study as a voyage. The researcher is a Star Trek fan who could not resist the notion that she had embarked on a journey with Captain Kirk of the Starship Enterprise in which new courses were charted, new ideas revealed, and more questions raised than there were answers.

Enterprise One came into existence in 1953. It is located in the southwest quadrant of the district on 20 acres. It has a total enrollment of 1,141 students. Native Americans comprise 5% of the total school population while Asian-Americans account for 3% and African-Americans account for 23%. Hispanic enrollment is 5% of the total, while Caucasian students are a definite majority, totaling 64% of the entire school population. Enterprise One has 63 certified teachers. There are no Asian or Native American

teachers assigned to this site. African-American teachers comprise 22% of the total while Caucasian teachers make up 77.8% of the remaining faculty. The dropout rate for Enterprise One is 4.5%, which is well below the national average of 17% for African-American and 11% for Caucasians (NCES 1993).

Enterprise Two came into existence in 1948. It is located in the far northwest quadrant of the district on 24 acres. There is a total enrollment of 1,143 students. Native Americans and Asians comprise approximately 2.5% of the total school population. African-American students are the majority with 63%. Caucasian students represent the second largest group with 32% and Hispanics round out the school population with 1.5%. There are 1.5 Hispanic teachers and no Asian nor Native American teachers assigned to this site. There are 37% African-American teachers and 61.5% Caucasian teachers. The dropout rate is 1.2% which is well below the national average (NCES 1993).

Enterprise Three came into existence in 1952 and is located in the central quadrant of the district on 38 acres. The total enrollment for Enterprise Three is 1,402 students. Native Americans comprise .5% of the total while Asians make up 10% and Hispanics total 12%. African-American students comprise 29.8% while Caucasians round out the enrollment with 48.5%. There are 80 certified teachers at Enterprise Three. Native Americans comprise 1.3% of the staff with 0

representation for Asian teachers. African-American teachers account for 23.8% while Caucasian teachers are in the majority with 75% of the total teaching staff. Again, as was prevalent at Enterprise One and Enterprise Two, Enterprise Three is far below the national average for dropouts with 1.1%. (See Appendix D)

Participants

The participants for this study were 15 African-American high school students who were identified by school principals and teachers as being academically successful. Teachers who assisted in the selection process came from the academic subject areas of math, science, English, history and government. The elective areas of foreign languages, computer technology and the fine arts also were asked to submit names. Each school submitted five names. Two students from Enterprise One chose not to participate. The principal replaced those who dropped out. There were no other casualties.

Students were informed about the nature of the research and their involvement as participants. They were given consent forms to take home to be signed and returned at the time of the interview. Pseudonyms are used in place of the students' names.

The participants were eager to talk. Many were fascinated with the idea that they could select a fictional

name that would be known only to them and the researcher. A brief biographical sketch is given of the students who participated in this study.

Several of the students were involved in athletic activities. Tee, Victoria, and Ebony ran track. LaDon, Joyce, and Lynn were cheerleaders. Joyce was student council president. Lynn had received a scholarship for college. She was very proud of this because it was for her academic achievement. Karen, Jasmine, and Tazz were also involved with sports. Additionally, all of the girls were listed on the principal's honor roll and/or the National Honor Society.

The boys were just as athletically inclined as the girls. DeeTee played football, and Tim played basketball. Bob and John were not on an athletic team, but they were in the National Honor Society and were officers on the Student Council. In summary, all of the students were listed on academic honor rolls, the students served in some capacity as club officers, and/or were star athletes for their schools.

Data Collection

Immediately upon receiving permission to proceed with the study the researcher contacted the principal's secretary of the participating schools. Appointments were made with each building principal to discuss the study. Each

principal was asked to help in the selection process. Principals were asked to select teachers from all subject areas who could nominate students for the study.

Taped interviews were conducted with all of the participants. The interviews were held in conference rooms that had been preselected by the researcher on the initial visit with the principal. This was done so the researcher would have similar interviewing conditions at all sites. The interviews were semi-structured. In other words, participants were initially asked questions which led to other, unplanned, questions. Mills (1959) would term this a "rearranging of the files" (p. 213).

Students were sent to the interview room by the principal's secretary. All participants were initially interviewed individually. However, on one occasion (at Enterprise Three) the secretary inadvertently sent three participants at the same time. The students asked if they could all stay together. Because it was the last site and the last group to be interviewed, I agreed to the request. I explained to them that each person would need to respond individually to the questions. They understood and agreed to the procedure.

As the interviews with the 3 girls began, it became apparent that the participants were having great difficulty trying to adhere to the guidelines. The researcher was amazed to see that the participants wanted to respond to a

comment made by another respondent. I permitted the respondents to interact as I guided the discussion. More information was received from those three than from the previous 12. The researcher immediately asked for permission to reschedule group interviews with the other participants. I explained what had happened at Enterprise Three and asked the students from Enterprise One and Two if they would talk with me as a group. It was during these interviews that the researcher used questions which had been generated from previous individual interviews and the group interview from Enterprise Three to formulate new questions.

The researcher was given a richer and fuller account from the groups than from the individuals. Such thick description helped the researcher to have a better understanding of the students' perceptions. Cusick (1983) expresses that "the researcher's success is contingent on his ability to access the events under study, take on the perspective of those creating the events, and describe those events from their perspective" (p. 132).

The Structured Interview

1. What does success mean to you?
2. Do you see yourself as a successful person?
3. Describe a teacher who has contributed to your academic success.
4. Does that teacher possess certain personality characteristics that aided your academic success?

Describe these characteristics. Tell me how these things helped you.

5. Can you describe attitudes that this teacher possesses that aided your academic success? List some ways that a teacher's attitude helped you.
6. Describe teaching methods that this teacher used that affected your academic success. Tell me why you think these methods helped you. Tell me why you liked these methods.
7. Has the race of the teacher been a significant factor in your academic success? Why do you feel this way?

Data Interpretation

After the interviews were complete, the researcher began the task of assessing the information that had been received. There were several recurring themes that emerged. Contrary to what some researchers have said (Biddle & Ellena, 1964), students have definite perceptions about what they believe an effective teacher is. The students cited many of the teaching practices that Levine (1989), Ornstein (1989), Brophy (1982), Gage (1978), Berliner (1987), and others have identified and contributed to effective teaching and teachers.

The grounded theory approach was employed to help in the interpretation of the data. This method of analysis was integrated into the entire research process.

A grounded theory is one that is inductively derived from the study of the phenomenon it represents. That is, it is discovered, developed, and provisionally verified through systematic data

collection and analysis of data pertaining to that phenomenon. Therefore, data collection, analysis and theory stand in reciprocal relationship to each other (Strauss & Corbin, 1990).

A grounded theory permits the researcher to study "uncharted waters," or human phenomena including feelings, emotions, perceptions and values which are idiosyncratic (Haggerson, 1988).

Grounded theory was selected for this study because it provided an explanation of how African-American students perceived certain teachers to be effective. This theory presented the best method for determining if the actions of the teachers were congruent with the beliefs of the students. Grounded theory also aided the researcher in seeing the "realities" of the students' perceptions of their teachers.

Perceptions of the students were compiled and categorized under conceptual headings. Recurring themes were categorized and explained. Chapter IV contains the data analysis and a review of the students' dialogue and comments.

CHAPTER IV

RESULTS OF THE STUDY

Introduction

Chapter IV presents the data collected for this study. It provides information about the students' perceptions of their teachers and how these teachers contributed to the students' academic success. The chapter concludes with the presentation of data and excerpts from interviews as well as an analysis of the similarities between the students' perceptions and those perceptions recognized by research.

Research Questions One Through Seven

Looking at Recurring Themes

In the tables which follow, students' responses are recorded as spoken. Sometimes the responses are in sentence form; sometimes they are not. At times they are grammatically accurate, but occasionally they are not. The emphasis is on faithfully recording students' actual responses.

Research Question One

"What does success mean to you?"

The majority of the participants indicated that success meant being able to accomplish their dreams or achieve a desired goal. Some saw success as making A's or receiving an honor or award. A somewhat unusual response for this age group suggested success was feeling good about helping others or performing a community service. One person saw success as having security. All student responses are presented in Table I.

TABLE I

RESEARCH QUESTION ONE: "WHAT DOES SUCCESS MEAN TO YOU?"

Participant Responses

- Able to accomplish dreams
- Achieving community status
- Feeling good about helping others
- Achieving what you want
- Achieving an honor
- Achieving anything real important
- Security
- Accomplish goals
- Making an A
- Trying to be like older brother

TABLE I continued

-
- Ability to prove you belong
 - Excel as much as another person regardless of background
-

Research Question Two

"Do you see yourself as a successful person?"

Those who responded to this question believed they were successful because they had overcome a negative influence or some mistake from the past. Many participants believed that hard work and dedication to a course were also contributing factors in their success. Two participants implied that their success was due to having older successful siblings as role models.

Only one student reported not feeling successful and attributed this to a lack of organization. It should be noted that this student was successful by most standards even though there was some personal doubt expressed. See Table II for a complete list of student responses.

TABLE II

RESEARCH QUESTION TWO: "DO YOU SEE YOURSELF AS A SUCCESSFUL PERSON?"

Participant Responses

- Yes, because I'm graduating

Table II continued

- Sees graduating as a major achievement
 - Being able to achieve goals
 - Overcoming negative influences
 - Overcoming mistakes of the past
 - Refusing to drop out of school
 - Yes, I work hard at academics
 - Work hard at outside curricular activities
 - I am not afraid to do things
 - Work a lot with church and religion
 - Older brother seemed a role model (4 1/2 years older)
 - Made it to AP classes, 23 on Act, 3.70 GPA
 - Applied myself
 - No, I am disorganized
 - Multi-definitions for being successful
-

Research Question Three

"Describe a teacher who has contributed to your academic success."

When asked to describe a teacher who had contributed to their academic success several respondents indicated that one teacher had an influential and powerful effect on their academic careers. The teachers were described as being encouraging and knowledgeable about their subjects.

Several students admitted they liked their teachers a lot. One student said, " ... I'll never forget her, even when I'm long gone from this school, I'll never forget her--never." The passion in his voice moved this researcher greatly. The expression on his face was evidence of his great respect for this teacher. Table III presents all student responses to question three.

TABLE III

RESEARCH QUESTION THREE: "DESCRIBE A TEACHER WHO HAS CONTRIBUTED TO YOUR ACADEMIC SUCCESS."

Participant Responses

- Cheerleading coach pushed me to stay in school
- Encouraged me to do my work
- Understood my capabilities
- Used negative consequences if necessary to get me to do my work
- Influenced me a lot
- Very powerful and influential
- Liked the teacher a lot
- Taught me to work for what I wanted
- Forced myself - self-motivated
- Always helpful to me, especially African-American students
- I'll never forget her even when I'm long gone from this school

TABLE III continued

-
- Truly the one teacher who has contributed the most to my success
 - Great influence on me wanting to learn and helping me in school
 - All teachers have influenced me
 - Knew information and brought it across very well
 - Yes
-

Research Question Four

"Does that teacher (the one referenced in question three) possess certain personality characteristics that aided your academic success? Describe these characteristics. Tell me how these things helped you."

Responses to question number four disclosed several recurring themes (see Table IV). There was a high level of agreement among the respondents in the areas of teacher control, availability, understanding, caring, encouragement and respect. The participants spoke with enthusiasm and compassion about their teachers' characteristics. "She didn't take any 'mess' from anybody," proclaimed one student as she talked about her teacher. Another rated availability as being important. "I felt she was always there for me," he pointed out. "This teacher commands respect at school and outside of school," conceded another participant.

The participants all listed caring and understanding as personality characteristics that aided their academic success the most. Classroom control was critical to many respondents who explained that rules and regulations were important. One girl affirmed, "He has discipline, yet he is fun to be around." Table IV presents all student responses to question four.

TABLE IV

RESEARCH QUESTION FOUR: "Does that teacher possess certain personality characteristics that aided your academic success? Describe these characteristics. Tell me how these things helped you."

Participant Responses

- She was very demanding
- She didn't take any "mess" from anybody
- Small in stature
- Strong powerful voice
- Takes control of any situation
- She insisted that students try their hardest
- I felt she was always there for me
- This teacher commands respect at school and outside of school
- People look up to her
- She is strong
- She knows what she wants

TABLE IV continued

- She can see through you, she seems to know what you can do, this is what stands out about her
- Wants you to try your hardest and best
- Redo homework
- Stay after school to help us
- Had to make effort to come before school or after school
- Pretty straightforward
- Too pretty to teach
- Pushed me above and beyond
- Not mean, but strict about rules and work
- Couldn't color outside the lines in 1st grade
- Caring while being strict
- Thinking about us
- Funny, yet he makes sure everyone does the work
- He has discipline yet, he is fun to be around
- Makes history real interesting
- Ah, come on, you can do it
- She takes on characteristics of a mother or grandmother
- She understands when you are in a good mood or bad mood
- She understands almost everything about you
- Caring, understanding everything, almost seemed like a second mother
- Mother role type

TABLE IV continued

-
- Always there when I need something or need to talk
 - A good friend, real nice
 - Anything a mother can get, she is there for you
-

Research Question Five

"Can you describe attitudes that this teacher possesses that aided your academic success? List some ways that a teacher's attitude helped you."

The dominant theme for question five was courage. All of the participants shared examples of how their teachers admonished them to try. "You can't be scared," recounted one student. "Everybody can do something," recounted another student. Example after example was given of the encouraging words the students received. Many of the responses indicated that the teachers had caused these students to believe in themselves. They spoke of discovering an innate quality that they did not know they possessed.

The participants mused, "Gee, I can do it," or "It's nice to know that black people are just as smart as other people." A complete list of student responses is presented in Table V.

TABLE V

RESEARCH QUESTION FIVE: "CAN YOU DESCRIBE ATTITUDES THAT THIS TEACHER POSSESSES THAT AIDED YOUR ACADEMIC SUCCESS? LIST SOME WAYS THAT A TEACHER'S ATTITUDE HELPED YOU."

Participant Responses

- Real strong on learning
- You can't be scared
- Accept the fact that your feelings may be hurt and keep going
- Someone will always hurt your feelings, that's life
- She taught us to like a student we couldn't get along with
- Everybody can do something
- Would not give up
- Showed that "black" people were just as smart as other people
- First teacher I met who showed "black" students they could do math
- Keep trying
- She made me believe in myself
- Kept on me until I got it
- Basically had good attitude--positive
- Attitude to try to force you to learn
- She will help you when you are trying
- She does not look down on you
- Straight attitude

TABLE V continued

-
- Yes or no, not maybe, no getting around it
 - Helped me understand
 - Gave up her lunch for a whole year to help students who did not understand
 - She gets on you about her work
 - Hardnosed
 - Will not cut you any slack
 - Fair
 - I don't take her fussing personal -
 - Strict attitude
 - Makes sure I get down to business
 - Makes sure I do what I need to do to succeed
 - She would really like for me to succeed in life
 - Wants all her students to accomplish something either from class or from her
 - Very caring - more personal - your mom or dad - your counselor
 - One on one session
 - Very positive attitude
 - Plus for students today
 - Stresses doing homework
 - Always in good mood
 - If he was in a bad mood he never showed it or took it out on anyone
 - Very optimistic person, easy to talk to
 - Very giving with his time
 - Expects the best even though I'm on the track team
-

Research Question Six

"Describe teaching methods that this teacher used that affected your academic success. Tell me why you think these methods helped you. Tell me why you liked these methods."

The primary responses to this question related to homework, quality of lessons, and the teacher's ability to work with the students (see Table VI). The responses to question six indicate that the students did not mind homework when it made sense to them. One participant referred to homework as a teaching assignment. Some teachers gave short quizzes while others required that notes be taken and kept in a notebook.

One student was inspired by her teacher's ability to teach songs and acronyms that aided the learning process in geometry. Another student was fascinated by his teacher's ability to let students work in groups and on the blackboard. He exclaimed, "Hands on work is better for students."

TABLE VI

RESEARCH QUESTION SIX: "DESCRIBE TEACHING METHODS THAT THIS TEACHER USED THAT AFFECTED YOUR ACADEMIC SUCCESS. TELL ME WHY YOU THINK THESE METHODS HELPED YOU. TELL ME WHY YOU LIKED THESE METHODS."

Participant Responses

- Paces her work

TABLE VI continued

- Won't let you take on too much
- Start small - work your way up
- Take on more as you understand it
- Have students work with each other
- Does not want all the glory
- Willing to let others help if they can
- Lets us know there is a reason for what we do
- We may not understand now, but one day we will
- I like that - at least I know that what we are doing can be used
- Used examples outside of school (practical experiences) to help students learn
- Broke it (lessons) down so we can understand
- Teaching assignments every night
- Gives short quizzes (5 questions)
- Grades your assignment, you know what's going on because you go over the same routine all the time
- Took down notes
- Gave homework never graded
- Test would tell her what you really know
- Refuse to pass you if you don't know anything
- Divides class in groups
- Teaches us to help each other

TABLE VI continued

- Lets kids work on the board
 - Hands on work is better for students
 - Gives a lot of homework, that helps to get it stuck in your head
 - Used songs and techniques that they were taught or created to make it easier for us to learn
 - Draw alphabet with Cabbage Patch kids
 - Learned songs and sayings to help with formulas
 - Cute sentences and sayings helped me to learn a lot
 - Good lectures, not too long and boring
 - Not much homework
 - Speaks very frank
 - Passes bounds of student/teacher, talks to us like we're friend instead of him being superior
 - Easy to express my opinion, don't feel bound by superiority
-

Research Question Seven

"Has the race of the teacher been a significant factor in your academic success? Why do you feel this way?"

The recurring theme for this question was the satisfaction that African-American students received from seeing other African-Americans in positions of authority and

leadership. Many responses indicated participants enjoyed seeing blacks "make it." One student moaned that she was " ... tired of always seeing other people make it ... it makes you feel like something is wrong." Another reasoned that "Seeing real good black teachers gives you a sense of pride."

About one-third of the participants did not believe race was a significant factor. Another one-third said it was significant, very significant or most significant. The last one-third did not believe the race of the teacher had any significance in regard to their academic success. See Table VII for all student responses.

TABLE VII

RESEARCH QUESTION SEVEN: "HAS THE RACE OF THE TEACHER BEEN A SIGNIFICANT FACTOR IN YOUR ACADEMIC SUCCESS? WHO DO YOU FEEL THIS WAY?"

Participant Responses

- Most significant
- Seeing real good black teacher gave me a sense of pride
- Significant
- Always seeing other people (not blacks) make it makes you feel like something is wrong
- Seeing blacks make it lets us know that we can make it too
- Very significant factor

TABLE VII continued

- Affects you to see only whites all the time
- In some teachers
- Have not experienced race as a significant factor
- No, she was real light - looked white
- Yes, it could be, loves helping all people
- Especially likes helping African-American students
- Pushes us (African-American) harder than the others
- Assigns tutoring for us when we don't do well
- Will not take no for an answer
- She really does love us
- If she wasn't there earlier, I wouldn't be here now
- She is a good role model
- Contributed more to my success than any other teacher
- Not really
- Sometimes it is
- Always something to distract black kids
- They like to party and go to clubs, stereotype, but it is true
- Society gives distractions
- She deserves her pay
- She is a hard working lady
- Race has not been significant

TABLE VII continued

- Watch to see what goes on to see if race does play a role
 - In one class teacher pampers whites more than blacks
 - Goes down to boys and girls, boys get more attention than girls
 - Yes, very significant
 - A determining factor
 - They are not expected to excel, I expect to excel
 - Disprove stereotypes of blacks
-

Categorization of Recurring Themes

As the data unfolded, it was apparent that many of the responses followed a theme or pattern. Initially, all participant responses were recorded and presented in Tables I through VII. Subsequently, the researcher categorized this neutral aggregation of responses into a group of recurring themes. This aggregation of responses was presented in Tables VII through XIV. Also listed in Tables XV through XVII were the similarities discovered between student perceptions and perceptions revealed in research.

TABLE VIII

SUMMARY OF RECURRING THEMES FOR RESEARCH QUESTION ONE:
"WHAT DOES SUCCESS MEAN TO YOU?"

Achieving/accomplishing goals and dreams

1. Achieving things of importance is success
 2. Accomplishing and realizing goals and dreams are successes.
-

Participants in Table VIII listed being able to achieve a desired goal or realize an anticipated dream as being successful. This appeared to be the dominant theme for this question.

TABLE IX

SUMMARY OF RECURRING THEMES FOR RESEARCH QUESTION TWO:
"DO YOU SEE YOURSELF AS A SUCCESSFUL PERSON?"

Hard work pays off, don't be overcome by mistakes and negative influences, attain goals

1. It pays to work hard
 2. You can be successful in spite of mistakes
 3. People who achieve their desired goals are successful.
-

The data in Table IX revealed that African-American

students believed if they worked hard and overcame obstacles they would be successful. These respondents also saw success as achieving a desired goal.

TABLE X

SUMMARY OF RECURRING THEMES FOR RESEARCH QUESTION THREE:
"DESCRIBE A TEACHER WHO HAS CONTRIBUTED
TO YOUR ACADEMIC SUCCESS."

Understanding, encouraging, influential, helpful and motivating.

1. Teachers understand and know the capabilities of their students.
 2. Teachers have a lot of influence on students.
 3. Teachers are encouraging and helpful to students.
 4. Teachers serve as motivators for students.
-

On the basis of the data in Table X, students saw teachers who had contributed to their success as being understanding, encouraging, influential, helpful and motivating. Moreover, an underlying theme appeared to be power. Some students spoke with reverence and passion when describing their teachers in question three.

TABLE XI

SUMMARY OF RECURRING THEMES FOR RESEARCH QUESTION FOUR:
"DOES THIS TEACHER POSSESS CERTAIN PERSONALITY
CHARACTERISTICS THAT AIDED YOUR ACADEMIC SUCCESS? DESCRIBE
THESE CHARACTERISTICS? TELL ME HOW THESE THINGS
HELPED YOU."

Straightforward, strong, caring, understanding, motherly/
grandmotherly role, friendly, strict, yet caring and fun,
available, motivating

1. Teachers were caring and understanding.
 2. Teachers were strong and controlling.
 3. Teachers took on role of mother/grandmother at times.
 4. Teachers were strict yet caring and fun to be around.
 5. Teachers were seen as friends and not adversaries.
 6. Teachers were available or made time for students.
 7. Teachers were motivators; they would not accept no for an answer.
-

According to the data in Table XI the students rated caring and understanding teachers who possessed motherly qualities as having a great influence on their success. Also, students expressed surprise with their own abilities when they had accomplished a task they previously believed to be too difficult.

TABLE XII

SUMMARY OF RECURRING THEMES FOR RESEARCH QUESTION FIVE:
"CAN YOU DESCRIBE ATTITUDES THAT THIS TEACHER POSSESSES
THAT HAVE AIDED YOUR ACADEMIC SUCCESS? LIST SOME WAYS
THAT A TEACHER'S ATTITUDE HELPED YOU."

Be tough, don't give up, role model for African-Americans,
positive outlook, helpful, caring

1. Several students listed teachers who were tough, but fair.
 2. Teachers encouraged students not to be timid, not to give up.
 3. African-American students liked having competent African-American teachers. They looked up to them as role models.
 4. Teachers demonstrated a positive outlook and attitude toward students.
 5. Again, students stressed a helpful and caring attitude as being very important.
-

An inspection of the data in Table XII allowed the researcher to adopt the generalization that African-American students achieved success when their teachers were tough but fair, helpful, caring, and competent. Consequently, African-American students held competent African-American teachers in high esteem and considered them as role models.

TABLE XIII

SUMMARY OF RECURRING THEMES FOR RESEARCH QUESTION SIX:
"DESCRIBE TEACHING METHODS THAT THIS TEACHER USED THAT
AFFECTED YOUR ACADEMIC SUCCESS. TELL ME WHY YOU THINK
THESE METHODS HELPED YOU? TELL ME WHY YOU LIKED
THESE METHODS?"

Gives reasons for assignments, paces work, uses practical examples, has a class routine, likes group work

1. Students liked knowing why they were doing whatever they had to do.
 2. Teachers paced worked for students.
 3. Students liked for teachers to use practical examples.
 4. Students liked classrooms with a routine (structure).
 5. Students liked working in groups.
-

Table XIII indicated that successful African-American students liked teachers who demonstrated clarity in their lessons. Moreover, students liked classrooms with structure. African American students enjoyed working with each other in groups.

TABLE XIV

SUMMARY OF RECURRING THEMES FOR RESEARCH QUESTION SEVEN:
"HAS THE RACE OF THE TEACHER BEEN A SIGNIFICANT FACTOR IN
YOUR ACADEMIC SUCCESS? WHY DO YOU FEEL THIS WAY?"

Pride when African-Americans succeed, hope race not always a factor, African-American teachers require much, stereotypes disproved, love for African-American students

1. African-American students liked seeing African-American teachers succeed.
 2. African-American students felt that there was hope for them if other African Americans could be successful.
 3. African-American students felt that they were pushed more by African-American teachers.
 4. African-American teachers showed love for students.
 5. Race was not always a factor.
-

The data cited in Table XIV revealed that African-American students were evenly divided on the significance of the teacher's race. Several of the students did not believe that race was a factor in their academic success. One student believed she had to be successful in order to disprove the stereotype surrounding African-American students.

TABLE XV

A SUMMARY OF SIMILARITIES BETWEEN STUDENT PERCEPTIONS
AND RESEARCH

Daniel Levine and Allan Ornstein's Research on Effective Teachers

Teacher Function	Students' Perceptions
1. Classroom Management (Develops good managerial techniques)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Takes control of situation - She didn't take any "mess" - Strict about rules
2. Direct Instruction (Presents clear systematic method of direct instruction or explicit teaching)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Good lectures, not too long or boring - Teaches to help each other - Go over same routine - Tests tells her what you know - Knew information - Teaching assignments every night - Won't let you take on too much - Gives a lot of homework, that helps to get it stuck in your head
3. Time on Task (Provides students with relevant academic activities)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Makes sure I get down to business - Makes sure I do what I need to do to succeed - Kept on me until I got it
4. Questioning (Asks appropriate questions)	
5. Comprehension Instruction (Emphasizes independent learning and learning to learn)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Real strong on learning - Attitude to try to force you to learn - Everybody can do something - Willing to let us help each other if we can - Used examples outside of school (practical experiences) to help students learn

TABLE XV continued

6. Cognitive Instruction (Attempts to move toward high-order thinking skills)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Someone will always hurt your feelings, that's life - Accept the fact your feelings are going to be hurt and keep going - Learned songs and sayings to help with formulas
7. Grouping (Group students for individualized and small group instruction)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Teaches us to help each other - Divides class in groups - Lets kids work on the board

TABLE XVI

A SUMMARY OF SIMILARITIES BETWEEN STUDENT PERCEPTIONS AND RESEARCH

Carolyn Evertson's Research on Effective Teachers

Teacher Function	Students' Perceptions
1. Rules and Procedures (Rules and procedures are established and enforced)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Strict about rules - Redo homework - She insisted that students try hard - Pushed me above and beyond
2. Consistency (Similar expectations are maintained for activities and behavior at all times for all students)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Hardnosed - Will not cut you any slack - Fair - Wants all her students to accomplish something - Go over some routine
3. Prompt Management of Inappropriate Behavior (Attends to inappropriate behavior quickly)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Takes control of situation - She didn't take any mess - Strict attitude

TABLE XVI continued

-
- | | |
|---|--|
| <p>4. Checking Students' Work
(All student work is checked, errors discussed and feedback is prompt)</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Grade your assignment ... you know what's going on ... go over same routine all the time - Tests would tell her what you really know |
| <p>5. Interactive Teaching
(Includes presenting and explaining new materials, question session, checking for student's understanding and reteaching if necessary)</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Let us know there is a reason for what we do - We may not understand now, but one day we will - Used songs and techniques ... to make it easier for us to learn - Showed that black people were just as smart as other people - Gave up her lunch to help students - She helps you when you are trying - I don't take her fussing personally - Helped me understand - Stayed after school to help us - Came before school and/or stayed after school to help us |
| <p>6. Academic Instruction
(Sometimes referred to as "academic learning time" or "academic engaged time")</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - She was very demanding - Funny, yet he makes sure everybody does the work - One on one sessions |
| <p>7. Pacing
(Information presented at a rate appropriate to the student's ability to comprehend)</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Paces her work - Won't let you take on too much - Start small - work your way up - Take on more as you understand it - Broke it (lessons) down so we understood |

TABLE XVI continued

8. Transitions (Transitions made rapidly with minimum confusion about what to do next)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - We may not understand now, but one day we will - Start small and work your way up
9. Clarity (Lessons are presented logically and sequentially)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - She can see through you, she seems to know what you can do - Pretty straightforward - Good lectures - not too long and boring

TABLE XVII

A SUMMARY OF SIMILARITIES BETWEEN STUDENT PERCEPTIONS
AND RESEARCH

Thomas Good and Jere Brophy's Research on Effective Teachers

<u>Teacher Function</u>	<u>Students' Perceptions</u>
1. Clarity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - See Table XV #2 and Table XVI #9
2. Knowledge	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - See Table XV #5
3. Variety	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Makes history real interesting - Used examples outside of school - Used songs and techniques ... to make it easier to learn - Draw alphabet with Cabbage Patch kids - Learned songs and sayings to help with formulas - Cute sentences and sayings helped me to learn a lot - Lets kids work on the board - Teaches us to help each other

TABLE XVII continued

- | | |
|---------------------------------|---|
| 4. "With-it-ness" | <ul style="list-style-type: none">- She knows what she wants- People look up to her- She understands when you are in a good mood or bad mood- She understands almost everything about you |
| 5. "Overlapping" | <ul style="list-style-type: none">- Caring while being strict- Not mean, but strict about rules- Caring, understanding everything |
| 6. "Smoothness" | <ul style="list-style-type: none">- Doesn't want all the glory- Passes bounds of student/teacher, talks to us like we're friends instead of him being superior |
| 7. Seatwork | <ul style="list-style-type: none">- See Table XVI #4 |
| 8. Holding Students Accountable | <ul style="list-style-type: none">- Make sure I get down to business- She would really like for me to succeed- Makes sure I do what I need to do to succeed- Will not cut you any slack |
| 9. Realistic Expectations | <ul style="list-style-type: none">- She can see through you, she seems to know what you can do, this is what stands out about her- Kept on me until I got it- First teacher I met who showed black students they could do math- Everybody can do something |
| 10. Realistic Praise | <ul style="list-style-type: none">- Keep trying- Ah, come on, you can do it |

TABLE XVII continued

- | | |
|--|---|
| 11. Flexibility | <ul style="list-style-type: none">- Stay after school to help us- Made effort to come before school or stay after school- Always there when I need something or need to talk |
| 12. Task Orientation | <ul style="list-style-type: none">- See Table XV #3 |
| 13. Monitoring | <ul style="list-style-type: none">- See Table XV #3 and Table XVI #1 |
| 14. Providing Opportunity to Learn | <ul style="list-style-type: none">- See Table XV #5 and Table XVI #5 |
| 15. Making Comments that Help Structure Learning | <ul style="list-style-type: none">- You can't be scared- Everybody can do something- Accept the fact that your feelings may be hurt and keep going- Someone will always hurt your feelings, that's life- Ah, come on, you can do it |
-

CHAPTER V

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Summary

The purpose of this study was to assess the characteristics of effective teachers as identified by academically successful African-American high school students. The researcher sought to ascertain if successful African-American students attributed their success, or some portion of it, to a teacher or teachers who possessed certain characteristics.

The participants for this study were 15 African-American students from 3 urban high schools within the same district. Principals and teachers acquainted with the students identified them as academically successful.

Concerning characteristics of effective teachers, the research focused on defining methodology and developing lists and tables. The review of the literature also revealed that "Academic success continues to be an elusive goal for the large majority of African-American students at all levels--from elementary to higher education" (Lomotey, 1990, p. 2). Equally important, the research failed to show

how lists and tables are transferred into the development of creative, free-thinking beings.

For this reason, this researcher began the task of trying to hear what the participants had said that the research did not say. Library research produced a literature review which in the end produced more tables and lists. This researcher found that most of the participants in this study listed many of the teacher characteristics which had been previously identified by the top researchers in the field. Taped interviews with the participants produced data supporting researchers, as well as data regarding a humanistic approach to learning that was sorely missing from the tables and lists described earlier.

Furthermore, some of the participants' responses regarding the teachers who "took control of situations" or teachers who "knew the information" coincided with researchers Levine & Ornstein findings in 1989 identifying good managerial techniques along with direct instruction as characteristics essential for an effective teacher. Also, the participants listed "working in small groups" as did Levine & Ornstein in 1989. The students described being able to "work at their own pace" as activities which contributed to their academic success just as Evertson had in 1986. Besides the above mentioned characteristics, the participants listed interactive teaching or teachers who presented and explained materials in ways that made sense to

them as teacher characteristics which helped them to achieve academically mirroring Evertson's 1986 findings. Therefore, participant responses and the research of Levine & Ornstein (1989), Evertson (1986), Gage (1978), Good & Brophy (1986), Berliner (1987), and Borich (1990) support the findings of this study that revealed that teachers did indeed possess characteristics that contributed to the academic success of African-American students.

Truly, this phenomenon was intriguing. The researcher heard responses that compared teachers to mothers, grandmothers, dads, and counselors. At times in their frustration teachers say, "I am not their (meaning students') mother. What do they want me to do?" The participants in this study did not want mothers per se, but they did want teachers to have what Carl Rogers (1994) called unconditional positive regard for them. The research demonstrates that they wanted teachers who did not look down on them because of their skin tone. Likewise, the data suggest that they wanted teachers who cared. Teachers who are caring and who demonstrate an unconditional positive regard toward human beings were the types of individuals that emerged from the study. Mothers, grandmothers, dads, and counselors were used metaphorically because this is as close as the students could get to describing the characteristics they liked most in teachers.

Conclusions

The results of this study support the following conclusions:

1. African-American students expressed feelings that strongly support the merit of African-American role models as classroom teachers.
2. African-American students invariably saw effective teachers as motivators. A motivator to these participants was a person who gave assurance and who demonstrated a positive attitude toward the students ability to perform.
3. African-American students saw the demanding teacher as being effective. While being demanding is similar to being a motivator, students emphasized such characteristics as high expectations, strict requirements and rules that must be adhered to as part of an assertive personality.
4. African-American students saw effective teachers as helping them to realize their own abilities. Teachers who refused to give up on them and who constantly offered encouragement and support were identified as being most helpful.
5. African-American students saw effective teachers as exhibiting a variety of methods in teaching. The students particularly enjoyed working in groups and helping one another as the occasion called for.

6. African-American students saw effective teachers as people who cared about them. They liked teachers who tried to understand them and who seemed to know what they needed.
7. African-American students took pride in the fact that African-American teachers occupied positions of power and control at school and in the community. Students responded that seeing other successful African-Americans gave them assurance that they too could become successful.
8. African-American students saw race as significant but not the most significant factor in effective teaching. The students spoke quite favorably of a Caucasian teacher who had moved to another state and had returned once to see the students and had promised to come again for graduation. "She really liked us" was the comment made by one of the participants.
9. African-American males viewed strong, influential African-American female teachers as having the characteristics that helped them the most.
10. African-American students viewed effective teachers as having paternalistic characteristics which aided their academic success.

11. African-American students saw effective teachers as persons willing to perform above and beyond their average teaching responsibilities.
12. African-American students saw effective teachers as possessing positive attitudes which helped the students to succeed.
13. African-American students viewed effective teachers as persons who wanted students to be successful.
14. African-American students saw effective teachers as persons who listened to them and permitted them to express their opinions.
15. African-American students equated being successful with accomplishing goals and/or seeing dreams materialize.

Recommendations

This study began with the journey of the African-Americans to a country they did not choose, to a place they now call home. This researcher journeyed into the hearts and minds of young African-American students who shared their perceptions of teachers who had aided their academic success. During this study, the researcher heard the passion in the students' voices as they spoke of persons who had impacted their lives. The students' perceptions of effective teachers are presented in this study and now stand

as a travel guide for other researchers who dare to embark on a similar journey.

As each journey or voyage has a beginning, so must there be an ending. The end for this researcher is really a beginning, the beginning of a search for understanding of the "unforeseen and unplanned linkages" (Mills, 1959, p. 213) of African-American students whose perceptions now serve as road maps for others who will follow. Based on the findings of this inquiry, future researchers are encouraged to continue the voyage. The recommendations for future travelers are listed below.

1. Dare to seek a more humanistic approach to learning.
2. Dare to help African-American students develop unconditional positive regard.
3. Dare to be a decision maker who will seek to empower African-American students to reach for the stars.
4. Dare to present new challenges and new techniques designed to narrow the gap between African-American students and their Caucasian peers.
5. Dare to establish teacher education programs that will encourage students to become caring, humane, effective teachers.
6. Dare to teach African-American students to think and do for themselves.

7. Dare to put an end to stereotypes of African-Americans.

8. Dare to lift African-American students from the wretched refuse of America's teeming shore.

The characteristics of effective teachers as identified by the academically successful African-American students of this study can do much to narrow the achievement gap between African-American students and their Caucasian peers. Let the people hear. The students have spoken.

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APPENDIXES

APPENDIX A
SAMPLES OF VERBATIM TEXT

SAMPLE 1

QUESTIONS AND RESPONSES

Question #1:

Interviewer - What does success mean to you?

Respondent #1 - Sounds like a pageant?

Interviewer - Okay, you're in the pageant today what is success to you

Respondent #1 - Success to me is being able to accomplishing what you have dreamed and hold on to your dream

Respondent #2 - I agree with LD to a certain extent, not just achieving as far as a career goes, but also in your community. I think that is more important. The feeling you get when you help someone else is.

Respondent #3 - Success to me is whatever you think it is. I mean like someone can see success as going to the grocery store and they made it back, but success is however for you see achieving what you want to achieve what you see the highest in achieving.

Question #2:

Interviewer - Do you see yourself as a successful person?

Respondent #3 - Yes, I do.

Interviewer - Elaborate

Respondent #3 - To make it as far as I have, that's success, you know when you're little and everything, you're like you know like being in high school and everything. Man am I going to make it that far - you just don't see it like but now that I'm here it is like, man I made it - that's a big achievement for me. I see that as very successful.

Respondent #2 - I guess we're all considered successful considering all the things we are influenced by and being able to overcome that, but then too I consider myself successful because I remember planning on being senior class

president as a freshman, and I am, so I consider myself successful.

Respondent #1 - I consider myself very successful because I made a lot of mistakes in the past at one point I considered dropping out - and I'm really thankful for my mother for being there for me. If my mother wasn't there I would have dropped out - so I consider myself very successful.

Question #3:

Interviewer - Describe a teacher who has contributed to your academic success.

Respondent #1 - One of my favorite teachers has.

Interviewer - Elaborate

Respondent #1 - My cheerleading coach in the 8th grade, she really pushed me into staying in school and doing my work. She knew my capabilities. It was just that I was lazy and didn't want to do anything - but it was like if I didn't do it I had to run for it so that just really pushed me.

Respondent #2 - This is sort of complicated, okay. I've always just kind of been my own self-motivation, but when I entered high school Mrs. B, who is the math teacher here, influenced me a lot. I mean, I never before met a black person who had so much influence and power in anywhere she goes. I mean it is not just in school it is outside of school - everywhere. I guess from then on she was sort of my favorite teacher.

Respondent #3 - Really, it is like all of my teachers have done their little part you know, like saying something. It's kinda like she was saying. I just met Mrs. B last year when I came here - and it's like she was saying. Nobody is going to give you anything, you have to do it for yourself. So, I did it for myself.

Question #4:

Interviewer - Does that teacher possess certain personality characteristics that aided your academic success? Describe these characteristics.

Tell me how these things helped you.

Respondent #3 - The teacher that I just said she was a short woman, but was very demanding, very. She stood out, she looked like a student but she stood out. She didn't take no messy from anybody, if somebody was gone, try to buck up to her you know, she would buck up right back to them. Yes, she was very demanding.

Respondent #2 - She just described Mrs. B., only she is taller. I think that is a quality, I guess that strong black woman have. I mean, her voice you can hear it from down the hall, it's not intentional it's just her. It's just how loud she is that's just one of her strong points, being able to take control no matter what - no matter what the situation is I've always seen her handle it and make just everybody seem so small to a certain extent as far as when they didn't try their hardest. She's always been there.

Respondent #1 - And, this same teacher, by her being (like this) you know, her status in the school building, but also outside of school by that people look up to her. You know it is like she teachers in high school and she is a professor in college and so people look up to her. She's a black a woman she did everything for herself. She's strong she knows what she wants and it's like she can see through a students - like she says, "I know you can do it," and like they go out and do it and that's the one thing about her that stands out.

Question #5:

Interviewer - Can you describe attitudes that this teacher possesses that aided your academic success? List some ways that a teacher's attitude helped you.

Respondent #1 - Her attitude was real strong on learning, but she took it to a certain extent that if your feelings were going to be hurt then you just had to accept it because your feelings are always going to be hurt that's the way she sees life.

Interviewer - Give me an example of this.

Respondent #1 - One time we did not get along with one student. So she made us walk around with her all the time. If we had to build a pyramid or something she was on top. If she went forward or something like that whoever was holding her had to be sure she didn't fall.

Respondent #2 - Mrs. B has that same attitude like, you can't be scared. She said you can do things. She shows by her own example that black people are just as smart as other people. She was the first teacher I met who showed black students that they could do math.

Respondent #3 - Her attitude was that no one could tell her that she couldn't do something. If I can't do anything I am going to try and try if I can't do it I am not going to stop until I know I can't. The last year I was in her class I remember I could not do math. I said like Mrs. B. I can't do math. She said, "Yes you can." She just kept on me until I got it don't. She made me believe in myself.

Question #6:

Interviewer - Describe teaching methods that this teacher used that affected your academic success. Tell me why you think these methods helped you. Tell me why you liked these methods.

Respondent #3 - Yes, Mrs. B. does. She like paces her work. She says don't take on more than you can handle. She teaches us to start small and to work our way up. She says we will get gradually better and then we can take on more.

Respondent #2 - I remember, teachers having students work with each other. I know some teachers say that what I can't tell you maybe someone else can. Some teachers want all the glory. She would insist that we do the work. She helps us work on the board. She also tells us that there is a reason for what we are doing. We may not know it now, but we will understand it in the future. In other

words, she lets us know that there is a reason why we are doing things. I like that.

Respondent #1 - She not only used teaching methods, she used things outside of school. Like, she helped learning disabilities, learn math. She broke it down to their level.

Question #7:

Interviewer - Has the race of the teacher been a significant factor in your academic success? Why do you feel this way?

Respondent #2 - Most significant, I think, basically because I have only had 3 or 4 teachers out of my whole 12 years of schooling who was of my race. The first one I had basically put down blacks and put up whites in a subtle way. When I saw black teachers who were real good like Mrs. B it gave me a sense of pride. It is definitely a significant factor.

Respondent #1 - I think it is a significant factor because when you are growing up and you are always seeing other people make it, but it is no one of your race. You're like it is something wrong with us. We can't do like everybody else, but when we see people like Mrs. B it lets us know that we can make it too.

Respondent #1 - Race is a very significant factor. If you go to an all white school and you basically see all whites and only one or two blacks that is going to have an effect on you.

SAMPLE 2

QUESTIONS AND RESPONSES

Question #1:

Interviewer - What does success mean to you?

Respondent - Success means graduating from High School.

Question #2:

Interviewer - Do you see yourself as a successful person?

Respondent - Yes

Questions #3:

Interviewer - Has a specific teacher contributed to your academic success?

Respondent - Yes, my pre-AP calculus teacher Mrs. B, she was my teacher when I was a freshman 3 years ago. She taught Algebra I back then. She has always been helpful to me mainly the African-American student's that she does teach, she shows a special interest in them. I'll never forget Mrs. B even when I'm long gone from _____ I think she is truly the one teacher who contributed the most to my success here.

Question #4:

Interviewer - Does this teacher possess certain personality characteristics that aided your academic success? Describe these characteristics. Tell me how these things helped you.

Respondent - Yes, she's more like a, she takes on the characteristics of a mother or grandmother, she understands as if she knows when you are in a bad mood or a good mood, she understands almost everything about you. It's like, she's just like a mother or grandmother, she is caring, she is understanding. She's everything man, she's everything (voice begins to quiver) almost like a second mother to me.

Question #5:

Interviewer - Can you describe attitudes that this teacher possesses that aided your academic success? List some ways that a teacher's attitude helped you.

Respondent #1 - Attitude? What do you mean.

Interviewer - I mean the way she treats you.

Respondent #1 - She does get on you when it comes to her work and her assignments. She rarely cuts you any slack when it comes to missing her assignments and things like that she is very hardnosed about turning in work and things like that. She is fair, I like her fairness.

Interviewer - You mentioned her getting on you, when she gets on you, how do you feel?

Respondent #1 - Well, at that time when she is getting on me I feel like any kid getting fussed at by their parents, you know. But yet, I still understand where she is coming from and I learn from that mistake and she knows that she only has to fuss at me once for her to get her point across. I don't take it personally as a bad thing, because I know it is something to build on.

Question #6:

Interviewer - Describe teaching methods that this teacher used that affected your academic success. Tell me why you think these methods helped you. Tell me why you liked these methods.

Respondent #1 - Well, ah yes, she ah on occasion she puts the class into class groups like 3 or 4 students in a group and she asks us to work together and to try and help each other out with problems we don't understand and help each other in a way that she probably couldn't. Students can maybe make it where we can understand the work better.

Question #7:

Interviewer - Has the race of the teacher been a significant factor in your academic success? Why do you feel this way?

Respondent #1 - Yes it could be because she's black, she loves helping, she loves helping all students, but I know that she's told me, and I know for a fact she loves helping the African-American students in a more unique way because she loves to see us she want to see us grow as students as well as people and she understands that education is almost the only way to succeed she pushes

us - African-American students, she pushes us more than she does other students.

Interviewer - What examples can you give of her pushing African-American students more than the others?

Respondent #1 - In some ways or some cases she expects us she'll say like, we'll have a test and we don't do too well or the test and she knows we can do better, she'll assign after school tutoring or before school tutoring to help us on the work we didn't understand. It's required, and if we don't, if we don't show up for tutoring, she'll take disciplinary action so and that way if we don't want to try to do better on our work and on our assignments she just won't have it, she just won't have it.

Interviewer - Are you saying she just won't take no for an answer?

Respondent #1 - Nah, nah, she wants the best outa all of us, she really, man, she really do love us.

Interviewer - Tim, is there something about this teacher you would like to share that I have not asked you?

Respondent #1 - Ah, I think that's it. I think without her being there my freshman year teaching me and some of my friends I probably would not be where I am now. You know, academically, she's just a good role model. Man, I wish it was more teachers like her now, in every school I don't know. I think she contributed more. She is the one teacher that contributed more to me to my success in high school. More than any other teacher.

APPENDIX B
CONSENT FORMS

Letter of Consent

Dear Parent:

In cooperation with Oklahoma State University, I will be conducting a research study dealing with high school students' perceptions of effective teachers. Your son's/daughter's participation in this study will enable the researcher to assess the characteristics of effective teachers as perceived by high school students. The results will make a significant contribution to the education of future teachers. There are no risks or expenses for your son/daughter.

This study will involve one 1 hour session either before or after school. As a participant, your son/daughter will be asked a set of structured questions regarding characteristics of effective teachers. All interviews will be tape recorded and will remain confidential.

Participation in this study is completely voluntary. Your son/daughter may withdraw from this study at any time. Should he/she choose to withdraw, the decision will not be held against him/her. Each participant will be assigned a pseudonym and an identification code number that will be used to identify his/her responses. The only persons who will have access to this information will be the researcher, Wendolyn S. Maxwell, and her advisor, Dr. William Reynolds. All information will be held in the strictest confidence.

If you have questions, you may contact Wendolyn Maxwell at (405) 771-3179 or (405) 425-5435. You may also contact Dr. William Reynolds at (405) 744-7125 or University Research Services, Oklahoma State University, Stillwater, OK 74074, telephone (405) 744-5700.

I have read the above information and understand the purpose and the procedure of this study. My signature below indicates that my son/daughter may participate in this study.

Signature of Parent or Guardian

Date

Letter of Consent

Dear Student Participant:

In cooperation with Oklahoma State University, I will be conducting a research study dealing with high school students' perceptions of effective teachers. Your participation in this study will enable me to assess the characteristics of effective teachers as you may have observed them. The results of this study will make a significant contribution to the education of future teachers. There are no risks or expenses that will involve you.

Your participation in this study is completely voluntary. You may withdraw from this study at any time. Should you choose to withdraw, your decision will not be held against you. You will be assigned a fictitious name (pseudonym) and an identification code number that will be used to identify your responses. The only persons who will have access to this information will be me, Wendolyn S. Maxwell, and my advisor, Dr. William Reynolds. Everything you tell me will be held in the strictest confidence.

If you have any questions at anytime during this study do not hesitate to contact me, Wendolyn Maxwell at (405) 425-5435 or my advisor Dr. William Reynolds at (405) 744-7125. You may also contact the University Research Services, Oklahoma State University, Stillwater, OK 74074, telephone (405) 744-5700.

I have read the above information and understand the purpose and the procedure of this study. My signature below indicates that I have voluntarily agreed to take part in this study.

Signature of Participant

Date

PROMISE TO DESTROY DATA

Dear Participant,

Your voluntary participation in this study is greatly appreciated. Your responses and all related data concerning this study will be destroyed upon my graduation from Oklahoma State University.

Thank you for your help in this research study.

Sincerely yours,

Wendolyn S. Maxwell

I, Wendolyn S. Maxwell, promise to destroy all tapes, notes, and all related data regarding this study and its participants.

Wendolyn S. Maxwell

VITA

Wendolyn S. Maxwell

Candidate for the Degree of

Doctor of Education

Thesis: CHARACTERISTICS OF EFFECTIVE TEACHERS AS IDENTIFIED BY ACADEMICALLY SUCCESSFUL AFRICAN-AMERICAN STUDENTS

Major Field: Curriculum and Instruction

Biographical:

Personal Data: Born in Oklahoma City, Oklahoma, February 3, 1946, the daughter of Alonzo Ray Williams and Annie Mae Matthews Williams. Married to Willie Bee Maxwell, Jr., May 31, 1968. Two sons, Stephen Allen and Christopher Todd.

Education: Graduated from Central High School, Oklahoma City, Oklahoma, in May 1964; received a Bachelor of Arts in History, Central State College, Edmond, Oklahoma in May, 1970; received a Master of Education in Guidance and Counseling, Central State University, Edmond, Oklahoma, in May, 1981; completed requirements for the Doctor of Education degree at Oklahoma State University, Stillwater, Oklahoma, in July, 1994.

Professional Experience: History teacher at Roosevelt Junior High School, Oklahoma City, Oklahoma, 1970-1971; history/English teacher at Living Word Academy, Oklahoma City, Oklahoma, 1973-74; social studies teacher at Rogers Middle School, Oklahoma City, Oklahoma, 1974-81; secondary school counselor, Rogers Middle School, Oklahoma City, Oklahoma, 1981-88; and Assistant Professor of Education, Oklahoma Christian University of Science and Arts, Oklahoma City, Oklahoma, 1988-present.

Professional membership: Phi Delta Kappa, Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development, and Oklahoma Association for College Teachers of Education.

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INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD
FOR HUMAN SUBJECTS RESEARCH

Date: 01-11-94

IRB#: ED-94-038

Proposal Title: CHARACTERISTICS OF EFFECTIVE TEACHERS AS
IDENTIFIED BY ACADEMICALLY SUCCESSFUL AFRICAN-AMERICAN STUDENTS

Principal Investigator(s): William Reynolds, Wendolyn S. Maxwell

Reviewed and Processed as: Exempt

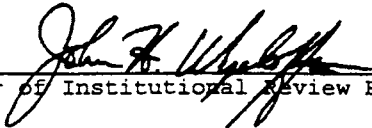
Approval Status Recommended by Reviewer(s): Approved

APPROVAL STATUS SUBJECT TO REVIEW BY FULL INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD AT NEXT
MEETING.

APPROVAL STATUS PERIOD VALID FOR ONE CALENDAR YEAR AFTER WHICH A CONTINUATION
OR RENEWAL REQUEST IS REQUIRED TO BE SUBMITTED FOR BOARD APPROVAL. ANY
MODIFICATIONS TO APPROVED PROJECT MUST ALSO BE SUBMITTED FOR APPROVAL.

Comments, Modifications/Conditions for Approval or Reasons for
Deferral or Disapproval are as follows:

Signature:


Chair of Institutional Review Board

Date: January 12, 1994