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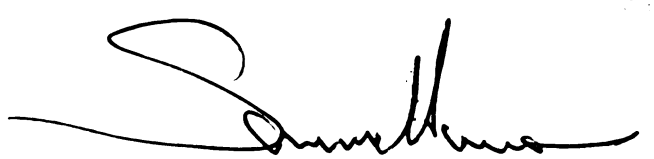

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A STUDY OF THE RELATIONSHIP OF FAMILY LIFE TO THE ACADEMIC SUCCESS OF STUDENTS

By

Thomas C. Jeltes

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ABSTRACT

A STUDY OF THE RELATIONSHIP OF FAMILY LIFE
TO THE ACADEMIC SUCCESS OF STUDENTS

By

Thomas C. Jeltes

The researcher's purposes were to investigate conditions of family life and culture among students who were successful in school and to describe how the students' involvement in the family as a dynamic social unit influenced their decision to succeed in school. To accomplish these purposes, the researcher examined the home settings of the students' families, family members' and students' school experiences, the students' experiences in the family, and interactions between and among students, family members, and school personnel.

Using information provided by school administrators, counselors, and teachers, and his own knowledge of successful students in the area, the researcher selected 11 successful students and their families for the study. These two-parent Caucasian families lived in rural communities near a large metropolitan area in the Midwest; the students all attended public schools. The researcher contacted the students' parents to obtain their permission to observe the students at school and to conduct personal interviews with parents and students at home.

A taped interview format was used to facilitate transcription and interpretation of the interview responses. The 400 pages of transcriptions were summarized, and the data were analyzed to identify patterns within and among families and to answer the research questions.

High academic aspirations and achievement, as well as hard work, were found to have existed in these families for at least three generations. Although many of the grandparents had not finished high school, they generally were successful in their chosen occupations and strongly supported the value of higher education for their children. All of the parents in the study had graduated from high school; several had earned college degrees. Parents saw themselves as successful, and they were committed to teaching their children moral and ethical values. The successful students' families provided them with positive support and built their self-confidence. Upward mobility and hard work were inherent in the family culture of these students.

To provide further insight into why certain students succeed, it is recommended that additional research be conducted with successful students from single-parent families, those who attend parochial schools, and those from a variety of racial and ethnic backgrounds.

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Completing a doctorate degree is a lesson in persistence; one does not go through this process alone. Many people provided support and encouragement in the completion of this dissertation, and I would like to take this opportunity to acknowledge their contribution.

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Special thanks go to my wife, Jane. She has endured 18 years of my working on various academic degrees. Her support and confidence in me were invaluable; without her constant encouragement, I might not have completed the doctoral program. With much love and gratitude, I dedicate this work to her.

I appreciate the help of Bill and Allene Felden, my parents-in-law. Allene furnished me with many articles on families, which were useful in preparing the review of literature.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION TO THE STUDY

Introduction

Much has been written about the weaknesses of the American educational system, especially with the recent declines in students' scores on the American College Test (ACT) and the Scholastic Aptitude Test (SAT). Another problem is the high number of at-risk students in American schools.

Attempting to understand why some students learn and why others do not is a difficult undertaking. Okey (1990) studied dropouts and the reasons they were not successful in school. He found that two reasons students dropped out of school were conflicts within the family itself and the family's relationship with the school. Okey claimed that the reasons students drop out of high school can be traced to their family life and how the family members interact with each other and the school.

According to many researchers, the family plays an essential part in children's education. The writers of High School and Beyond (U.S. Department of Education, 1984) concluded that "family socioeconomic status (SES) and other factors of family background" (p. 2) were main influences on students' success or failure in school.

The family and its culture play a large part in determining whether a child is successful. Bell and Bell (1982) wrote:

> The system in which the child develops will affect her personal development and her style of relating to others--both inside and outside the family. Behavioral skills and cognitive sets beneficial--or detrimental--to successful functioning in the "real world" are learned through the ongoing process of family interaction. (p. 519)

Researchers also have found that the social position of the family is directly related to students' behavior. In Elmtown's Youth, Hollingshead (1949) wrote, "The social behavior of adolescents appears to be related functionally to the positions their families occupy in the social structure of the community" (p. 9). Similar conclusions were reached by Bachman (1971, 1972), Masters (1969), Rosenthal (1983), and Rumberger (1983). They believed that socioeconomic status is an important factor in students' academic success.

Newson and Newson (1963) stated that middle-class children in both England and America do better in school than those from lower classes because of social-class differences in parental encouragement and in early child-rearing practices. Thus, according to Newson and Newson, certain family background characteristics affect the behavior of students who succeed. Parental encouragement is one such factor. Parental interest, Musgrove (1966) found, is especially important with children of borderline ability. In his study, children of borderline ability obtained 23% more places in grammar schools than expected if their parents were educationally

ambitious for them. Children with ambitious parents tended to be "over-achievers."

Other factors that have been found to affect students' success or failure include whether both parents are present in the home and the number of siblings. With regard to school dropout (Okey, 1990), found that "in homes where only a female parent was present, the dropout rate was found to be 66% greater than that of intact families. When the only parent was a male, this rate soared to 78%. If a child did not reside with either parent, the rate was 2-1/2 times that of intact families" (p. 3).

Family size and children's birth order may affect students' success in school. It is possible that, in a small family, the child is in closer touch with the parents and habitually uses more grown-up language and ideas than if he or she were surrounded by siblings. In the nineteenth century, Galton (cited in Musgrove, 1966) found that it was an advantage to be an eldest or an only son. Subsequent researchers have confirmed this judgment (Gilmore & Gilmore, 1982; Pines, 1981).

Hess and Handel (1959) believed that each family member draws an image of every other member and himself or herself through the relationship he or she has with the family. Children develop their cultural values, role expectations, and moral standards from their families.

From the research cited above, it is evident that the family is an important aspect of students' success in school. Early childhood experiences also have an important influence on adolescents' lives.

These experiences are controlled and shaped almost exclusively within the family setting. Brazelton (cited in Brinley, 1990) wrote, "The real job in education comes long before children get to school. You've got to have kids feeling good about themselves, feeling self-confident and ready to learn" (pp. 86-87).

Much of the child's personality, including core values, norms, and beliefs, may largely be internalized by age three or four. The child's behavior patterns are established primarily through his or her early experiences in the family. What the child learns in the home is carried out of the home to the neighborhood. When the child enters school, he or she confronts a new environment with its own formalized structure. What the child has learned in the home acts as a powerful influence on his or her behavior in this new environment.

A child's success in school depends on his or her ability to adapt to this new world and to conform to its rules, goals, and structures. Despite the real power of peers in the elementary grades, the family is still the primary influence in a child's life. The security of a loving, supportive family is what keeps the child stable.

As children mature, they begin to choose their own friends and set their own course. The ability to make friends and have relationships represents an inner sense of competence. Peer pressure grows more powerful, but a strong foundation--and the support of parents who are willing to be flexible but who know where

to draw the line--can counteract even negative influences. The family and school environments remain central to all these interactions and to the individual.

Statement of the Problem

Many quantitative studies have been conducted on at-risk students and school dropouts. But a valuable component of the schools often has been overlooked--students who are doing well in school, those who are achieving and are successful academically and socially.

To understand why particular students are successful, one needs to understand the complex interactions that take place between the individual and his or her family, the individual and the school, and the family and the school. Clark (1983) provided some insight into the relationships among the individual, the family, and the school. He asserted that it is not the structure or composition of the family, but rather the quality of family life and how the family members interact, that influences whether students succeed or fail in school.

Only recently has the influence of family relationships on children's development and achievement been subjected to direct analysis. Much clinical evidence is available on the effects of family life, but this information is of an indirect nature, drawn from patients' recollections of the often quite distant past. Some researchers have attempted to measure the strength of individuals' need for achievement and to relate this need to their family

background. Other researchers have found that family income level is directly related to students' achievement. However, these undertakings have not provided consistent and reliable data on the relationship between family influences and student achievement. Although these researchers have made a valuable contribution, they have not considered the family as a living, dynamic social group within which the successful student functions. Most investigators have not considered the complex interaction among successful students, their families, and the schools. Hence, more research is needed in this area.

Purpose

This qualitative study was undertaken to address the need for research on the features of family life that lead to students' success in school. The researcher's overall purpose in conducting this study was to investigate the conditions of family life and culture among students who are successful in school. The intention was to gain a better understanding of why certain students are successful by examining the students' family experiences, their family history, and family-school interactions. The researcher was interested in understanding the behavior of successful students and the factors underlying students' success in school.

A secondary purpose was to describe how the subjects' involvement in the family as a dynamic social unit influenced their decision to work hard and succeed in school. The researcher was interested in discovering whether the students' perceptions of their

families' views regarding the importance of education influenced those students' decision to succeed in school.

In attempting to accomplish these purposes, the researcher examined the complex interrelationships that exist among successful students, their families, and the schools.

Importance of the Study

The present study is important because it is expected to provide insights into why certain students succeed. Because American schools are frequently viewed in a negative way, this study was undertaken to show that there are successful students and to explain why they have been successful.

It also is expected that the study findings will lead to a better understanding of the family's influence on the education of the child. This influence will be examined with regard to the following issues:

1. The interaction between successful students and their families, and the family's relationships with the people and groups constituting the school organization.

2. The relationship of family members' experience with schooling and the student's decision to do his or her best in school.

3. The problems a successful student encounters in being successful and whether being successful is worth the effort involved.

4. The perceptions successful students have of school.

5. The relationship between family experiences and being successful in school and in life.

The Population

The population included 11 "successful" students and their families. The subjects were from outlying (considered rural) school districts within a 50-mile radius of a large metropolitan area in the Midwest. Sixth graders through college students were included in the study. The population included both males and females; all of them were Caucasians.

The researcher chose the students for this study with the help of school administrators and social workers/counselors. This choice was based on the administrators' and counselors' knowledge of students who were successful academically and socially and who were involved in school activities.

Students selected for the study and thus considered successful were those who were involved in many school activities, such as band or choir, sports, and/or academic clubs. Their grades were in the A and B range. These students were well liked by staff members and were positive role models for their fellow students, who looked up to and followed them.

Students selected for the study were observed by the researcher as they interacted with other students, faculty, and school personnel. The researcher also conducted personal interviews with the selected students and their families.

Research Questions

The following questions, which are similar to those Okey (1990) used in his study of dropouts, were used as a guide in gathering information on successful students and their families.

1. How do successful students define their families? The researcher was interested in the roles, norms, values, and interactions of successful students' families. The focus was on the role successful students play as part of the family. In what ways do these students see themselves fitting into the family structure?

2. What is the student's family background? To understand successful students, one must understand their family background. Are these students successful because they have been exposed to successful people? Does being a member of a successful family have a major influence on these students?

3. How do successful students' family members react to and interact with members of the school community? The researcher was interested in determining the exchange of information, communication processes, level of involvement, and the quality of interactions that take place between family members and the school.

4. What were the school experiences of successful students' family members? In trying to understand what makes certain students successful in school, it is necessary to understand the educational backgrounds of members of students' families.

5. Is there a relationship between students' success in school and their family experiences? The researcher examined in depth the

family members' values and beliefs with regard to education, as well as the normative structures of the students' families.

6. How do successful students' family members view the importance of education? The researcher was interested in discovering the views regarding the importance of education held by successful students' family members. What do they see as the family's role in regard to school?

7. What meaning does being successful have for the individual? The researcher attempted to describe the meaning the subjects gave to being successful, based on the findings from the previous questions. Attention was given to examining why the student was successful by examining his or her collective experiences within the framework of the family and the family's relationship with the school.

8. How does the successful person succeed? Recognizing that classmates often are hard on really successful students, the researcher sought to determine how successful students react to those who make fun of them for getting good grades and perhaps view them as the teacher's pet. How do successful students react to being called "nerds" or being isolated from the larger group who might not share their high expectations? What negative reactions do they get from their fellow students, and how do they handle these and other problems related to being a good student?

Delimitations

The unit of study was the nuclear family. The study population was delimited to families comprising parents and their biological children; families with adopted children were excluded because the researcher's concern was with the intact family. The population was further delimited to Caucasian, middle-class families. Only successful students from middle school through college age were selected for study.

Definitions of Key Terms

The following terms are defined in the context in which they are used in this dissertation.

Behavior. Moral conduct, the way the student works, and how the student reacts to his or her environment; the role the student plays in the family and at school; the role the parents play in the life of the student; how the student interacts with his or her parents and siblings; the student's actions at home.

Events. Occurrences regarded as having an influence on the student's attitudes and actions.

Experiences. Interesting or remarkable events in a person's life or something suffered by a person; all that has happened to an individual throughout his or her life or in a particular sphere of activity.

Interactions. The actions taking place between and among individuals, especially between the student and members of his or her family and among family members and school personnel.

Perception. Awareness or interpretation of something, based on one's physical senses or intuition.

Perspective. The evaluation of events or conditions according to a particular way of looking at them, i.e., the way the student sees his or her family's view of the importance of education.

Position of the family. The level of achievement of the family; the family members' occupations. "The social behavior of adolescents appears to be related functionally to the positions their families occupy in the social structure of the community" (Hollingshead, 1949, p. 9). In general, the higher the position, the better the achievement of the child; the lower the position, the less is expected of and attained by the child.

Successful student. A student who is active in extracurricular activities such as sports, music, clubs, and school-sponsored competitions; gets along well with faculty members and other students; and earns A's and B's in school classes.

Overview

This chapter contained an introduction to the study, a statement of the problem and purpose of the research, the importance of the study, a description of the study population, exploratory questions, delimitations, and definitions of key terms.

Chapter II contains a review of literature in two major areas. The first section is a review of writings on family background and the characteristics of families of successful students. The second

part of the literature review deals with the involvement of parents in their children's schooling.

The methodology used in conducting the study is explained in Chapter III. Included are the procedures used in selecting the population, data-collection techniques, and the methods used in analyzing the data.

The findings are reported in Chapter IV. Chapter V includes a summary of the major findings, conclusions drawn from the findings, comparison of the findings to those from previous research, and recommendations for further research.

CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE AND RESEARCH

Introduction

The researcher's overall purpose in this study was to investigate the conditions of family life and culture among students who are successful in school. The intention was to gain a better understanding of why certain students are successful by examining the students' family experiences, their family history, and family-school interactions. The researcher was interested in understanding the behavior of successful students and the factors underlying students' success in school. A secondary purpose was to describe how the subjects' involvement in the family as a dynamic social unit influenced their decision to work hard and succeed in school. The researcher was interested in discovering whether the students' perceptions of their families' views regarding the importance of education influenced those students' decision to succeed in school.

The literature pertaining to topics relevant to this research is reviewed in this chapter. Writings on family background and the family characteristics of successful students are discussed. The researcher examined conditions of family life that lead to children's success in school, as well as characteristics of successful and healthy families. Literature dealing with the

interaction of family members and family processes and culture also is reviewed. The literature review was intended to provide background on the family's influence on students' success in school.

The Influence of Family Background and Characteristics on Students' Success

Social Class

Blau and Duncan (1967) stated that "the family into which a man is born exerts a significant influence on his occupation in life, ascribing a status to him at birth that influences his chances for achieving any other status later in his career" (p. 6). According to this viewpoint, the family into which a person is born determines who the individual is, where he or she will fit into society, and what kind of future the person is likely to experience.

Early researchers such as Counts, Deer, and Warner found that there is a strong direct relationship between socioeconomic status (SES) and achievement and behavior. Likewise, Hollingshead (1949) concluded that adolescents who have been reared in families of different class cultures may be expected to follow different patterns in responding to situations they encounter as they participate in the social life of the community.

As a result of the investigations they conducted in Nottingham, England, Newson and Newson (1963) concluded that "the classless society in Britain is still a long way off. Men may be born equal; but, within its first month in the world, the baby will be adapting to a climate of experience that varies according to its family's social class" (p. 217).

Boocock (1972) reviewed the literature on social class and school achievement and concluded that "the weight of evidence . . . has clearly indicated that the social characteristics of the child's family affect his chances of success at school" (p. 56). However, even though a link between social class and school achievement has been established, the processes by which social class influences parental behavior and parental behavior affects children's educational achievement are not yet understood.

In all of the studies reviewed, a key family characteristic relating to students' success was social class. However, in his book Preventing Student Dropouts, Greene (1986) revealed that family characteristics other than SES also are important. He wrote:

> It is not unusual to find that dropouts come from homes where the parents are separated or where family interpersonal relationships are weak. In these situations, it is found that the home fails to provide the love, affection, understanding, and the emotional security which is necessary to the normal development of young people. . . .
>
> Another factor related to socio-economic class is the level of aspiration of the students and their parents. . . . It is difficult to convince these parents that education is directly related to the goals they hold for their children.
>
> One of the major characteristics of these students and of their parents is the need for immediate gratification. . . . It is difficult for them to realize that the rewards will be greater later if they prepare themselves now. (pp. 27-28)

Parents' Involvement in Their Children's Education

In the 1960s, the belief that the family plays an important role in children's education was considered almost radical. At that

time, many people believed that the main responsibility with regard to children's education rested with the school. In the mid-1960s, researchers began to point to the undeniable influence of the family on children's education. Bloom (1964) found that many differences in children's academic development can be traced to the value placed on education at home and specifically to parents' reinforcement of children's activities in schools.

In 1966, Equality of Educational Opportunity (U.S. Office of Education, 1966), often called the Coleman Report, was published. In this report, Coleman and his associates underscored the importance of the family and the home in determining children's academic achievement.

In the late 1960s, a number of projects were begun with preschoolers, with the intention of preventing problems when the youngsters started attending school. In general, the earliest projects, in which children were tutored but parents were not involved, produced immediate gains in test scores, but these gains were lost in subsequent school years. Children who took part in later projects, which actively involved the parents, maintained their test-score gains after the tutoring programs ended (Bronfenbrenner, 1974).

Researchers at Stanford University in the mid-1970s helped confirm the strategic role of parents as educators (see, for example, Goodson & Hess, 1975). These researchers looked at key models of parental involvement in compensatory education programs that were developed in the 1960s. The evidence they found supported

the model in which parents worked with their children at home, sustaining the work of educators in the schools.

The evidence for parents' key role as educators continued to grow, but this role still was not receiving wide recognition. In a study completed by Rich (1976), participating teachers designed eight home-learning recipes for use in first-grade classrooms in the Washington, D.C., area. After using these tools for eight weeks, the first graders in the treatment group scored significantly higher on standardized reading tests than did children in the control group, who did not use the home-learning recipes. This finding supported Rich's hypothesis that parents are a very important part of children's education.

Early Childhood Influences

Whereas parents usually choose each other voluntarily in marriage, their children become family members without an exercise of choice. When one considers that the family typically retains at least some influence over children for almost all of their immature years and is characterized by a peculiar intimacy that facilitates the transference of basic attitudes and values, one begins to appreciate the paramount significance of the family in shaping youngsters' personalities. It is generally accepted that the first years of life are extremely important in the formation of the essence of an individual's personality.

In his study of family life and school achievement, Clark (1983) found that children spend most of the first five years of

life in the home. After that, between the ages of 5 and 17, more than 60% of the days in a child's life are spent moving from home to school and back home again. How children come to perceive life in the classroom is shaped by the message parents provide about their own school experience; the routine communication among parents, children, and teachers; and the academic information and experiences the child acquires at home, which provide greater knowledge about various aspects of school subject matter. Thus, the early years are important because parents shape their children's thoughts about school.

Jack Pascoe (1981), a pediatrician in the School of Medicine at the University of North Carolina, found that children who are talked to, held, and praised tend to develop intellectually more rapidly than children who do not receive as much warmth and affection. Pascoe studied the families of 80 children born prematurely, and sick, who had been in intensive-care units for some time before joining their families at home. Pascoe visited the families of these children throughout a two-year period; he examined the children and interviewed their mothers, while noting the amount of family and social support the mothers received, the child's intellectual level, and the home environment. He concluded that mothers who received high emotional support themselves gave more tender care and encouragement to their children. Families that had rich emotional support enjoyed their children and did a good job of rearing them. Children in such families scored significantly higher

on intelligence tests than those who came from less stimulating and less caring families.

The findings from several early longitudinal studies showed significant correlations between maternal behavior in early childhood and the children's subsequent mental test scores (Baldwin, Kalhorn, & Breese, 1945; Bayley & Schaefer, 1964; Honzig, 1967; Kagan, 1964; Kagan & Freeman, 1963). Moore (1968) conducted a longitudinal study in England, in which he gathered information through home visits. The researcher rated toys, books, and experiences available to the child, as well as example and encouragement in the home for the development of language, emotional atmosphere of the home, and general adjustment of the child at two and one-half years of age. Although the quality of these home influences was only slightly related to children's early intelligence test scores, the relationship of these influences to children's reading scores at seven years and intelligence quotient (IQ) at eight years was substantial. The family variables were better predictors of IQ and reading, even after controlling for social class, than were maternal vocabulary and education. Controlling for social class and the early data on family variables increased the credibility of the interpretation that parental practices influenced children's development.

With regard to intellectual and language development, relatively stable differences between socioeconomic groups in terms of mean mental test scores have been found to emerge in the second and third years of life. This difference may be interpreted as evidence

of the early and continuing influence of parental stimulation (Hindley, 1965; Terman & Merrill, 1937). From a summary of findings on early language and intellectual development, Schaefer (1970) concluded that:

> The evidence of the coincidence of the emergence of early language skills with the emergence of mental test differences between social groups, of the relationships of verbal skills with socioeconomic status, ethnic groups, IQ scores, reading achievement, and academic and occupational success supports a conclusion that the education of the child should begin prior to or at the beginning of early language development. (p. 187)

In addition, the relationship between maternal behavior and child language behavior at 5 months (Rubenstein, 1967) and 10 months of age (Tulkin, 1971) can be interpreted as evidence of the influence of parental behavior on early language development and, perhaps, later cognitive development.

Hess (1969) summarized the significant findings from a longitudinal study in which measures on 160 middle-class mothers, which were collected when their children were four years old, were correlated with the children's school performance two to four years later. Among the variables that were related significantly to reading readiness, reading achievement, and grades given by teachers were availability and use of educational resources at home, the mother's personal optimism, and number of out-of-home activities. Maternal behaviors in teaching the child to use an Etch-A-Sketch that were related to later achievement included number of models shown to the child, number of specific turning directions, orientation to the task, praise and encouragement, and specificity

of maternal feedback. Maternal language scores and indices of affection/support toward the child, warmth in a block-sorting task, and affectionateness in teaching tasks also predicted later school achievement. Apparently the mother's teaching behavior, the experiences she provided, and the model she set for the child were important influences.

Guthrie and Jacobs (1966) conducted a study in the Philippines on child rearing and personality development. They noted that the family has something at stake with regard to each of its members. Children reflect the whole family in all that they are and in all that they do. From their earliest years, children move in the family circle, consciously and unconsciously, willingly and unwillingly. They are trained in the family ways and absorb the family values. If youngsters are good, they honor the whole family; if they commit wrong, the misdeed sullies the family name. Hence, Guthrie and Jacobs concluded that, in the Philippines as in the United States, children are educated at an early age about what the family expects of them.

Hunt (1964) wrote that it is the earliest experience or "primary" learning that forms much of the pattern for later information-processing capability in the system. This early learning serves as the "programmer of the human brain-computer." In a similar vein, Bing (1963) noted that mothers whose children had "high" verbal skills provided more verbal stimulation in early childhood, remembered more of their children's early accomplishments, were more critical of poor academic achievement,

provided their children with more story books, and let them take a greater part in mealtime conversation than did mothers of children with lower verbal skills.

Dreikurs (1958) said that children derive their first impressions of human beings from their parents. Consequently, parents must carefully watch their own conduct and improve it as much as possible. Parents give children their first concept of the great world beyond the family, and parents' portrayal of this outside world affects children's outlook. Most prejudices are instilled in children's minds by their parents. Parents' attitudes toward life and its problems are evidenced in their conversation; what children hear at home strongly influences their development.

Dinkmeyer and McKay (1973) supported Dreikurs's observations and further stated that the child first learns to be human in the social unit of the family. The family provides the environment and the setting in which the child is exposed to a set of assumptions about life. The family's commonly held traits, beliefs, and values arise from this atmosphere, as do their means of relating to others. The child observes family exchanges and relationships and interprets these as the way to deal with other people. If the youngster's mother and father quarrel, or if one of them uses temper or emotions to gain control, the child observes these behaviors and then adopts the ones that appear to be effective. Families that emphasize working together for their mutual interests often engender a similar attitude in the child. Likewise, if the family as a whole values

intellectual pursuits, music, or athletics, children often pursue these interests, as well.

Family behavioral patterns should not be considered direct determinants of behavior. Obviously, children are free to accept or reject particular behaviors. However, when siblings have similar character traits, it frequently is an indication that they have internalized the family atmosphere. Differences in siblings' personalities are a result of their position and competition in the family constellation and of their individual perceptions.

Gilmore and Gilmore (1982) said that nurturing children so that they develop into responsible and self-confident adults takes many years. From the time children are infants, parents are their most important and most influential teachers. According to numerous researchers, parents lay the educational foundations of children's lives even before the youngsters enter school (White, 1975). Gilmore and Gilmore developed the following precepts for raising productive children:

> Provide them from an early age with a warmly affectionate and accepting environment. Stimulate their curiosity about the world around them. Foster their acquisition of basic learning skills in every way possible. Maintain high expectations for their future development and achievement. Finally, give them lifelong reinforcement, praise, and encouragement. The result? Children, and later adults, equipped to cope with the demands of school and society. (p. 12)

Researchers generally agree that children's early education and training is very important. Youngsters' views of the world and especially of school develop from the grounding they are given at

home. It is parents' values and outlooks on life and the world that are instilled in their children.

Parents' Personality Structure

Clark (1983) defined "personality structure" as (a) the set of identities and perspectives held by an individual about each of the roles played in everyday life and (b) the individual's predispositions for behavior orientations that are based on these perceptions (p. 115). Parents' personalities are derived from what they experienced in their own childhood homes. According to Clark:

> Parents who were successful in their own life described their early home relationship with their own parents as being characterized by clearly defined role boundaries and asymmetrical status relationships. These elders seemed to possess, and to pass on, a keen appreciation of the need for children to obtain an "education" and to strive for educational success and economic self-sufficiency. (pp. 112-113)

He continued:

> Parents' past and current experiences in the home and their past and current position in the marketplace are the primary determiners of their current psychological orientations (or disorientations). Whatever decisions parents make about what to do with their children in the home environment are influenced by the parents' own mental health and emotional well-being at the time the decisions were made.
>
> The high-achieving students' parents were further distinguished by their hopeful, forthright sensibilities about themselves and their children. Specifically, they possessed a belief in their own ability to see to it somehow that their children's needs would be provided for, a strong sense of goal direction and a hope and belief that things would get better, a penchant for managing their time and material resources prudently, a strong sense of self-reliance and independence, deep self-pride and personal integrity, a sense of the salience of the needs of children, a belief that familism or solidarity with other adult kin and friends is essential, and a demeanor of organized, rational seriousness about their life conditions. Although life in society had handed these parents a series of psychological and emotional bumps and bruises, they had

> basically managed with the support and encouragement of kin and friends to maintain a sense of emotional calm and rationality. (pp. 115-116)

In her study Traits of a Healthy Family, Curran (1983) noted that "insecure and doubting parents are not likely to instill attitudes of self-worth in their children. In good families, parents feel good about themselves. If they don't, they recognize their problems and do something about them" (pp. 63-64). She further asserted that:

> There is a direct linkage between a person's sense of competence and contribution and his or her expectations of others. Competent parents by their very modeling expect children to be competent. This expectation fuels a desire on the part of children to be responsible. It's a little like a ping-pong game in which the ball bounces from parent to child--from expectation to fulfillment, from challenge to responsibility, from accomplishment to pride, from immaturity to maturity. All the while the young person is developing and becoming more independent, preparing for that time when he or she can leave the umbrella of parental responsibility and strike out as a responsible adult. (p. 172)

Dobson (1992) observed that parents' own feelings of inferiority often make it difficult for them to accept gross imperfections in their children. Their "damaged" child symbolizes their own personal inadequacies and failures. Thus, it takes a very mature parent to say of an unattractive child, or one who is clearly deficient in mentality, "Not only do I love you, little one, but I recognize your immeasurable worth as a human being."

In a series of studies, Crandell, Dewey, Katkousky, and Preston (1964) and Katkousky, Preston, and Crandell (1964a, 1964b) examined the relationship of parents' attitudes concerning their own achievement to the achievement behavior of their children. The

researchers found that the intellectual-achievement values that parents held for themselves were similar to those they held for their children. In addition, there was a relationship between parents' intellectual expectations and their participation in intellectual activities with the children.

Clausen (1966), Coopersmith (1967), Westley and Epstein (1969), Rosenberg (1965), and Lewis, Beavers, Gossett, and Phillips (1976) identified the following factors as typically present in highly productive families:

1. There usually is a stable marriage in which the parents are mutually supportive of each other.

2. Maturity, good emotional health, and responsibility characterize both marriage partners.

3. Both spouses agree on basic values, ethical principles, and family goals.

4. The family is closely knit; communication is warm and spontaneous.

Thus, according to a number of researchers, in highly productive families the parents are mature, have good emotional health, and are responsible. The way parents see themselves influences the type of environment in which their children will be raised. The parents' own upbringing has a significant effect on the environment of their home.

The Home Environment

Hollingshead (1949) stressed the influential role the home environment plays in shaping youngsters' behavior. He wrote:

> The home an adolescent comes from conditions in a very definite manner the way he behaves in his relations with the school, the church, the job, recreation, his peers, and his family. . . .
>
> Essential aspects of the class culture which characterizes the family are transferred through the subtle processes of informal learning from the parents to the child. What the child learns in the home is carried out into the neighborhood, and the child is not aware of the connection between home influence and what he does. In this way, family background goes along with the child wherever he goes, and what he has learned in the home acts as a powerful influence on his behavior in non-family social situations. . . .
>
> First, children's behavior patterns are established primarily by their early experiences in the family and secondarily in the neighborhood; and, second, similar experiences in family and neighborhood mold children into similar social types because their learning in both areas tends to be strongly associated with class. Unconsciously, he is being molded into personality that is simultaneously a creature of his experiences and a creator of new situations in which he will act as a molder of conduct. (pp. 439-453).

Lauro F. Cavazos (cited in Brinley, 1990), United States Secretary of Education, said that if parents want their children to love learning and to thrive in school, the home environment should be a learning environment. In the same article, Edward Zigler, a Yale University professor, was quoted as saying that:

> Education is not really about education. It's about human development. What happens in a child's total life influences what happens in school. Parents, not schools, remain the most important educators of children. [They must] create a sense of learning within the home itself. (p. 86)

Concerning the influence of the home environment, Clark (1983) asserted that "a family's ability to provide a home environment that prepares its children for future success, including success in school, develops out of past experiences with cultural tasks and social rewards" (p. x). In large measure, researchers have made it clear that students' family life plays a significant and perhaps

overwhelming role in preparing them to function effectively in settings outside the home.

Based on an extensive review of the literature, Hess (1969) compiled a list of parental behaviors that have been found to be related to children's intellectual development and academic achievement. These behaviors can be considered characteristics of the home environment. Hess's list of parental behaviors is as follows:

A. Intellectual Relationship

1. Demand for high achievement
2. Maximum of verbal interaction
3. Engagement with and attentiveness to the child
4. Maternal teaching behavior
5. Diffuse intellectual stimulation

B. Affective Relationship

1. Warm affective relationship with child
2. Feelings of high regard for child and self

C. Interaction Patterns

1. Pressure for independence and self-reliance
2. Clarity and severity of disciplinary rules; this can be interpreted as a setting of high standards and enforcement of rules, rather than severity, which may imply hostility or rejection
3. Use of conceptual rather than arbitrary regulatory strategies. (pp. 187-188)

Werner, Bierman, and French (1971) conducted a longitudinal study on the relationship or perinatal complications, socioeconomic status, educational stimulation, and emotional support to the achievement problems, learning problems, and emotional difficulties of children. Socioeconomic status, educational stimulation, and emotional support were significantly related to school achievement

and learning problems (IQ, perceptual, and language problems) at 10 years of age; the strongest relationship was with educational stimulation. Emotional problems were most strongly related to lack of emotional support. Children's learning, achievement, and emotional problems were more strongly related to family environment than to socioeconomic status.

Werner et al. (1971) also found that "ten times more children had problems attributed to the effects of a poor environment than to the effects of serious perinatal stress" (p. 193). Relations between perinatal stress and the child's competence decreased with age, but relations to environmental factors and competence increased with age. At 20 months of age, only a 4-point difference in IQ was found between children from the least and most favored environments, but at 10 years of age a 20-point difference was found between children who received the least and most educational stimulation in the home.

Baumrind (1967) stressed the importance of the modeling aspect of the environment. Children will follow the example of adults who subordinate their impulses enough to conform to social regulations and who are charitable and generous. Conversely, adults who are self-indulgent and lacking in charity will have that example modeled, even if they preach generous, cooperative behavior. Mischel and Liebert (1966) and Rosenhan, Frederick, and Burrowes (1968) suggested that adult models who behave self-indulgently produce similar behavior in children and that such modeling has a

more extensive effect than directly rewarding self-indulgent behavior. Further, when adults preach unfriendly or uncooperative behavior but behave in such a way that the child perceives socially responsible behavior to have great consequence (Bandura, Ross, & Ross, 1963), the model will be most effective in inducing responsible behavior. Parents who are fair and who use reason to legitimate their directives are more potent models and reinforcing agents than parents who do not encourage independence or verbal exchange.

Fraser (1959) studied more than 400 school children between the ages of 12 and 13 in Aberdeen, Scotland. The inquiry began in 1949. Information that was available about the children included the results of two intelligence tests and one English-attainment test. The home environment of each child in the sample was assessed during a personal visit to his or her home. Four aspects of home environment (cultural, material or economic, motivational, and emotional) were distinguished, and an attempt was made to gather information regarding all four aspects for each child. In total, 11 characteristics of the home environment were studied, namely, parents' education and parents' and children's reading habits (cultural); income, father's occupation, family size, and living space (material); parents' attitudes toward the education and future employment of the child and parental encouragement (motivational); and abnormal home background, general impression of the home background, and mother out at work (emotional).

Fraser's (1959) purpose in conducting the study was to determine to what extent children's progress in school was related to factors in the home environment, and to compare this relationship with that existing between the home environment and intelligence. The results indicated that factors in the home environment were more closely correlated with school progress than with intelligence; the difference between these correlations was highly significant.

Wolf (1964) said that what parents actually do in the home is one of the subenvironments presumed to influence general intelligence and academic achievement. He claimed that "the home produces the first, and most insistent, influences on the development of these outcomes" (p. 9). The results of several studies of home influences (Bing, 1963; Dave, 1963; Freeberg & Payne, 1965; Kagan & Moss, 1962; Milner, 1951; Sontag & Kagan, 1963; Wolf, 1964) were fairly consistent. Children of superior intellectual ability were found to come from homes where parental interest in their intellectual development was evidenced by pressure to succeed and assistance in doing so, particularly in the development of children's verbal skills.

In The Challenge of Parenthood, Dreikurs (1958) wrote that, "in rearing their children, most people follow the example of their own parents. . . . If we are to have better children, the parents must become better educators" (pp. 16, 17). Dreikurs defined the atmosphere of the family in relation to maintaining order as follows:

> Every community has its customs and usages. And every family is a community in itself. If wrangling and contention, disorder and slovenliness, suspicion and self-interest are allowed to set the tone of the home, the child will adopt these practices and attitudes, no matter how favorable this disposition and hereditary background may be. For this reason the results of education depend largely on the atmosphere of the family. If the rules of conduct prevailing in the home do not accord with those stipulated by society in general, the child will be faultily prepared for the problems that he will encounter at school, in his profession or job, in his sex relationship, and in his social contacts.
>
> The parents' example is of greatest importance. The better the atmosphere of the home, the more likely it is that the child's development will be gratifying. (p. 56)

Dinkmeyer and McKay (1973) believed that heredity determines the rate at which an individual develops, as well as one's basic assets and liabilities. Environmental factors that are consequential to the child's growth include the family atmosphere, parent-child relationships, the family constellation, relationships among siblings, and the method of child training. The factor over which parents have most control is the method of child training. Dinkmeyer and McKay pointed out that, in raising children to be successful, it is essential to recognize the active role children play in their own development. Youngsters decide how to use their potentialities and environment. They have the creative capacity to develop their own meaning of events and to act according to their perceptions.

Gilmore and Gilmore (1982) studied productive students at Massachusetts Institute of Technology. They defined productive people as individuals who, through some expression of themselves, contribute to those around them (Gilmore, 1978). From their survey

of the psychological and educational literature in the fields of academic achievement, scientific and artistic creativity, and leadership, as well as from their own research, Gilmore and Gilmore concluded that "all outstanding students, scholars, scientists, artists, and leaders have as their common distinguishing trait a desire to contribute to the welfare of society" (pp. 7-8).

Gilmore and Gilmore (1982) found that a common trait of productive individuals is self-esteem. They wrote:

> Self-esteem is the foundation of productive personality development. It is fragile, easily destroyed, and in need of constant renewal. Throughout your children's lives, and especially during their years at home, your aim should be to communicate constant affection and support to them. The means are utterly simple: a smile, a loving spoken or written word, and a hug. (p. 46)

For 25 years, Gilmore and Gilmore (1982) observed and studied children's personalities, social characteristics, and coping skills, as well as a great variety of family backgrounds and parent-child interactions that produced different outcomes in children's lives. They concluded that productive families have the basic strengths and general traits of good emotional health, strong marriages, shared values, warmth of communication, affectionate and supportive relations with their children, and aspirations toward high future goals. Single parents who are forced to rear their families alone can provide their youngsters with a similar home environment.

Gilmore and Gilmore (1982) found that, in productive families, there was evidence of a steadfast parental commitment to the children's intellectual and educational development. They listed the following practices of productive families:

1. The parents devoted considerable time to their children's informal preschool education, thus giving them the basis of the learning skills that are necessary for high performance in school.

2. Both mothers and fathers, no matter how busy, follow their children's daily school progress with keen interest and support. The fathers keep in constant touch, sometimes by phone or letter.

3. The parents are attentive to homework needs. They are willing, when asked, to lend a hand with assignments, although they do not do the children's work for them.

4. They keep in touch with their children's teachers, especially in the early grades.

5. They are quietly alert to the presence of any school-related problems which may call for special parental intervention.

6. They faithfully attend extracurricular school functions in which their youngsters are involved.

7. They do not overemphasize social life either for their children or for themselves. (pp. 28-29)

According to Gilmore and Gilmore (1982), successful parents are, above all, empathetic persons. They care about and are quick to respond to their children's feelings. The improvement in children's academic and other accomplishments depends on parents' values and goals for their young children. "Children's achievement will be no higher than their parents' dreams for them. Being productive means giving one's skills, time, and energy to the welfare of others" (p. 210).

Characteristics of Successful Families

In this section, the family characteristics that various writers have viewed as important to students' success in school are

discussed. Musgrove (1966) described a "good home" as being a small family in which the parents are ambitious for their children. The father is at least a skilled manual worker, and if it is a working-class home, the mother preferably has "married down" (p. 72).

Kent and Davis (1957) were concerned with the characteristics of an effective home. As a result of their research, they concluded that:

> "Normal" parents were tolerant, patient, but firm, making reasonable demands on the child, realistically related to his abilities, interests and needs. The unconcerned [parents] were indifferent to the child's progress, without ambition for his success, content if he kept out of trouble and made few demands upon them. But the effective home was the "demanding" home: the parents set high standards from an early age; they were ambitious for their child; they "reward infrequently and without generosity"; approval and affection are conditional upon achievement. But within the general framework of high demands and expectations the child is free to learn, and good opportunities are afforded for him to do so. (p. 30)

According to Hess and Handel (1959), the successful family has relatively high ambitions for the children. The family's role is to teach children the importance and meaning of moral standards and to instill repression of selfish and other antisocial impulses. In the family itself, the maternal influence should be dominant, extending to the husband as well as to the children. The role of parent is largely one of transmitting moral expectations and administering punishment for waywardness.

Lewis (cited in Bell & Bell, 1982) formulated a list of characteristics that differentiate "optimal" from "adequate" families within a normal population. According to the author, optimal families have the following characteristics:

1. An affiliative attitude about human encounters. There is an expectation that human encounters are apt to be caring; this expectation encourages reaching out to others.

2. Respect for subjective views. Family members feel free to be open and honest about agreements and disagreements. They do not speak for each other. The respect for subjective views is not grounded in a high level of agreement between family members about important values, but rather in the respect for individual differences.

3. A belief in complex motivations. This is inferred from the families' approach to problems, a willingness to explore numerous options.

4. High levels of initiative. Healthier families demonstrate more constructive reaching out, are more active in their response to their environment.

5. Flexible structures. Whereas dysfunctional families are chaotic, midrange or adequate families tend to have rigid structures; and optimal families, flexible structures. Healthy families exhibit egalitarian marriages and strong parental coalitions.

6. Separateness with closeness. Family members have clear ego boundaries and a respect for individual autonomy, and at the same time, perhaps as a result of this mutual respect, a high level of demonstrated closeness to each other.

7. Family mythology congruent with reality. The family perceives itself much as it is seen by competent observers.

8. Open expression of feelings. Healthy families are more open in the expression of feelings. The prevailing mood is one of warmth, affection, and caring, and there is a well-developed capacity for empathy. (pp. 519-527)

Home experiences play an important role in preparing students for school learning (Clark, 1983). Clark said that whenever children develop high levels of linguistic competence, the parents have usually contributed to this achievement by guiding them in the home through academically enhancing activities. Although no nationwide study has centered on the role of American parents in children's school performance, there is substantial evidence that

children's chances of success throughout their educational careers are significantly decreased by a neutral or nonsupportive family context (Clark, 1983, pp. 4-5).

Clark (1983) also discussed family norms, rules, and expectations. He said that children's compliance with their parents' requests was the result of parental exercise of "legitimate power"--the influence parents attain through children's acceptance of their parents as legitimate authority figures who should be obeyed. Such parents use their influence to outline clearly the family rules, norms, and expectations that govern the child's home and school behavior.

In a comparative study of high and low achievers, Drews and Teahan (1957) found that mothers of white high achievers were more authoritarian and restrictive with their children than were mothers of low achievers. Torsten and Husen (1963) conducted a study of Swedish families, in which they documented a significant relationship between mothers' child-rearing ideologies and children's school behavior. They said that children from homes with a consistent and established habit pattern received "better" ratings from their teachers with regard to their school behavior. Children from homes where parents had difficulties in establishing or maintaining a regular habit pattern received "worse" ratings.

Clark (1983) analyzed the life styles of high achievers' families. He found that it did not matter whether the family unit consisted of one or two parents; of greater importance were specific

psychosocial orientations and home activity patterns. The interpersonal-communication patterns in these homes tended to be marked by frequent parent-child dialogue, strong parental encouragement in academic pursuits, clear and consistent limits set for the youngsters, warm and nurturing interactions, and consistent monitoring of how children used their time.

According to Clark (1983), parents of high achievers had taken the responsibility for guiding, nurturing, and protecting their children during the pursuit of competent adult behavior. Parents were bringing up their children as they themselves had been raised, in accord with their perception of the degree of community support and/or danger to themselves or their progeny. Communication took place within a parent-child bond that was marked by clear standards for "appropriate" and "inappropriate" behaviors during specific events, established rules and norms for achievement, parental monitoring of organized and routinized learning activities, the search for knowledge from highly interactive social encounters, and adult provision of corrective feedback and sanctions to reinforce the relationship that had been successful in producing bright, capable, and well-adjusted children.

Clark (1983) also said that parents of high achievers had been instrumental in shaping their youngsters' personalities by actively catering to the children's need for emotional support, approval, reassurance, and other psychological resources. Parents had created a happy and emotionally supportive environment by engaging family members in home activities that produced laughter and gaiety. They

had spoken supportively of their children as capable, competent, and basically healthy in mind, body, and spirit. Parents and significant others had been available during most major crisis periods during their children's lives. The achievers complied with family norms and standards but retained the right to have a mind of their own (Clark, 1983).

Clark (1983) found that parents of high achievers held strong positive feelings about the necessity of schooling for their children. The parents' viewpoints concerning education were dominated by four fundamental dispositions. The first was the mother's apparent willingness and desire to put her children's growth and development needs before her own.

A second disposition was the parents' perception of their own responsibility for helping children gain a general fund of knowledge. These parents did not believe the school should provide all or even most of their children's academic training and support. They defined their purpose as actively working--alongside school efforts, when possible--to strengthen their children's talents. These parents frequently were involved with their children in many activities that required communication through reading, writing, and speaking.

A third disposition was parents' perception that their children were personally responsible for pursuing knowledge routinely. They firmly believed that, in order to learn, their children must attend classes, be careful listeners and evaluators, and actively

participate. The high achievers' school behavior was shaped by a clear, long-standing family code about the personal and professional worth of learning and a fundamental sense of duty about complying with classroom and family norms.

A fourth disposition was parents' expectation that their children would participate in some form of secondary training. Largely because of their parents' teaching activities and attitudes toward schooling, high achievers had developed a school-success and self-improvement orientation. Parents often served as models and advisors who encouraged responsible risk-taking behavior (Clark, 1983).

Clark (1983) also discussed parental control and standards for parent-child relationships and home activities. The parents of high-achieving children early on asserted their "legitimate right" to set house rules, demonstrated their ability to delegate role responsibilities for each child, and consistently supervised and monitored their children in the performance of these activities. High-achieving students had a routine daily and weekly schedule that included certain before-school activities, after-school activities, evening activities, and weekend activities. The parents structured the youngsters' schedules from the time their children were very young.

The parents of high-achieving students in Clark's (1983) study knew that their children spent a great deal of time at home but that a larger proportion of the children's time would be spent in social settings outside the home as the youngsters matured. These parents

carefully set rules defining "socially acceptable" out-of-home environments and activities for their children, based on their own perceptions of the quality of the environment and the children's level of development or maturation. Again, the parents determined the rules for and time spent on activities outside the home. The main reason parents could restrict their children in this way was that these parents showered their children with verbal and physical signs of affection, praised their personal worth to the family, and provided liberal emotional support.

Baumrind (1972), McClelland (1953), and Clark (1983) found that parents of competent American students may use similar management styles, regardless of family ethnicity or social class. Baumrind also concluded that high parental support and high control, when that control was internalized, based on reasoning, and accompanied by the child's sense of power, resulted in academic achievement.

In her search for the traits of a healthy family, Curran (1983) attempted to answer the following questions: What strengths, or traits of health, do professionals agree are found in healthy families? On what family traits do professionals disagree? Does the family get different messages about good family living from different institutions in their lives? As a result of her research, Curran came up with 15 traits commonly perceived to exist in healthy families by professionals who work with families. The traits are listed below, according to frequency of mention.

Trait 1: The healthy family communicates and listens. The family exhibits an unusual relationship between the parents, has

control over television, listens and responds, recognizes nonverbal messages, encourages individual feelings and independent thinking, recognizes turn-off words and put-down phrases, and interrupts but equally develops a pattern of reconciliation.

Trait 2: The healthy family affirms and supports one another. A person's self-concept usually evolves throughout his or her lifetime. The value of a supportive family during this evolutionary process is inestimable. To support the other family members and build their self-esteem, parents must have good self-esteem themselves. Everyone is expected to affirm and support other members of the family, realizing that support does not mean pressure. The family's basic mood is positive, and the family supports its institutions.

Trait 3: The healthy family teaches respect for others. Respect for others begins within the home, where family members respect each other's individual differences, know that self-respect means just that--respect for self, accord respect to all groups and not just specifically approved ones, and respect individual decisions and the property of others.

Trait 4: The healthy family develops a sense of trust. In a healthy family, the husband and wife trust each other deeply, the children are gradually given more opportunity to earn trust, family members do not play the trust-trap game in which the decisions being made have very little to do with trust, the family does not break trust for the amusement of others, the family realizes that broken

trust can be mended, and parents as well as children are trustworthy.

Trait 5: The healthy family has a sense of play and humor. The hallmarks of families that have developed a strong sense of family in which rituals and traditions abound are as follows:

1. The family reassures its legends and characters.
2. The family has a person and/or place that serves as locus.
3. The family makes a conscious effort to gather as a people.
4. The family views itself as a link between the past and the future.
5. The family honors its elders and welcomes its babies.
6. The family cherishes its traditions and rituals.

Trait 9: The healthy family has a balance of interaction among members. One of the characteristics of a healthy family is that individuals spend time getting to know, appreciate, and love one another. The family does not allow work and other activities to infringe routinely on family time, and the family actively discourages the formation of coalitions and cliques within the family.

Trait 10: The healthy family has a shared religious core. Faith in God is the foundation of daily family life, a religious core strengthens the family support system, and parents feel a strong responsibility for passing on the faith, but they do so in positive and meaningful ways.

Trait 11: The healthy family respects the privacy of one another. The family looks forward to the teenage and separating

years; moves from a base of parental rules to one of mutually negotiated rules; does not dole out respect according to age, gender, or any other criterion; respects fads, friends, confidences, room privacy, and time to be alone; and lets go.

Trait 12: The healthy family values service to others. The family is basically empathetic and altruistic, serves others in concrete ways, seeks to simplify its life style, is generously hospitable, and keeps its volunteerism under control.

Trait 13: The healthy family values table time and conversation.

Trait 14: The healthy family shares leisure time. The family that shares leisure-time activities keeps its collective leisure time in balance, prioritizes its activities, finds opportunities to spend time alone with individual members, controls television use, and plans how to use its time.

Trait 15: The healthy family admits to and seeks help with problems. The family expects problems to arise, considers them to be a normal part of family life, and develops techniques to solve them.

Rosen and D'Andrade (1959) found that parents of boys with high achievement-motivation scores maintained high standards for their sons and were more competitive, more interested, and more involved during their sons' performance than parents of boys without high achievement-motivation scores. These boys' mothers were likely to reward their sons with warmth and approval but showed some tendency to punish with hostility and rejection. The authors concluded that

it was the factor of involvement that most clearly set the mothers of high-achieving boys apart from the mothers of low-achieving boys. Rosen and D'Andrade also found that high levels of active parental involvement in their children's lives provided the basis for achievement motivation, performance on intelligence tests, and intellectual-achievement behaviors evidenced in free play.

Parents must try to teach and guide children socially, as well as academically. If youngsters cannot succeed socially, they will have difficulty achieving their goals. Baumrind (1967) compiled the following list of adult practices and attitudes that facilitate the development of socially responsible and independent behavior in children:

1. Modeling by the adult of behavior which is both socially responsible and self-assertive, especially if the adult is seen as powerful by the child and as eager to use the material and interpersonal resources over which he has control on the child's behalf.

2. Firm enforcement policies in which the adult makes effective use of reinforcement principles in order to reward socially responsible behavior and to punish deviant behavior, but in which demands are accompanied by explanations, and sanctions are accompanied by reasons consistent with a set of principles followed in practice as well as preached by the parent.

3. Nonrejecting but not overprotective or passive-acceptant parental attitudes in which the parent's interest in the child is abiding and, in the preschool years, intense; and where approval is conditional upon the child's behavior.

4. High demands for achievement and for conformity with parental policy, accompanied by receptivity to the child's rational demands and willingness to offer the child wide latitude for independent judgement.

5. Providing the child with a complex and stimulating environment offering challenge and excitement as well as

> security and rest, where divergent as well as convergent thinking is encouraged. (pp. 222-223)

Evans and Anderson (1973) looked at achievement and achievement motivation from the perspective of three components of their achievement syndrome. The first is achievement motivation, a psychological factor that provides an individual with the impetus to excel and to attempt to meet standards of excellence. Evans and Anderson said that achievement motivation results from two types of family socialization practices: achievement training and independence training. Achievement training involves parents setting high goals for their children and communicating to them that they expect evidence of high achievement. Independence training involves parents encouraging self-reliance by granting their children enough autonomy to make their own decisions and to accept responsibility for success or failure.

Achievement value orientations, the second component of the achievement syndrome, include three sets of values: activistic-passivistic orientation, individualistic-collectivistic orientation, and present-future orientation. Value orientations result from complex verbal communication that occurs in the cultural setting of the home. Educational and vocational aspirations, the third component of the achievement syndrome, are also decisively shaped by the family structure (Kahl, 1953).

Another factor that affects achievement motivation is the child's self-concept. Coopersmith (1967) found that youngsters who had high self-esteem set higher standards for themselves and came

closer to achieving these standards than did youngsters with low self-esteem. Coopersmith also found that self-esteem was highly related to the type of discipline or control exercised by the parents.

The attitudes of parents who believed in the value of their children's "getting ahead" were explored in a study conducted by Cohen (1965), in which he compared two groups of students. One group included students from upwardly mobile parent groups; the second comprised students from nonmobile parent groups. Cohen predicted that parents of mobile sons would exhibit more frequently than parents of nonmobile sons the following types of behavior:

1. Deliberate encouragement of going to college from an early point in the boy's life and active pushing toward this goal.
2. Concern with school performance.
3. Aspiration for a middle-class job for their son.

Cohen concluded that the ambition and behavior of parents greatly influenced children's setting goals and achieving at school.

In a study of Protestant high school boys in Seattle, Washington, Finne (1953) compared boys who had a positive attitude toward doing well in school with boys who had a relatively negative attitude toward doing well in school. Only among working-class boys was a positive attitude toward doing well in school correlated with a tendency to discuss personal matters with their parents and to choose parents rather than friends when there was a conflict between the two.

Stinnett, Sanders, and DeFrain (1981) conducted a study of 193 families from 25 states to discover family characteristics underlying the well-being of the family and the success of the child. They also gathered information on the strength of families from daily and weekly newspapers across the United States. The sample included representatives from all regions of the country and from both rural and urban areas. The majority of respondents were white, middle-class Protestants; most of them said they were religious or very religious. The couples had been married an average of 19.4 years, had an average of three children, and had an average annual income of $25,000; 65.7% of the husbands and 48.6% of the wives had a college degree. The five characteristics of family strength that emerged most often were love, religion, respect, communication, and individuality. Other family strengths included doing things together, consideration, commitment, good parent image, and sharing.

Rich (1988) enumerated the skills children need in order to succeed in school. He termed these skills megaskills and explained how parents can help their children develop these skills. The ten megaskills Rich listed are discussed below:

Megaskill 1: Confidence. The goal is to help children develop a sense of self-respect and respect for others, which is the basis of real confidence. Every child needs experiences that convey the message, "I can do it." It is parents' responsibility to find ways to meet this need. When children try, they build confidence.

Megaskill 2: Motivation. Parents are like coaches on the sports field--encouraging, urging, and sometimes pushing. Parents need to remain alert to what motivates children because what works at age 5 might not work at age 10 or 15.

Megaskill 3: Effort. Children need parents who think homework is important, who let the youngsters know this, and who provide discipline that children can follow and that is enforceable.

Megaskill 4: Responsibility. Children become responsible through an accumulation of experiences. Family discussions about truth, taking care of property, and thinking about choices are intangible abstractions. Some of these abstractions involve helping children do for themselves, helping children do for the family, and helping children think responsibly about choices and values.

Megaskill 5: Initiative. Children must be willing to try, and parents must be willing to give their children opportunities to try.

Megaskill 6: Perseverance. Children must learn the habit of following through and finishing. Parents must instill in their children's minds that some goals will take longer to accomplish than others and that the youngsters must keep working at them.

Megaskill 7: Caring. Children must care about others. Parents can teach caring in ways that are meaningful.

Megaskill 8: Teamwork. Children must learn the ability to work with others, as part of a team, cooperating to achieve a common purpose. Activities at home, even chores, can help develop teamwork. They provide a sense of getting things done, and they help children feel more needed and more important in the life of the

family. Jobs today depend more than ever on people-to-people skills. Teamwork at home will help children develop these skills.

Megaskill 9: Common sense. Gaining common sense is a long-term process. Common sense is not inherited but must be developed through experience and practice. Parents must try to give their children opportunities to make decisions and avoid hasty conclusions.

Megaskill 10: Problem solving. Children are not born problem solvers. Problem solving requires thinking. A thoughtful home is one in which children get the practice they need in asking thought-provoking questions and in arriving at "thought-full" answers.

In summary, writers have shown that families of successful students are strong, have sound moral and ethical values, and stick together. The literature reviewed in the next section indicates that these families also are actively involved in school activities.

Parental Involvement in Children's Education

Brinley (1990) pointed out that, although being involved in a child's education can be time consuming for parents, home-school partnerships are crucial to school success. Parents need to devote time and energy to schools, and schools need to open their doors to parents. "The bottom line," said Izona Warner, parent-involvement consultant to the Indianapolis, Indiana, schools, "is that attitudes toward school are formed through the interest and motivation children get from home" (Brinley, 1990, p. 93).

In this regard, Clark (1983) said that parents of high achievers hold strong positive attitudes about the necessity of schooling for their children. These parents do not believe the school should provide all or even most of the academic training and support for the child. Rather, these parents define their purpose as actively working--in conjunction with school efforts, when possible--to strengthen their children's talents.

Working with the schools, parents make sure that their children do their homework and study regularly at home. Family dialogues frequently are used as occasions to stress to students that schooling is important. Education is regarded as a key avenue to economic advancement, as well has having its own intrinsic value.

Thus, according to the literature, parents of successful students have taken the time to be involved with the schools and to devote time and effort to helping school personnel accomplish their goals. Education is important to these parents, and they convey this attitude to their children.

Chapter Summary

To gain a better understanding of the influence of the family on children's success in school, major studies focused on this topic were reviewed in this chapter. The literature pertaining to family and school is of primarily two types. First, researchers have focused on the family's sociodemographic characteristics, including intactness, size, occupation, income, education, and so on. Many of these studies have been criticized because the researchers explored

family background and characteristics without taking a close look at the dynamics of the family and interactions among family members or exploring the internal dynamics of family life. Second, a number of writers have analyzed family processes and culture, without referring directly to the achievement or success of offspring.

Clark (1983) argued that it is not the structure or personnel of a family, but the quality of family life and how family members interact, that is related to children's success or failure in school. Pursuing Clark's argument could open up entirely new areas of questioning. Questions could be asked about how successful students define their families in terms of roles, norms, values, and interactions. A better understanding could be sought of how family members react to and interact with the people and groups comprising the school. Such avenues of inquiry could lead to a better understanding of how family members themselves experienced schooling and whether such experiences influenced the children to be successful. The present research was undertaken in an attempt to explore some of these topics and may form the basis for further, more extensive investigations into family dynamics and their influence on children's academic success.

CHAPTER III

METHODOLOGY

Introduction

The methods and procedures used in carrying out the study are presented in this chapter. Included are a discussion of the study design, the research questions, selection of the population, setting for the study, research methodology, procedures followed in conducting the study, and data-analysis procedures.

The Study Design

This descriptive, qualitative study is similar in its conception to Okey's (1990) study, "The Family Perspective on the Individual's Decision to Drop Out of High School," and to Clark's (1983) study, "Family Life and School Achievement." In both of these studies, the individual family members were treated as interacting persons. Each family member occupied a position within the family in which roles were assigned, and each individual saw the norms or role expectations for his or her attitudes and behavior as being held individually or collectively by other family members (Clark, 1983, p. 16).

Even though it is difficult to make generalizations from a study of a small number of families, characteristics of these family organizations can be discovered and the social processes in these

homes described. From this analysis of selected families, generalizations might be made about the behavior patterns that are prevalent in the families of successful students.

Bott (1957) discussed the problems inherent in conducting an intensive exploratory field study with a few families. He wrote:

> The difficulties in applying this method to the study of families seem to lie in conventional selection of units of study. When familial affairs are concerned, the unit that springs to mind is the total society. It must be the family, not some families. We should therefore like to make it clear that we are discussing only some families, not all families or the family. (p. 10)

The families selected for this study are examples of ordinary family units residing in three rural communities. The families' structures, processes, and interactions with school personnel were the focus of the analysis. The specific categories of family structures and processes that guided the collection and interpretation of data in this study were as follows:

1. Family theme and background. Included in this category were the students' names, ages, religious practice, ordinal position in the family, and group affiliation; a description of the family's residence; a physical description of parents and student; and the educational background and social history of the student's parents and grandparents. This category pertained to what the family was "about."

2. Early child-rearing and familial practices. Included in this category were meaningful events that took place during the student's formative years, early training and value orientation, and

socialization to norms. Items in this category concerned the student's experiences during the formative elementary school years.

3. Family experiences. Included in this category were interactions among all family members; rules of the house (role expectations); power relations; child-rearing practices, for example, methods of discipline and control, duties, and responsibilities; division of labor; and parents' and students' approach to time and space. This category centered on interactions within the home--that is, those that do not pertain to school.

4. Education in the family--past, present, and future. Included in this category were family members' educational orientations; educational aids; parents' and students' academic values; students' goals and aspirations and approach to homework, study, and other educational activities; and parents' educational aspirations and expectations. This category pertained to the intellectual climate of the home.

5. School experiences. Included in this category were parents' involvement in school activities, such as the Parent-Teacher Organization, booster clubs, and volunteer work in the classroom; parents' and grandparents' school experiences; parents' experience with their children's school; students' school experience; and parents' and students' perceptions of school. The focus of this category was the family members' school experiences and parents' involvement in their children's schooling.

6. Mental health. Included in this category were students' values and attitudes, general personality characteristics of the

student, trust, attitude toward school, and social outlook. In this category, an attempt was made to capture the dominant personality traits and psychological orientation of the students.

Research Questions

In addition to the preceding categories of family structures and processes that were used to guide the collection and interpretation of data in this study, eight research questions were posed. The researcher undertook this study in an attempt to understand the complex interactions that take place between successful students and their families and between family members and school personnel, and thereby to understand how these interactions influence students' success in school.

This research was inspired by the work of Clark (1983), who broke fresh ground in the study of school achievement and failure, and by Okey's (1990) research on dropouts and family culture. These researchers' findings supported the notion that family culture is a more powerful determinant of school success or failure than are family demographics. The present researcher investigated the characteristics of the family culture of students who succeed. The family culture was studied in connection with the interactions of the family and the student with school personnel. The researcher thought that, to understand students' success in school, it was necessary to study the situations that had conditioned their responses.

The following questions, which are similar to those Okey (190) used in his study of dropouts, were used as a guide in gathering information on successful students and their families. The expected findings regarding each question are set forth after the question.

1. How do successful students define their families? The researcher expected that successful students would define their families from the perspective of being members of those families and having a relationship with other family members. Further, successful students would see themselves as extensions and representatives of the family.

2. What is the student's family background? The researcher expected that successful students' family backgrounds would include experiences with school and learning and that their success had been built on the experience of previous generations.

3. How do successful students' family members react to and interact with members of the school community? The researcher expected to find that the successful students would carry family messages to school and bring school messages home. Family members' reactions to school were expected to be based on their past experience and their sense of how school personnel viewed them. The family background and family members' interactions with school personnel were expected to influence how school personnel viewed the student.

4. What were the school experiences of successful students' family members? The researcher expected to find that a positive experience with school had continued in these students' families for

several generations. Students were expected to share that same positive experience.

5. Is there a relationship between students' success in school and their family experiences? The researcher expected that the family's beliefs, values, structure, and morals were of major importance to the parents of successful students. Similarly, it was expected that experiences in the family would determine how the children reacted to school and to life in general.

6. How do successful students' family members view the importance of education? It was expected that the successful students' families would represent or create a culture of acceptance that would mesh with the culture of the school. These families would perceive school personnel as the ones who must maintain control and discipline, and help ensure that students were safe and that they learned.

7. What meaning does being successful have for the individual? The researcher expected to find a direct relationship between family experiences and students' decision to be successful in school. Further, it was expected that conditions at home created a climate conducive to success and a willingness to work to achieve one's goals.

8. How does the successful person succeed? The researcher expected to find that these successful students were leaders, not followers. It was also expected that these families would have high goals and expectations for individual family members.

Selection of the Population

Using information provided by school administrators, counselors, and teachers, as well as his own knowledge of successful students in the area, the researcher compiled a list of 35 possible participants for the study. The researcher obtained permission to review the students' cumulative school records (CA-60 files) to check on the accuracy of the information provided by school personnel. After sending preliminary information on the study to these 35 students' families and reviewing the students' achievement records, 11 families were selected.

The scope of the study was limited to rural students and their families. Urban and minority populations were excluded for two reasons. First, the researcher had no previous experience with either urban schools or minority populations. Second, the nature of the qualitative investigation necessitated placing some limits on the duration and scope of the study.

The unit of study was a two-parent family with at least one high-achieving child. The socioeconomic status (SES) of the families ranged from one household in which the husband was currently unemployed to another in which the husband was an executive at a major company. Family size ranged from one child to five children.

All siblings from 12 to 22 years of age, who were in sixth grade through college, were included in the study. The researcher thought that studying this age range would help in obtaining an

accurate picture of the students' early education and in determining whether the parents were as interested and involved in the education of their college students as they were in that of their younger children. However, the researcher concentrated on the oldest child in the family. This allowed for optimization of data gathering because the oldest child had the longest tenure in school. Moreover, the researcher thought that, if all children were included, the parents would give more meaningful responses regarding differences in their children.

Setting for the Study

The study was conducted in communities within a 50-mile radius of a large metropolitan area in the Midwest. The furniture industry is the largest source of income in this area. The population and industrial activity in this region are increasing because many people consider it desirable to live on this side of the state. The rural areas are starting to become a thing of the past as housing projects are being built on what was formerly farm land. Rural areas are now becoming bedroom communities for executives who work in urban locales but desire the ambience of country life. Small 100-acre dairy and grain farms still abound, but as the city expands these farmers are being enticed to sell their land to developers.

The recessions of the 1970s and 1980s did not have a powerful effect on the area. The once-small rural villages and towns are growing in terms of population and industry. The tax base has increased, but to attract more industries, the towns have offered

such incentives as tax exemptions or delayed tax payments. This growth has put a strain on the school system and the local utilities.

The 11 families included in the study lived in small, predominantly white towns and villages outside the large metropolitan area. The ethnic composition of the communities was primarily Dutch; most people living there were politically conservative. The population was very religious, and many denominations were represented in the community. The area was one of prosperity, with a future for growth. These communities were ideal places in which to raise families.

The school systems in which the subjects for the study were enrolled ranged in size from 1,400 to 2,000 students. The high schools these students attended ranged in size from 440 to 600. Students enrolled in these schools were primarily white, middle- to upper-middle-class youngsters; they were conservative in both dress and attitude. Parents in the district were usually supportive of the schools and passed most millages.

Research Methodology

After much research and initial interviews with several successful students, the researcher decided to use a taped-interview format to allow more accurate interpretation of the responses. This method also allowed the researcher to listen more carefully, be more attentive, maintain better eye contact with interviewees, and observe the respondents more carefully than would have been possible

if he had been required to take notes during the interviews. The tape-recorded interview was the primary document, and the transcription was a secondary written record of the first document.

The interview is a well-established and accepted method of field research. Gorden (1969, 1980, 1987) delineated the specific structure and protocol for tape-recorded interviews. In his 1969 publication, Gorden identified five advantages of the interview over the questionnaire method:

1. The interview provides more opportunity to motivate the respondent to supply accurate and complete information immediately.

2. The interview provides more opportunity to guide the respondent in his interpretation of the questions.

3. The interview allows a greater flexibility in questioning the respondent.

4. The interview allows greater control over the interview situation.

5. The interview provides a greater opportunity to evaluate the validity of the information by observing the respondent's nonverbal manifestation of his attitude toward supplying the information.

There is no established standard method for studying whole families. This researcher used the field methods of interview and observation with normal (nonclinical) families, first because of the wide latitude these methods provide in conducting exploratory research and, second, because of the opportunity they provide for

gathering data on the dominant patterns and processes in small groups.

The data for each family were collected over a four-month period during the 1991-92 school year, using taped semi-structured interviews and observation. The interviews were conducted using a specially developed outline that allowed for "unencumbered" inquiry into the functioning of the family unit. The interviews were not rigidly structured, and additional questions were formulated to follow up on or clarify answers to previous queries. The interviews were intended to elicit the following types of information:

Background information: General background of parents, including their work history; attitude about present environment and life circumstances; social experience of student as a child; early childhood functioning; early parental influence (moral training); church participation; past, present, and future ambitions of parents.

Home living patterns: Parents' concept of child rearing; family decision-making process; parental expectations in terms of children's behavior; role responsibilities in the home; sibling relationships; interactions with kin, neighbors, and friends; methods of parental control; parental handling of students' time and space; students' attitudes toward parents and other adults; family outdoor activities and travel; daily routines.

Educational orientation: School plans and goals of parents and student; career plans of parents and student; parental aspirations for child; parental expectations of the child; learning customs in

the home, for example, reading, hobbies, games, and other activities; student self-concept.

School experiences: Parents' and grandparents' school experiences; parental involvement in school activities; contact with school, for example, exchange of information, quality of interaction, level of involvement, communication process; parents' expectations of the school.

Before the interviews were conducted, the researcher distributed three surveys to the selected families. The Family Characteristics Inventory (Appendix A) contained 20 items to which family members as a group were to respond using a five-point Likert-type scale ranging from 1 (Does not fit our family at all) to 5 (Fits our family very well). The Family History Survey (Appendix B) was designed to elicit demographic information on the family members. The Family Risk Factors Questionnaire (Appendix C) contained 12 items designed to discover whether the families had any characteristics of dysfunctional families (unemployment, abuse, alcoholism, and so on). The researcher's intention in distributing these surveys before the interviews was to allow students and their parents to acquaint themselves with subjects that would be discussed during the interviews so that they would be better prepared to answer the questions. There were to be no surprises during the interviews, and all responses were recorded without any judgment on the interviewer's part.

Procedures Followed in Conducting the Study

Permission was obtained from the Michigan State University Committee on Research Involving Human Subjects (UCRIHS) to conduct the research as proposed (see Appendix D for letter of approval). All participants were asked to sign a Consent Form (Appendix E), which stated the purposes of the study and what participation would involve. Potential participants were informed that their participation was voluntary and that their responses would be treated with strict confidence. They were assured that their answers would be confidential and that their real names would not be used in any research report. All 11 families agreed to participate in the study and signed the Consent Forms.

The observation portion of the study was conducted during school hours. The researcher observed the successful students in the schools they attended as they interacted with fellow students, faculty members, and other school personnel.

The interviews were conducted in the families' homes and lasted from one to one and one-half hours. One interview was conducted with each family; no follow-up meetings were necessary. The researcher let the parents decide whether the student(s) could stay in the room and listen to their answers, and vice versa. In all but one case, the researcher interviewed the student(s) and parents separately. The respondents were assured that they could refuse to answer any of the questions; however, none of the parents or students refused to answer any question. Each family agreed to have the interview tape recorded.

Data-Analysis Procedure

The data collected in the interviews with the 11 families were carefully transcribed to ensure accuracy. The responses were then summarized and charted. More than 400 pages of transcription were accumulated. Seventy-one categories of responses were charted. As the researcher analyzed the data, he noted some repetition and overlapping in the categories. This repetition proved useful in cross-referencing the data and in identifying patterns within and among families.

The findings are reported in Chapter IV.

CHAPTER IV

PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS OF DATA

Introduction

The researcher's overall purpose in this study was to investigate the conditions of family life and culture among students who are successful in school. The intention was to gain a better understanding of why certain students are successful by examining the students' family experiences, their family history, and family-school interactions. The researcher was interested in understanding the behavior of successful students and the factors underlying their success in school. A secondary purpose was to describe how the subjects' involvement in the family as a dynamic social unit influenced their decision to work hard and succeed in school. The researcher was interested in discovering whether the students' perceptions of their families' views regarding the importance of education influenced those students' decision to succeed in school. In attempting to accomplish these purposes, the researcher examined the complex interrelationships that exist between and among successful students, their families, and school personnel.

In this chapter, the findings are presented as they relate to the experiences, behaviors, and interactions under investigation. In the first section, the home settings of the successful students'

families are described. The second section contains demographic information on the families in the study, including their background and early child-rearing practices. These sections are intended to introduce the successful students and their families. In succeeding sections, the findings regarding the school experiences of the successful students' parents and grandparents are described, the students' family experiences are considered, the students' school experiences are examined, and the interactions between and among the students, their families, and school personnel are presented. The chapter concludes with a discussion of the families' influence on students' decision to succeed. Throughout the dissertation, pseudonyms are used to protect the families' anonymity.

Home Settings of the Families in the Study

All 11 families included in this study owned their own homes. The type of dwelling and geographic location of each of the families in the study, along with other demographic data on the families, are shown in Table 1. The home settings of each family are described in the following pages.

The Coates Family

The Coateses lived on a cul de sac in an attractive subdivision. They built their home when the area was first developed. Their ranch-style home had eight rooms, three and one-half baths, and a full basement. The house had a pleasant living room with a large window overlooking the backyard swimming pool.

Table 1.--Home settings and demographic characteristics of families in the study population.

Family	Family Composition	Parents' Level of Education	Employment	Geographical Setting/Home Ownership
Coates	Intact family: father, mother, two siblings	Father--high school graduate; mother--two years college	Father--factory worker; mother--homemaker	Rural, own custom-built house
Gates	Intact family: father, mother, two siblings	Both parents high school graduates	Father--factory foreman; mother--tax consultant	Rural, own custom-built house
Hill	Intact family: father, mother, two siblings	Father--college graduate, Doctor of Divinity mother--college graduate	Father--pastor mother--teacher	Rural, own large house
Start	Intact family: father, mother, three siblings	Father--college graduate mother--high school graduate	Father--project manager; mother--receptionist	Rural, own large house
Brown	Intact family: father, mother, three siblings	Father--high school graduate mother--college graduate	Father--executive mother--teacher	Rural, own large house

Table 1.--Continued.

Family	Family Composition	Parents' Level of Education	Employment	Geographical Setting/Home Ownership
DePree	Intact family: father, mother, four siblings	Both parents high school graduates	Father--unemployed mother--nurse	Rural, own small house
Snider	Intact family: father, mother, three siblings	Both parents high school graduates	Father--factory worker mother--homemaker	Rural, own large house
Madison	Intact family: father, mother, two siblings	Father--high school graduate mother--college graduate	Father--tool & die maker mother--teacher/homemaker	Rural, own custom house
Kort	Intact family: father, mother, three siblings	Both parents college graduates	Father--teacher mother--homemaker	Rural, own modest house
Rosema	Intact family: father, mother, three siblings	Both parents high school graduates	Father--construction mother--homemaker	Rural, own modest house
Hart	Intact family: father, mother, two siblings	Both parents high school graduates	Father--furniture company employee mother--assistant secretary at church	Rural, own modest house

There were three good-sized bedrooms, a kitchen, and a dinette. The home appeared to be well maintained. Upon entering the Coateses home, the researcher was greeted by two cats, who were free to roam; Mrs. Coates showed these cats during the winter months.

Adjacent to the Coateses' property was a vacant lot, which they had recently sold to a neighbor. The backyard had a large fenced-in area in which they kept their dog and grew a garden. Also in the backyard was an above-ground pool, which was heated by solar panels on the roof of the house. Behind the house was a large wooded area that led to a pond. The Coateses owned this wooded area, and Jim, their son, rode his dirt-bike back to the pond.

From the wooded area, Mr. Coates obtained fuel for the wood-burning furnace they used during the winter months. According to him, the fuel bills were very low as a result. He said, "This is where we save a lot of money." The family owned a car, a motorcycle, a four-wheel-drive truck, and a recreational vehicle that they used on trips to save money on hotels.

The Gates Family

The Gateses lived near a lake in a small rural area; the home was not directly on the lake, but they had access to the lake. Their house was custom built. Mr. Gates did much of the work himself; he also built a sunroom as an addition to the house. This two-story house had a loft on the second floor. The kitchen was to the right of the entrance hall, and the living room was to the left of the kitchen. At the back of the house were two average-size

bedrooms, the bathroom, and a utility room, all of which the Gateses had renovated. Mr. Gates saved money by doing the repair and renovation work himself. The upstairs bedroom was open to the living room and had an adjacent bathroom. The cars and boat were kept in the three-car garage.

The yard was nicely landscaped, with flowers and white stones surrounding the fruit trees. The road on which the Gateses lived had recently been paved. Their house was not extravagant, but it was very comfortable.

The Hill Family

The Hills lived in a two-story brick house that the church provided for use as a parsonage while the family was on call at the church. The house, which was across the street from the church, was situated on an attractive lot that was close to the middle and high schools. The Hills also owned a cottage in the northern part of the state, which they visited as often as possible.

The parsonage was maintained very well. The living room was on the left of the entry hall, and the family room was on the right; a staircase led from the entry hall to the second floor. There was a dining room and a kitchen with an eating area; a door separated the kitchen from the family room. The living room had a piano, which both children and adults used. The bedrooms and bathrooms were upstairs; another bathroom was located downstairs, off the garage.

A deck overlooked the small backyard. The family had a puppy, which was not permitted to go into any of the carpeted areas of the house; it was still learning where it could and could not roam.

The Start Family

The Starts lived in a new subdivision in a small town. Their two-story custom-built house was located in the middle of a quiet cul de sac, with neighbors to the east and a vacant lot to the west. The Starts' house was relatively new, and the yard was in excellent condition.

A deck overlooked the backyard, which had a deep drop and was nicely wooded. The house had a formal living room, family room, dining room, and a kitchen with an island at which to eat. The staircase was open to the second floor, where the bedrooms were located. The basement contained a work area for Mr. Start; there he completed the projects he brought home from work. Because the house was new, everything was in good condition; the rooms were spacious and bright.

The Brown Family

The Browns owned a ranch-style house with a basement that opened to the backyard. They had this house built for them when the subdivision was started. It had a living room and a dining area next to the kitchen; there were three bedrooms on the first floor and one bedroom in the finished basement. Steps from a spacious deck led down to the large backyard, where there was an in-ground swimming pool with a hot tub. Mr. Brown did most of the work

building the pool area. Also in the backyard was a terraced garden, which the youngest son tended; Mrs. Brown canned much of the produce from the garden. Looking at the yard and the house, one could see that the Browns were hard workers and that they worked as a team to maintain their property.

The DePree Family

The DePrees' house was situated on a large piece of property in the farm area of a small town; the area in which they lived had several muck farms. Their ranch-style house had a kitchen, an eating area, a living room, and three bedrooms. In her large garden, Mrs. DePree raised most of the vegetables for her family. The children helped her with the garden. In the old garage next to the garden, Mr. DePree and their son Bob were working on a car that had been a project for many years. Mr. DePree said that he just did not have time to work on the car because the children occupied his time.

The Snider Family

The Sniders had lived in their house on a main street in a small town for all their married life--19 years. The outside of the modest ranch-style house was nicely painted and decorated, and the basketball hoop erected next to the driveway had received much use. Inside the house was a sitting room; one step up were the kitchen and eating area. Through an archway were the living room and a hall

leading to the bedrooms. The downstairs provided more living space and led to the backyard.

The Madison Family

The Madisons lived in a modest two-story house across from a lake in a small rural area. A staircase led from the entrance hall upstairs to two bedrooms used by the boys. To the left was the living room; behind the living room was the dining room, and to the left of the dining room was the kitchen. The backyard was large and well maintained. The Madisons purchased this house because it was smaller and easier to care for than their previous house, which had more square footage and a much larger lot. Because the boys were grown up and had left home, the Madisons no longer needed a large house.

The Kort Family

The Korts lived in the same subdivision as the Browns. Their well-kept, three-bedroom ranch-style house was custom built for them. A beautiful tree grew in the middle of the front yard, and the rest of the yard was landscaped with flowers and wood chips. From the porch, a stained-glass door led into a wood-floored entryway, from which one entered the living room. Next to the living room were the kitchen and eating area; outside the eating area was a porch overlooking the backyard. There were two bedrooms on the first floor, and another two downstairs.

The Rosema Family

Mr. Rosema built their two-story house. To the right of the entry was the living room, and to the left was a staircase leading to the three bedrooms. Down the hall were a large family room and kitchen and a door leading to the backyard. To the right of the kitchen was the formal dining room. The Rosemas' house was well built and comfortable; the yard was of average size and was well maintained.

The Hart Family

The Hart family lived in a ranch-style house in a large subdivision in a small town. The front door opened into the living room, next to which were the kitchen and dinette. Down the hall were the bedrooms and bathroom. The house also had a finished basement. The deck overlooked the above-ground pool in the backyard. The yard was full of flowers.

Demographic Information on the Successful Students and Their Families

The successful students and their families are introduced in this section. Background information such as the students' names, ages, religion, and ordinal position in the family; description of parents and students; and the history of the parents is given. The following descriptions of the families are a composite of the students' and parents' interview responses and the researcher's observations.

The Coates Family

The Coateses had been married for 25 years; it was the second marriage for both of them. There were no children from their first marriages; the children described were from this marriage.

David Coates was 50 years old at the time of the interview. He had worked as a printer for an office furniture company for 18 years. Dave was trim and kept himself in good shape by working hard and chopping wood. He liked the outdoors and enjoyed hunting and fishing. His hair was starting to gray, and he had a mustache. Dave was a twin; his brother lived in Florida, where they had been born and raised. They had no other siblings. Growing up was difficult for Dave. After his parents were divorced, he did not have much contact with his father. Dave was educated in a Catholic school, from which he graduated. When asked "Are you bringing your children up the way your folks brought you up?" he said, "Not my folks. I am a lot more supportive of what my children do; I try to help them succeed in whatever it might be. In our family, we stress education." The researcher could tell that Dave took the interview seriously because he gave his answers careful thought.

Nancy Coates, a petite woman, was a homemaker who volunteered frequently at her children's school. She had held many jobs during her lifetime and was currently seeking employment as a secretary to help with their daughter's college tuition the following year. Nancy was an only child; her parents owned their own business. She was a bubbly, outgoing person; the Coates children had personalities similar to hers.

Sally Coates was taller than her mother; she had brown hair and wore glasses. She was a senior in high school and was looking forward to graduating and going to college. She had her mother's bubbly personality, was gregarious, and had many friends. Sally was an avid reader and was very intelligent, even though she did not want to show it. She was the older of the Coateses' two children and thus had to baby sit for her younger brother. She was well disciplined, as evidenced by the fact that she seldom got into trouble. She said that she had great respect for her parents and would not want to hurt them by getting into trouble.

Jim Coates was a sixth grader and enjoyed doing outdoor activities with his father. Jim was rather small for his age and probably took after his mother. He was a very good student and had a 3.75 grade point average in middle school. Jim was very active in athletics and enjoyed playing games with his parents. He answered the interview questions in a very mature manner.

Sally and Jim were of Italian, English, Irish, Welsh, and German descent. Their paternal grandfather had dropped out of school, and their paternal grandmother had started college but did not graduate. Their maternal grandfather had a high school education but did not attend college because he had to run the family business. Their maternal grandmother had started college but did not graduate.

The Coateses did not attend church, but they acknowledged the importance of religious beliefs. In response to a question concerning religion, Dave commented,

> I had a bad experience, so it turned me away from the church. When the kids were younger, but old enough to understand, we took them to a United Methodist Church for almost a year. We told them if they wanted to continue going to church feel free to, but it was not something Mother and I believe in. You don't have to go to church or be a member of a church to be successful. My uncle told me one time and it really stuck in my mind: "You don't need to belong to a church to believe in God or whatever you want your Supreme Being to be, but make homage to Him in your own way, recognize Him, that there is one, but do it in your own way." We have passed this down to our kids.

Nancy added,

> You don't need to go to church to have beliefs. My mother and her mother had their own, and I believed whatever I wished to believe, and she kind of guided me and I have pushed them on Sally and Jim. I tried to explain things and the different religions there are and explain what I believe, and they may believe in whatever they choose to believe. If they want to go to church with anybody, they may. I think it is important to have some type of belief.

The Gates Family

The Gateses had been happily married for 24 years. Marty Gates was employed as a supervisor at a General Motors Fisher Body plant; he had worked for the company for more than 23 years. Marty had short, graying hair; he was tall and of average build. He was very handy around the house and had remodeled the bathroom and utility rooms. He commented that he was getting the house ready for their younger son's graduation a year hence. Marty nearly died a few years ago because of complications due to diabetes. Fortunately, this problem had been brought under control with medication and diet. At the time of the interview, Marty appeared to be strong and energetic, but he commented that sometimes he needed extra rest.

Corrine Gates was an attractive woman in her forties. She, too, had some health problems and periodically went to the University of Michigan Health Center for treatment. Corrine was energetic and had a strong personality. She was actively involved in her sons' schooling; in fact, she had chosen every teacher the boys had in elementary school. She had stayed home with the boys when they were young and had returned to work as a tax preparer for H & R Block just ten years ago, when the boys were in school. Her work ethic and determination had helped her advance to the executive associate level.

Tom Gates was 21 years old and a college junior. Like his parents, he had been plagued by health problems. He should have graduated from technical college by now, but he missed much of his junior year because of a collapsed lung. Tom was a tall, thin, good-looking young man who loved life. He had been very active in high school and was even more active in college. Tom was very personable; he had a good sense of humor and was a good conversationalist. When asked to describe himself, he said,

> I am very content now; I am happy in every aspect of my life. School is going real good, and everything is falling into place for the first time. As far as I can see, that will happen in the future, and I like the way it looks.

Tom's younger brother, Bill, was a junior in high school. Like his brother, Bill was tall and thin. He, too, had had many physical problems. Although Bill was a good student, he admitted he was lazy and needed to work on being more industrious. When questioned about his future plans, Bill said that he wanted to be an elementary

school teacher because he loved children. At the time of the interview, he was diligently practicing basketball because he was considering trying out for the team the following year. Bill was very active in school and loved to act in the school plays.

Tom and Bill's maternal ancestors were Dutch and German; their paternal ancestors were French, Irish, and Dutch. Although the Gateses attended church occasionally, they did not have an active church life. However, Marty and Corrine said that religion was an important part of their family. Corrine added, "We feel it and live it more than we act it out by going to an organized church. It sets the morals, the ethics, and it is based on our own religion. We don't go to church." When asked how they conveyed their religious convictions to their children, they responded, "Actions. The kids have picked up on it, and they have done some reading, investigation of the Bible." The researcher then asked, "Do you have to go to church to have religious ethics?" The answer was, "No, [but] it helps to have a background in religion as we do because we can answer any questions the kids have."

The Hill Family

The Hills had been married for 18 years. Jack had been the senior pastor of a Dutch Reformed church in a small town for six years. He was tall, clean cut, and wore glasses. Jack was a strong supporter of the school system and visited the schools periodically. He and his three siblings had been sent to Christian schools. His father had been self-employed, and Jack had helped him in his

business. Jack said, "I grew up learning to work. My dad's motto was, 'Work faster and cheaper.' Work had that old Dutch work ethic that got ingrained in me." Jack had a Master of Theology and a Doctor of Divinity degree. Following high school, Jack had paid for his own education. As he said,

> Mom and Dad sat down with me and said, "If you want to go on to college that is fine, but we cannot help you financially; we can help you in other ways." I worked my way through college and overall had a good time.

Mary Hill was a tall, attractive, soft-spoken Dutch woman. The oldest of three girls, Mary had grown up on a farm, where she had to help with the chores. She commented, "Living on the farm, since there were three daughters, I had to drive the tractor and do all kinds of chores. We worked a lot. We were expected to work." Mary believed that this work ethic had carried over to her children. A college graduate, Mary was a home economics teacher. She also had taken graduate courses. She was well liked in the community and had been a substitute teacher in the school system in which her children were enrolled. Mary was presently employed in a community education program at another school.

Susan Hill was a seventh grader. She was a tall, slender brunette and wore glasses. In describing herself, Susan said, "I am a good person." Susan was the older of the Hills' two girls. Her sister, a fifth grader, was not interviewed. Susan was on the honor roll and was very active in school and in her church. Like her parents, Susan was a very hard worker.

Susan was of Dutch descent. Her parents had been raised in the Dutch Reformed faith. Because her father was a minister, religion was an important part of the family's home life. Susan was asked about the importance of religion in her success; she said, "It is very important because I would never make it through school if I didn't pray." Jack agreed:

> The Christian base is an important part of the child's total education and development. We did not send our kids to the Christian school; we like to keep our children involved in Christian education of the church. The kids are involved in a lot of activities in the church. We try to integrate the two, and if there is an opportunity for them to take advantage of education of the church, they should be there.

It is interesting that, although Jack attended a Christian school, his children were enrolled in public school. He explained this situation by saying, "We kept the kids in the public school system from the viewpoint [that] sooner or later they would have to learn to integrate their faith to the world."

The Start Family

The Starts had been married for 22 years. Larry had an average build. He liked to work, and by his own admission he was a workaholic. He was the second of seven children. Larry's parents were both high school graduates and thought education was important. His father had been a factory worker who held two jobs and worked all the time. Larry graduated from college and was certified as a secondary school teacher, but during his student teaching he decided that teaching was not for him. Instead, he took a job as a draftsman and became interested in engineering. He took 19 hours of

engineering classes and, at the time of the study, was employed as a project manager at an office furniture company.

Myra Start was a tall, attractive woman in her early forties. She was the fourth of six children in her family. Whereas her father had a high school education, her mother had dropped out of school after seventh grade. Her father had worked nights, and his children had not seen much of him. Myra was a high school graduate. She had wanted to attend college and study design, but her parents did not support this goal. In her words, "If I wanted to go to any other college than Bible college, I would have to pay for it." Thus, Myra got a job when she graduated from high school and never continued her education.

Jane Start, a tall, slender blonde, was the valedictorian of her senior class. Jane described herself as "secure and self-dependent. I have a pretty good outlook on life, and I know what is going on." She was very popular at school and participated in many activities. Because she was so active and intelligent, she received privileges at school. She said, "I have earned a good name for myself, and the teachers trust me."

Sarah Start was a high school freshman. She was different from her sister in many ways. Although she was a very good student, Sarah did not work at it like Jane did. Whereas Jane liked school, Sarah did not; in fact, she thought school was boring. However, Sarah was very active in school and was popular. Sarah was very strong willed and wanted to be independent. Asked how she perceived herself, she said, "I depend on my parents for rides and stuff. I

am not independent." With regard to how she saw herself in the future, she said, "[I will] grow more independent when I get a car." Whereas Jane planned to work for someone else, Sarah said she would have her own business.

The Start girls were of Dutch and German descent. They were being raised in the Dutch Reformed faith, and religion was practiced in their home. When Jane was asked whether religion was important to her success, she commented, "I do not think so as a student, but as a person."

The Brown Family

The Browns had been married for 18 years. Tom Brown was a short man of average build who seemed very self-confident. He had only a high school education, but through hard work and determination he had risen to a high position in his company. Just recently, he had been promoted to head of his division. Tom's family had been poor and could not offer their children much. But through his strong determination, he had turned a poor situation into success. It might be said that Tom had been raised on the other side of the tracks, but he had crossed over those tracks to be a highly respected member of the community. In recent years, Tom had been involved in the school, working on millage campaigns and helping the school improve its image. At one time, community members encouraged him to run for the school board, but he declined.

Pat Brown was a short, fair-skinned woman in her early forties who recently returned to work full time as a special education

teacher. Before that, she had worked part time as a bookkeeper for her husband's company. Pat was an assertive, well-organized woman who was determined to achieve her goals. To become a full-time teacher, she had returned to school to earn a special education degree. Pat was active in the school and her community. While she was substituting at the middle school, a cheerleading coach was needed for middle school sports. Pat volunteered and worked diligently to create a good squad; teachers at the school told the researcher they were impressed with the squad.

Bob Brown was a sophomore in high school. Bob was short and wore glasses; he was a very quiet youngster who had many friends. During the interview, Bob was tired because he had just finished work at a hardware store in town. His responses were short and to the point. Bob was a good student who could probably do better if he chose to do so. At present, he had enough credits to graduate from high school the following year. Bob's parents wanted him to enroll in classes at a local community college. Bob had been on the honor roll since elementary school and had participated on many academic teams. He played football the last two years and worked hard to become a good player.

Brenda Brown was a seventh grader in the local middle school. She was short, blonde, fair skinned, and wore glasses. Brenda was very active in school and sports. According to her parents, if there was a sport, Brenda would go out for the team. So far, she had competed in track, volleyball, basketball, cheerleading, tennis,

and softball. She was a good student, and, unlike her brother, she worked very hard at her studies. She had been on the honor roll since elementary school and had competed on the school's academic teams. She baby sat part time and was considering a future as an elementary school teacher.

Bob and Brenda were a mixture of nationalities. Religion was not stressed in their family, but it was important. Tom Brown stated,

> We do not put as much emphasis [on going to church] as we should. The way you act is more important. Even though the kids do not go to church, they still have the values and morals of someone who goes to church on a regular basis.

The DePree Family

The DePrees had been married for 21 years. Chuck DePree was a short man of average build; he was a truck driver. He was without a full-time job and had been working part time at a nursery. Chuck had turned down an opportunity to be employed again as a truck driver because the job would have taken him away from his family for extended periods of time. Chuck's wife encouraged him to take the job, but he refused, saying his family came first. He was a devoted father who was active in his children's lives. Frequently, he attended school board meetings and asked questions about the progress of the school. Chuck also was active in his church; he was a religious person and had committed his life to God. He was very hard working and managed the family's finances effectively, which was important during his periods of unemployment. He was late for the interview because of his part-time job; when he arrived, he was

sweaty, dirty, and tired. His children answered to him and their mother. During the course of the interview, one of the DePrees' daughters asked whether she could watch television. When asked why the children asked permission to watch television, Chuck responded,

> That TV does not go on unless they [the children] ask us, especially on school nights. She wants to watch *911*; that is all right because she wants to be a nurse, and it relates to that profession. If there is ironing to do, they do the ironing while they watch TV.

Janet DePree was a slight, work-weary woman in her forties. She had returned to work part time as a licensed practical nurse about five years ago to supplement the family income once the children were old enough to care for themselves. Her work schedule was unpredictable, but she tried to arrange her hours so that either she or Chuck would be at home with the children. What the DePrees had accomplished with limited financial resources was admirable. In her large garden, Janet raised produce for the family; she canned all their vegetables for the winter months. She was active in her church and in school activities. If a volunteer was needed, Janet was the first in line if her work schedule permitted. Coming from a farm family, Janet was used to hard work.

Bob DePree was not present for the interview because of another commitment. Wendy DePree, a high school senior, was the oldest of the four children; she was tall, slender, and wore glasses. Describing Wendy, her parents said,

> [She] likes little kids, she likes people either younger than her or older than her but not her own age. She does not do well with kids her own age. She is a hard worker if it is something she wants. She is a determined young lady who does not give up.

Wendy had had a struggle with school even though she had made the honor roll; she did not plan to go to college. After graduation, she intended to live at home and try to find a job.

Michelle DePree was just the opposite of her sister. She was somewhat heavier and wore glasses. A bubbly and talkative girl, she laughed a lot and seemed to enjoy life. She did most of the answering during the interview. Michelle, a sophomore in high school, was a good student. In her words, "I am a very confident person. No one pushes me around, and my grades are very good." Like Wendy, Michelle was more active in church activities than in school events. School was much easier for Michelle than it was for Wendy, and she planned to attend college and become a nurse.

The DePree children were primarily of Dutch descent. Their maternal grandfather came from the Netherlands. Religion was very important to this family. The children said religion was important to them because it taught them discipline in that they had to be at certain places at particular times. It helped them with their responsibilities.

The Snider Family

The Sniders had been married for 19 years. Ken Snider was a tall, good-looking, athletic man who turned 40 the day of the interview. According to his children, Ken had a quick temper, but over the years, he had been mellowing somewhat. Ken had lived in the same community all his life, and their house was just the second one in which he had lived. Ken had a high school diploma and worked

as a production worker in a local company. He had been with the company for 21 years and was quite satisfied with his job. Ken was active in sports and had been playing softball during the summer. A devoted husband and father, Ken took time off from work to attend his children's sports events. His children described him as "old, works for everything he has gotten, very hard worker, not real patient, stubborn--but as a father he is the best."

Margaret Snider was a petite brunette with a wonderful laugh. She was a registered nurse and had recently gone back to work at a nursing home. Margaret was active in the community, sports boosters, and any other activities in which her children were involved. Margaret had had an adventurous life because her father, a trouble-shooter for a tire company, had been transferred numerous times. Her mother had died when Margaret was 11, and her father remarried; there were nine children in the combined family. Margaret was the second oldest child and had to take a leadership role in the family. Because there were so many younger children, Margaret became a mother figure to them. She said,

> Because I was one of the oldest, I took a leadership role, especially when my mom died. My sister was a year and a half older than me, and she was 13 when my mom died. She was very carefree and could not handle it, so I sort of became the mom for a while. I had an eight-month-old brother, and so I have been the motherly type for a long time.

When the interview took place, Brad Snider was on a trip to Toronto, Canada, with his eighth-grade class. Thus, he did not participate in the interview.

Sarah Snider was a high school senior. She was a tall, attractive, and athletic young woman. Also, Sarah was a good student who planned to go to college and become a legal secretary. Sarah described herself as being "a very self-confident person with values and morals." She was active in school functions, especially sports, and was well liked and respected at school. She had made the honor roll and had competed on academic teams. Sarah was independent and a free-thinker. She was not influenced by others and generally was a leader, rather than a follower. She was the oldest of the Sniders' three children. Because she was a good student and was trustworthy, she had special privileges, such as going into town on errands and leaving the parking lot during school hours.

Tim Snider was a high school sophomore. He was a good-looking young man who was still growing and filling out. Tim was a good student and had a higher grade point average than his sister did. He described himself as being "self-confident and one with values and morals." He was involved in athletics and had been on the honor roll since elementary school. He had competed on academic teams and was respected at school. Like his sister, Tim was accorded special privileges at school.

The Snider children were of German, Irish, Polish, and Scottish descent. They were practicing Catholics who attended church regularly. Religion was very important to the Snider family. Margaret said, "It shows you your values, morals. It has a lot to

do with our discipline." Sarah also said, "Religion is important to us, not as a student but as a person."

The Madison Family

The Madisons had been married for 28 years. Marshall was a tall, good-looking, graying man in his fifties; he had a very athletic build. He was the oldest of three children. His parents had owned their own business, where they had put in long hours. Marshall was a good athlete in high school and was offered three scholarships to play football in college. However, his parents did not encourage him to go to college, so when he graduated from high school he enlisted in the navy. After serving in the navy, Marshall got into an apprenticeship program in tool and die making. He had worked as a tool and die maker for 28 years.

Joyce Madison was an attractive woman in her fifties; she was very concerned with appearances and conduct. As she described it, "I was brought up in the 1950s, with a mother and father. Father worked and mother stayed home." She was the youngest of two girls; her older sister left home when she was 18. Joyce's father was a very influential member of the community, even though he had not finished high school. Joyce had a master's degree in education. She quit her job as a teacher/counselor when the children were born. When asked about whether either of them had stayed home with the children in their early years and, if so, whether they had discussed this issue before having children, Joyce and Marshall differed in their responses. Joyce said,

> This is a point of debate that we have never resolved. Marshall thinks we made a conscientious decision together that I would stay home with the kids. I don't feel that way. [Marshall's] mother worked--they owned a grocery store--18 hours a day waiting on strange people; they were mostly migrants. Marshall resented that intrusion into their lives because they lived behind the store. When we got married it was important to him for someone to be there. But I had spent all this time and energy getting this education and I got pregnant. By the time I was ready to go back to work, there was no more federal money for programs and my choices were subbing or working back into it. Well, it has taken me a long, long time; I feel he forced me to stay home. It has taken me many years to realize if I was out of the house using my education I would be influencing other people's children, and so I had to work that through in my mind that I would rather give my children my values. But in the long run I have given up a career that I worked hard to achieve and I did it myself. I had to work through a lot of anger and frustration. When you have a one and two year old, your life is not fun.

As a follow-up question, Joyce was asked, "If you hadn't stayed home with the children, would they have turned out as well as they did?" She responded, "Not a chance, especially John. You know, sometimes all they needed was five minutes, but John needed me then; it was important." Her responses showed that Joyce thought independently and cared very deeply for her children.

Tony Madison was 22 years old and had just graduated from college with a degree in business. He was very good looking, tall, well built, and clean cut. In high school, Tony had been an all-around athlete and student; he graduated third in his class. Teachers respected him and gave him special privileges. He had been named to the all-state football team and attended college on a football scholarship. Tony was a very determined, self-confident young man. He told the interviewer, "I am very self-confident. I feel very fortunate; I have a great family, a good kid brother, and

a nice girl friend. I am in a good situation. I have a job and am happy where I am. I feel pretty good."

John Madison was 21 years old and, like his brother, was tall, handsome, and athletic. He was a college junior and played on the varsity basketball team. At the time of the interview, John had just returned from Washington, D.C., where he had been working on a project sponsored by the college. Later, he was planning to travel to Colorado to head up a team of editors to edit a professor's book. John's mother claimed he probably would not be the person he was if she had worked instead of staying home when the children were young. John readily agreed:

> Looking back, I would not have taken the same steps without them, without them pushing me, saying 'You must get all A's." It was all based on confidence, on how I would make my own decisions. So they pushed me, but they also let me go my own way. If it wasn't for my parents, I probably would not be at _____ College, with the recognition I am getting. Without them, I don't know where I would be.

When John was quite young, his mother had had his intelligence tested because she knew he was unique; at age five he was beating adults at games--and the adults were trying to win. When he was tested, he "blew the socks off the test." However, although John was a brilliant child, he did not live up to his potential until he got into college. The interviewer asked John, "When you were growing up, were you encouraged and praised and told 'You can do it'? Did your parents build up your self-confidence?" He responded,

> Well, it was a long process with me. My parents took us as far as they could go. They set us up; they built the foundation, and we had to take that last step, but they did everything they

> could to take that last step. They took it as far as possible with their support, praise, and what have you, to get you to the next step. The last step is that my parents were right and I do have abilities that they have told me I had. It took me until college to realize that I had the ability. But my parents always knew it and never let up on me, letting me know I have a lot of ability.

John had done very well in college and had received many awards. He had matured and said, "I am a very confident person."

The Kort Family

The Korts had been married for 27 years. Ken was a big man in terms of both height and weight; he had a mustache and wore glasses. Ken was a teacher and coach in the local school district and had been born and raised in the town where he was now teaching. He had been a teacher for 26 years. Actually, he held down three jobs to support his wife and three children. In Ken's words, "I am working these three jobs so that I can put bread on the table and retire early." One of his jobs was as township recreational director, which involved him in many nighttime activities. Ken was highly respected in the community and the school system.

Sue Kort was an attractive blonde in her late forties. She was a college graduate with a major in music, but she had not worked outside the home because of the children. She was a homemaker and would have it no other way. At one time, Sue had multiple sclerosis and was confined to a wheelchair. However, she now walks as a result of what she believes was a miracle. For many years, Ken and Sue had been going to religious retreats to increase their faith and witness miracles. At one of these retreats, Sue miraculously rose

from her wheelchair and walked. She had attended the retreat without Ken and did not tell him immediately about the healing that had occurred. The next day in church, she got up out of the pew and walked down the aisle. Ken was amazed and wept with joy. Since then, God had been the center of their lives.

Mary Kort was a sophomore in high school. She had her mother's good looks and shared her father's love of sports. Mary was a good student and was involved in many school activities. She was the youngest of the Korts' three children and the only one still living at home. Her sister was 23, and her brother was 26. Mary described herself as "a very self-confident person. . . . I could do almost anything I wanted to."

Mary was of Dutch and Irish descent. The family was of the Christian faith and had grown closer to their religion as a result of Sue's miraculous healing. She said,

> Religion is extremely important to our family. If the children do what the Lord calls them to do and be there, they will be happy and successful in life. It is the bottom line in our family.

The Rosema Family

The Rosemas had been married for 19 years. Tony Rosema was a short, well-built, athletic, clean-cut man who was proud of his appearance. He had been employed in the building industry all of his adult life and had recently taken a new job as a construction superintendent. Having this new job had created a problem because Tony had to be away for extended periods of time, and he liked to be involved in the children's activities. During the winter, when Tony

was working in Chicago, he drove home on Tuesdays and Fridays so he could be at his sons' basketball games. When asked whether they followed all of their children's activities, Carolyn said,

> Yes, we love it and maybe more than they would like. Dad would come in from Chicago to watch his sons play on Tuesday and after the game go into the locker room and talk to them and leave right from there to go back to Chicago that same night.

Carolyn Rosema was a small, dark, attractive woman with the Italian spirit. Carolyn had grown up on a farm in a small town; she graduated from high school but did not attend college. Her parents divorced after 20 years of marriage, when Carolyn was 18 years old. She commented, "I don't know if I would have handled the divorce if I was younger, but being 18 and on my own, it helped." Carolyn had worked most of her adult life but took some time off to raise her children. She was currently a business manager for a clinic, where she had worked for six years.

Rick Rosema was a high school sophomore. He was short and slight, had short hair, and was nice looking. Rick was a good student and had been on the honor roll and academic teams; he also was a member of the student council and was a class officer. Rick described himself as follows: "I'm self-confident, and I can do whatever I want, but I also know that it is going to take hard work and college to do what I want to do." According to his parents,

> Rick is about as good a child as you possibly could wish for. He rarely is disrespectful, a very good kid. He is very hard working at school, hard working around here when we ask him to do something. He is honest, extremely honest. I don't know if we have ever caught him in a small lie or cheating or stealing or anything. He is a good kid.

Rick was outgoing and friendly and had many friends. He was well liked by his fellow students and teachers and was trusted by both his parents and his teachers.

Steve Rosema was an eighth grader. He was taller and had a more substantial build than his brother. Steve was very quiet and reserved. He had struggled with school and improved tremendously the past year. His parents described him in these words:

> He is our most sensitive child and takes the least amount of discipline. He listens very well when you are telling him something or correcting him; he takes it to heart, and he seems to learn from it. Steve has matured a lot in the last year, and he is really a lot of fun for us right now, and he is doing well in school. We are on him rarely. His attitude toward his work has changed. He used to give up, but now he seems to attack it. Steve is a perfect example of sports helping a kid in school.

Steve described himself as being self-confident but needing to improve.

Rick and Steve were of French, Irish, and Italian descent. They were practicing Catholics and valued their religion; they said it gave them their inner strength.

The Hart Family

The Harts married right after graduating from high school; they had been married for 18 years. Randy Hart was a balding man of average build; he was well dressed and took pride in his appearance. Since graduating from high school, he had worked for an office furniture company; he had worked his way up to being the lead person at the plant, with the responsibility of dispatching trucks to various locations. He was the middle of four children, and he

admitted to feeling like the stereotypical middle child. Randy had been born and raised in the community where he still was living. He was active in the community and school and volunteered his time to work at school athletic events.

Pat Hart was a tall, attractive woman in her late thirties. Like her husband, she had been raised in the community where they were living. She got a job shortly after graduating from high school, but while the children were small, Pat stayed home and took care of them. Pat currently was working part time as an assistant secretary at the local church.

Doug Hart was a freshman in high school; he was tall, clean cut, and good looking. He arrived home from working on a muck farm just as the interview was beginning, and he was tired and hungry. He ate during the interview. Doug was an average student who probably could get better grades if he tried harder. He was quiet during the interview, and it was hard to elicit more than one-word responses from him. He was involved in athletics at school and was well liked by his teachers and classmates. Doug was beginning to assert his independence, but his parents still were keeping track of what he was doing. He will be driving next year, and he saw that as an opportunity for greater independence. His parents described Doug as "an easy-going kid who is laid back and mellow. He sometimes lacks motivation, but he is very kind to others. He is like any other kid who is 16--he is always testing."

Cheryl Hart was a seventh grader. She was a tall brunette and wore glasses. She believed that, once she gets contact lenses, she

will be more attractive than she is now. Cheryl was more outgoing than her brother and was involved in numerous school activities. Her parents described her as "a person who likes to be where the action is. She likes to have fun and be involved in everything. She really has a heart and would do anything for you." Cheryl enjoyed baby-sitting and was very good with children; in fact, she may have aspirations to become a teacher. She was a better student than Doug because she was motivated and diligent about her school work. She had been on the honor roll since elementary school and was a member of the student council. She had a positive attitude and was confident about her abilities.

Doug and Cheryl were of Dutch descent and were members of the Dutch Reformed faith. The family attended church regularly and were actively involved in church activities. Randy had been a deacon and elder, and Pat worked for the minister. In their words, "Religion is another one of the building blocks in a good relationship. It establishes morals and values. It is a commitment, something to believe in."

Family Members' School Experiences

The family is viewed as a collective, with its own perspective. Thus, to understand why the selected students were successful from a family perspective, the researcher needed to study the educational experiences of family members that might have influenced that perspective. The participants were questioned about three generations of their family: the successful students themselves,

their parents, and their grandparents. The respondents were asked about their own school experiences; in addition, the students' parents were questioned about the school experiences of their parents. A summary of the educational backgrounds of the successful students' parents and grandparents is shown in Table 2.

Grandparents' School Experiences

The successful students and their parents were often unclear about the details of the grandparents' school experience. However, all 11 families supplied information on the highest level of education the grandparents had attained.

With regard to the successful students' grandfathers, 9 of the 22 had dropped out of high school--a dropout rate of 40.9% and a completion rate of 59.1%. Mrs. Coates's father attended college for one or two years but became involved in his father's business and left college before graduating. Mrs. Kort's father also started college but did not graduate. The main reason the grandfathers did not continue their education was that they had to work. In 4 of the 11 families, grandfathers went to work on the family farm. Mrs. Gates's father had to quit school during the Depression to help support his family. Two grandfathers quit high school and joined the family business; they never saw a need to finish high school.

Eight of the 22 grandmothers dropped out of school--a dropout rate of 36.4% and a completion rate of 63.6%. Two grandmothers started college but did not graduate. One of them was Mrs. Madison's mother, who had just one semester of college. The primary

Table 2.--Educational backgrounds of successful students' parents and grandparents.

Family	Paternal Grand-father	Maternal Grand-father	Paternal Grand-mother	Maternal Grand-mother	Father	Mother
Coates	X	H	O	H	H	I
Gates	X	X	X	X	H	O
Hill	X	X	O	X	P	G
Start	O	O	O	X	G	O
Brown	O	O	O	O	O	P
DePree	O	O	X	O	O	H*
Snider	X	O	X	O	O	H+
Madison	X	X	H	O	O	P
Kort	X	H	X	O	P	G
Rosema	O	O	O	X	O	O
Hart	O	O	O	O	O	O

Key: X = Dropped out of high school before graduating
O = Graduated from high school
H = Started college but did not finish
G = Graduated from college
I = Graduated from junior college
P = Completed some postgraduate work
* = Completed one year nursing of LPN
+ = Completed two-year nursing program

reason these grandmothers tended to stay in school was that their families were financially stable and the young women did not need to get a job. The main reasons grandmothers dropped out of school were to help out at home or get married.

Because none of the grandparents themselves were interviewed, information regarding their educational experiences was limited. However, some parent respondents recalled and commented on their parents' views about education in general.

Corrine Gates remembered that her father became a skilled tradesman and continued his education independently through his trade. She said, "My parents were education oriented and made sure you were at school; education was very important in the family." Nancy Coates said, "My mom was one who stressed education. She was real involved in school and knew how important education was and how important higher education was, too." Her husband, Dave, said, "Mom was the primary educator . . . but she did not stress college or continuing your education."

The large number of parents who graduated from high school and went on to college attests to the fact that the grandparents believed in the importance of education. When Jack Hill was in high school, his parents told him, "We are paying for this education, and you better get your head in that book and get better grades, and a *C* was not acceptable." When Jack decided to attend college, his parents said, "If you want to go on to college that's fine, but we can't help you financially; we can help in other ways." In all 11

families, education was stressed; these parents were told to study and do their best in school.

Whereas the grandparents left school to begin work, they did not want the same kind of life for their children. They wanted to create a better financial situation for their children than they had experienced. Thus, their children benefited from a good economic condition and an atmosphere of pride and self-esteem. In only one family did there seem to be disharmony, and this parent had gained enough self-confidence to complete a master's degree.

Parents' School Experiences

Interviews with the parents of successful students allowed the researcher to compile data on their highest educational level and their school recollections. All 22 parents were present for the interviews.

All 11 fathers were high school graduates; five of them started college. Three graduated from college, and two pursued graduate work. The fathers who did not attend college said they wished they had done so. Dave Coates said, "I joined the service after one year of college. What I planned on doing was to join the service and when I got out to use the money the government gave for college and continue my education, but it never worked out." Tom Brown said, "I never did go on past high school. I sure wished I would have. I don't know how much it would have benefited me because I have worked my way up where I am at now." Finally, Ken Snider commented, "[In the] middle of my senior year, I wanted to go to junior college, to

the police program. But the college dropped it, so I never went on any further. There were a lot of times I wished I went on to school. That is why my kids are going on to school."

All 11 mothers were high school graduates; seven of them had some sort of college experience. Four of the mothers graduated from college, and two continued with graduate work. Corrine Gates had taken college courses in taxation for 11 years without obtaining a degree. Myra Start had wanted to go to a college of design, but her parents were willing to pay only for Bible college, so she got a job instead. Carolyn Rosema said,

> I never thought I would need an education further than high school because Tony and I were going to be married and live in a small town. Tony's father had a construction company, and Tony would move into that, so I didn't need an education. It wouldn't have helped me in that small town, and I didn't think of furthering my education. Now I regret it.

Pat Hart commented,

> I got a job shortly after high school. It was a good job and I enjoyed it, and so I had no inkling to go on. I got married a year and a half later. Once I got out of school, I was looking for a job, but when we got out of school the kids didn't always go to college quite as much as now. You almost have to go to college or you are just about sunk.

As the parents were asked to recall their high school and college experiences, their personal stories emerged. In the following paragraphs, the school experiences of the parents interviewed for this study are discussed, based on the recollections they shared during the interviews. The interactions between the parents, when they themselves were students, and the school are emphasized. An analysis of the findings regarding parents' school

experience follows the discussion of the individual parents' experiences.

The Coateses. Dave and Nancy Coates both graduated from high school, and Nancy received an associate degree from a junior college. Dave's parents divorced when he was young, and Dave had little contact with his father after that. Dave's only male role model was an uncle to whom he was close. Dave attended a Catholic school, which was very strict, and he did not enjoy the school experience. Dave's mother was his primary educator and made him do his homework, but she did not stress the importance of education.

Nancy's experience with school was just the opposite of Dave's. Her mother was involved in school activities and stressed the importance of education. Nancy said, "My school experience was really good; I had a good time. We did a lot of neat stuff, and I enjoyed school."

When asked whether they were bringing up their children as they had been raised, Dave said, "I am a lot more supportive of what they want to do [than my folks were]; I try to help them succeed in whatever it might be. And we do stress higher education." Nancy was very positive about the way her parents had raised her. She said she would raise her children as she had been brought up. "My parents stressed education and were very supportive of me," she said.

The Gateses. Marty and Corrine Gates both graduated from high school. Marty attended a Christian school and graduated from the high school. He said, "I attended a Christian school because . . .

my parents were members of the Christian Reformed Church. They wanted a Christian education [for me]; they felt it was better than the public education." Marty was unhappy that he did not attend the public high school because all of his friends went there. However, he accepted his parents' decision and, in general, thought his school experience was good.

Corrine's parents were very hard-working, education-oriented people. Corrine explained why her parents wanted their children to have an education:

> My father, growing up in the Depression, came from a family of five, and so did my mother. My mom and dad worked from the ground up, and they basically had no money to start with. Father went to the tenth grade, and my mother went to the eighth grade, and that was during the Depression. My father was taken out of school when he was ten because he had to go to work because his family had no money. Education was important to them, and they stressed it to me and my sisters and brothers.

Corrine had no complaints about her schooling. Her parents never pushed her, and they never questioned her about her grades. Overall, her school experience was good.

The Hills. Jack and Mary Hill were both college graduates. Jack earned a Master of Theology and a Doctor of Ministry degree. Mary had taken some graduate courses, as well.

Jack was sent to a Christian school because his parents believed in the value of a Christian education. Once he entered the Christian school, Jack knew he had to take his academics seriously. Jack's father was a self-employed rock-lather and dry-waller, and he recognized the value of education. Jack recalled:

> From what I remember from the days of school, it's not the material they taught me but what the teachers were like, their personalities, and they were the greatest models that I had for life. I can point to several teachers along the way, the way they interacted with me and their concern for me. Those were the lasting imprints that you remember.

Mary enjoyed school and did well academically. She attended a one-room schoolhouse until fifth grade and remembered having some very good teachers. She remembered that, in this one-room school,

> I had a couple of very good teachers and one that was very bad in my opinion. He scared me to death and threw temper tantrums, threw erasers and everything and scared me. There were many positive aspects of that school in that I was helped by older kids and I helped the younger kids when my turn came.

Mary loved high school and was involved in many extracurricular activities. She was a member of the National Honor Society and was one of the top ten students in her graduating class. The good experience she had in school carried over to her children.

The Starts. Larry and Myra Start both graduated from high school; Larry was a college graduate, as well. He was the second of seven children and was the leader of his family. His mother pushed hard for him to pursue a college education. Larry said, "I was not real sure I wanted a college education, but Mom convinced me that was the way to go." Larry enjoyed school and did not get into any trouble. He saw his father working two jobs to support the family and realized that having a good education could help economically.

Myra did not elaborate on her school experience; she just said she enjoyed school. She did not attend college because of lack of encouragement and support from her parents.

The Browns. Tom and Pat Brown were both high school graduates. In addition, Pat had earned a college degree as well as some graduate credits. Tom's and Pat's experiences with school were very different. According to Tom,

> My parents were basically for education per se but never got on us to do our homework and were not persistent that our grades stay at a higher level. Then, I thought it was great, but now I wish they would have got on me. But they were for education.

When asked whether he had a good experience at school, Tom said,

> I didn't mind going to school. I wish I would have applied myself much more than I did because I probably would have something different. But I didn't have that push to apply myself. I push my kids because of what I learned in my childhood.

Pat's parents were definitely in favor of education. Both her parents were high school graduates, and her father had started his own business. Pat's parents thought that if their children received a good education, things would not be as difficult for them financially. Pat was the first person from either side of her family to go to college. She said, "At that time, it was not the thing to do if you were a woman. They supported me, but they were a bit hesitant because they took flack from a lot of people, but they still followed through." Pat enjoyed school, but as she put it,

> I was always pushed, I was in the top ten; I was eighth in a class of 210. I worked very hard and took all the accelerated classes. I was probably positive, but I had to work hard all the way through.

The DePrees. Chuck and Janet DePree were both high school graduates. In addition, Janet had one year of nursing school. Chuck's parents both graduated from high school, and his mother went on to secretarial school. His parents valued education and sent all

their children to Christian grade school. Chuck then attended a public high school. Regarding his experience with school, Chuck said it was hard for him and that he struggled academically.

Janet's family also valued education; in fact, her father insisted that each child have at least one year of schooling beyond high school. Janet did not enjoy school and said, "Neither one of us [Chuck and I] enjoyed school. School was hard. We both are like Wendy; we struggled. We were on the dairy farm and had chores to do." Because of the chores she had to do before and after school, Janet did not have much free time to enjoy school or extracurricular activities.

The Sniders. Ken and Margaret were both high school graduates; in addition, Margaret earned a two-year nursing degree. Education was important to Ken's family. His father had dropped out of school because he had to work on the family farm, and his mother had dropped out because most women in her community just did not go on to high school in those days. Ken attended a Catholic school through eighth grade and earned straight A's. In high school, though, grades were not as important to him, perhaps because he had transferred to a public high school. Also, he had to work on the family farm after school. He said,

> My responsibilities--I was on the farm, so at night because my dad worked second shift, the chores were mine and/or my brother's. When my older brother left, the chores were all mine. Every Saturday, I was with my dad from morning to night doing something; there was not a whole lot of free time.

Ken enjoyed school but wished he could have taken part in more activities. His parents said he could participate in one sport, so he chose baseball. However, during his senior year he went out for football and baseball and enjoyed them both. He regretted not having been allowed to play both sports throughout high school.

Both of Margaret's parents were high school graduates; in addition, her mother went to secretarial school for six months. Margaret's father was a trouble-shooter for Firestone Tire Company and was frequently transferred. Thus, Margaret attended seven different schools in 13 years; she said she enjoyed them all. She stated, "Both my parents stressed education; in fact, they demanded good grades from us." Margaret attended the same high school for three years and graduated second in her class. Following graduation, she attended nursing school. Margaret completed the three-year program in two years and was third in her graduating class.

The Madisons. Marshall and Joyce Madison both graduated from high school. Marshall went on to apprentice school, where he learned tool and die making. Joyce pursued a college education, earning a master's degree in guidance and counseling.

Marshall's parents owned a grocery store and devoted so much time to the business that they were not involved in their children's education. Marshall played sports and was offered football scholarships, but his parents did not express any interest in this opportunity, so Marshall enlisted in the navy. Participating in sports was probably what kept Marshall in school; his brother, who

did not participate in athletics, dropped out before graduating from high school.

Joyce liked school but thought she had no identity of her own there. Because her father was president and treasurer of the school board, he was the important person at school. Joyce was known as Pete's daughter and had to live with that identity throughout high school. She made the best of it and was determined to be more than her father's daughter. According to Joyce, her mother was the typical fifties wife and mother. She stayed home, while her husband worked. Joyce's mother advised her, "Don't be only a housewife." That advice stuck in Joyce's mind, and she went on to complete college and earn a master's degree. To Joyce, education was one means by which she could prove her worth to her father.

The Korts. Ken and Sue Kort were both college graduates. Ken described his parents' educational background and his own educational experience in this way:

> Neither one of my parents graduated from high school. My dad [finished] eighth grade; I don't know if my mother went even that far. They were very interested in education; they were very supportive of schools. I am the only person in my family that is a college graduate. My parents were very, very proud of me because I got a college education. I paid most of my own way, although my dad did help; but I earned my money by working for him most of the time. I feel I had support that way. I was a good student, A-B student, and very involved in school and enjoyed school a lot.

Ken added that, if it had not been for sports, he would not have enjoyed school as much as he did, and perhaps his grades would not have been as high as they were.

Although Sue's parents valued education, she was just an average student. She liked to have fun and was more concerned with the social aspect of school than with academics. Sue especially enjoyed the extracurricular activities. Because Sue's parents pushed education, she went to college and became a teacher. But she later decided that staying at home and being a mother to her children was more important than teaching other people's youngsters.

The Rosemas. Tony and Carolyn Rosema both graduated from high school. Tony described his experience with school in these words:

> My father owned a company, and everything was geared toward me going into that field. I thought about college early in high school, but I didn't do well early in high school. I went through eight years of Catholic school, and doing well in school was very important to my family and probably to me too. During my freshman year, I didn't do real well, but it picked up my junior and senior years. I only considered college my sophomore year because I thought I could play football. I didn't grow a lot, and it became apparent to me that football was not going to be a future. I put college out of my mind. I went into my junior year and went into a home-building class for half the day and the other half in the office. I was enrolled before the school year ended in carpentry apprenticeship class. It was a union trade, so everything was geared for me to go that route. As I look back in my field, it was easy for me not to look at college. My parents never pushed me, and my father probably never discussed my going to college. School was very positive.

When Carolyn was asked whether she had a good experience in school, she said it was "real good, very positive; I loved school. I was in the National Honor Society and was homecoming queen. [But] my parents never pushed me to go on, and the school did not have good counselors to guide me." Thus, she saw no need to pursue her education after high school.

The Harts. Randy and Pat Hart were both high school graduates. Randy had a good experience at school. He was an average student, and his parents were very supportive of him all the way through school. Randy said, "They made it well known [that] if I wanted to go to college they would do their best to send me. I had no desire. I was ready to go into the work force." Randy said that he enjoyed school except for one class; he and the teacher did not like one another.

Pat's school experience also was a good one. She said, "I loved school because of the friends and what we could get into." She was an average student, preferring the social aspects of school to academics. Although Pat's parents believed in the value of education, they did not push her to make the honor roll or to improve her grades.

Analysis of the Findings

In this section, data regarding the educational experiences of the successful students' families were presented. The grandparents' and parents' educational backgrounds also were discussed.

The grandparents who dropped out of school had compelling reasons for doing so, primarily the need to help their families financially. They tried to improve their lives by working hard and being involved in their community and/or the local school system. For the most part, the grandparents tried to instill in their children the value of a good education and were willing to help provide a college education for them. Myra Start's parents

stipulated that she go to a particular Bible college. Tom Brown's parents were too poor to send him to college but would have supported him spiritually if he decided to go. All except one of the parents' siblings graduated from high school, and some went on to college.

Education was valued as a means of obtaining a good job, but the social importance of education also was cited. The respondents' school efforts were based in large part on compliance with school expectations. Achieving A's and B's was important, and some parents considered it unacceptable to get C's and D's. The parents were proud of their academic and extracurricular achievements. School achievement helped build their confidence and determination.

The school behaviors of the interviewees were characterized by conformity to school rules and participation in extracurricular activities. Rewards were gained from academic achievement and from participation in school-sponsored activities.

School experiences were pleasant for all parents except the DePrees. These parents had been accepted by their peers and teachers, and they got along with the groups comprising the school.

Parental support was evident in all but one family. These students knew that if they got into trouble at school they would be in worse trouble at home. The family culture provided much preparation for school because each family supported and was involved in school and its activities. These students received numerous rewards, such as being members of the National Honor

Society, homecoming queen, an all-state football player, and being in the top ten academically.

In the interviews, the parents did not mention having many bad or inept teachers. Mary Hill said one teacher had scared her, but she also mentioned some teachers whom she appreciated. Randy Hart said there was one class he did not like, but he still enjoyed school. Jack Hill said he greatly admired his teachers; they were the best role models he had in his life. Overall, teachers, administrators, and other school personnel were held in high esteem.

The data suggested that these families accepted the school's educational values and the beliefs on which schools are organized. The culture and interactions of the homes in which they had been reared, and to which they had adapted, meshed with the culture of the school. The family values, traditions, and education resembled the education and training they received at school.

In the next section, the experiences of the successful students within their families are examined. The focus is on the interactions within the family, viewing the family as the primary reference group of the successful student.

The Successful Students' Family Experiences

In this section, the successful students' family experiences are reported. The focus is on the successful student as a member of the family collective. Barnhart and Barnhart (1983) defined *experience* as "what happens to a person; what is seen, done, felt, or lived through" (p. 748).

In the following paragraphs, the experiences that occurred during the students' formative years are discussed. The students' early training and value orientation are considered. Other topics that are examined include socialization to norms, early family dynamics, and the students' experiences during their formative elementary school years. The researcher's intention was to explore the quality of the selected students' family experiences in relation to the quality of their school experiences.

The Coates Family

Sally and Jim Coates's childhood years were characterized by assistance with educational tasks, family cohesiveness, a strong sense of responsibility, and supportive family rituals. As a result, the children became self-reliant and self-confident. They remembered doing chores and performing household duties as a family and having fun doing them.

Nancy Coates was the coordinator in this household. Both Nancy and her husband had decided that she would stay home with the children during their formative years. He explained:

> We talked it over before we had kids--that if we could afford it, we were pretty sure we could, that we wanted Nancy to stay home. The reason was we felt that having a parent home rather than having your kids be watched by someone outside the family and getting their influence and being with them a lot of the time, we would rather them be with us and learn our values and have us teach them to grow up and have our guidance.

In her mothering role, Nancy Coates had focused her attention on engendering self-respect in the children and seeking effective

schooling for them. Sally and Jim both were enrolled in preschool to give them a head start on elementary school.

The children's early years were spent accompanying their parents on many trips and playing games as a family. Nancy said,

> We helped them count, we traveled with them around the country and around the local area, we went camping, and we took them out to dinner. By taking them out to dinner, it helped them socially, getting them to act properly at a restaurant and [learning] how to act around other people.

Daily and weekly chores and responsibilities were part of the daily routine at the Coates household. Jim said, "If you grew up in a household where you didn't do anything, your house that you live in would be really bad." Sally added, "You learn responsibility [by doing chores]." Dave noted,

> It helps to build character when they know they have a responsibility, self-esteem, and when they finish [a task], praise it and tell them they did a great job. They are more apt to continue if you praise them; if you say nothing, then they say to themselves, "Why try?" They don't care.

When the children were asked what their family meant to them, they said,

> Our parents are very important to us. They are the ones who encourage us to do things. They have taught us values and morals and a positive attitude. If we didn't have anyone to encourage us as they do, we probably wouldn't be where we are today. Our relationship with our parents is a very positive one.

The parents were asked, "In your opinion, what is the key or keys to being a good parent?" Nancy and Dave cited several factors:

> The keys to being a good parent are: (a) Being a friend to your children. Let them know you are human and make mistakes. (b) Be a loving, caring parent. You can always love your children by letting them know you care and are ready to listen to them. (c) Very patient. (d) Understanding. Try to

understand their point of view. (e) Be honest with them. (f) Supportive. (g) Firm in your discipline.

The Gates Family

Tom and Bill Gates's early years were filled with love, educational opportunities, family togetherness, a supportive family, and a sense of responsibility. During their childhood, the boys were given a solid foundation for school and life. They did many things with their family--from chores to travel.

Corrine Gates had most of the responsibility for raising the boys. She explained it this way:

> I didn't want to split; I felt that their loyalty had to be to us and their values had to be our values, and you cannot split that. You have someone come in for six to eight hours a day, telling them their values and their attitudes and their way of coping with problems, and then the kids are not picking up on what you want them to learn. It is important that they learned what we wanted them to learn. We always planned it that I would stay home.

Corrine and Marty were very protective parents. They selected the teachers they wanted for the boys and became very involved in school to make sure their boys were being treated properly. Marty also coached the school's junior varsity soccer team.

From the time their boys were very young, Corrine and Marty were actively involved in their education. Marty asserted,

> Corrine made sure they had certain teachers; she was there at school with the principal, where they were expecting her every year. We did things extra that we thought was important to their education. We took them to plays, musicals, and science-type museums. Travel to us was a real education. We would bring people in that we thought were suitable for them to play with. Because we lived out in the country, we had to transport their friends in. I had to know the families before the children came.

When questioned about the travel and other educational experiences their parents provided for them, the boys commented,

> Oh, yeah. It made you feel good, especially when you went to school. You can talk about things you have seen, or when a teacher would ask a question, you were there and knew about it. It makes you feel better about yourself and more intelligent.

Contributing to the cohesiveness of the family were shared chores and responsibilities. When asked whether the children had chores or responsibilities, Corrine and Marty answered,

> Not really. We all work as a family; whatever needs to be done, it gets done. There is not one set thing. We are a different working family. We all work together; it is not just one person's job. If it needs doing, someone does it. When they were younger, they were better than now. We accomplish the fact that the kids help us because we do it for each other. If they didn't help, we said, "Get up and help us." If we go through a door and one of them didn't open it for Mom, a question would be asked, "Why didn't you hold the door open?" The kids that do not do things at home that I have seen are off doing their own thing and are separate from their family. I have always told my kids, "You are part of this family." When kids tell me that they have to be paid to baby sit their younger brother or sister, I think that is obscene. I think that you do it as a family member. The kids realize we do a lot for them, not just monetarily. If they want to go someplace, we will try to help them get tickets or whatever.

The boys said they felt like they were an integral part of the family because of all the things the family did together. When asked whether he would raise his own children as he had been raised, Tom said,

> In some ways, and in some ways not. I am more liberal and open minded than my parents are. But there are morals and respect and the ways they helped me build my self-confidence that I would do exactly the same way.

Corrine said the key to being a successful parent is:

> Unconditional love. Even though you are sometimes disappointed, you are angry, you are frustrated, that child still has to have the confidence that he knows you love him. What

> you are doing for him is not a punishment, but you are trying to do what is best for them. They know how angry I get with them, but that I will love them more than anyone else in this world.

Marty added: "Do things together; spend time with your kids. I am always available for the kids. Set up sensible guidelines. Follow their education and their extracurricular activities, and be a good role model."

The Hill Family

Susan Hill had been raised in a family that was very caring; religion was a central part of their lives. Susan was privileged to have a mother who was a teacher and a father whose job allowed him the flexibility to be with her when needed. Through her relationship with her parents, Susan had been given a sense of caring, a Christian base, support, trust, and assistance with academic problems.

Susan went to preschool; Mary said the experience had been good for her:

> Susan was shy. When she was three years old, Kimberly was born, and we thought maybe it would be good for her to go to a little preschool. So at four, she went to preschool. Susan has an August birthday, and at five we had a problem of whether to send her to preschool again or kindergarten. The school system said she was ready to go to kindergarten. Academically, she was ready, but she was still very shy. So we talked to the elementary principal and said we would like to have her go into D-K [developmental kindergarten]. There were no openings. We decided not to send her to kindergarten. We would keep her at home and home-school her. To get her involved with kids, we would sign her up in group piano lessons and do our own things with her. A week before school started, the principal called and said there was an opening in D-K. She ended up going to D-K. She had a great D-K teacher, which was worthwhile for her. In second, third, and fourth grades, she went to a small four-room school, which was really good for her because it was

> small and she knew everyone. She felt confident. Making the transfer from fourth to fifth was very hard for her. During the middle of her fifth-grade year, she started to blossom and came out of her shell.

This family was a close-knit one. They had a cabin in the northern part of the state, where they vacationed in the summer. Susan said, "These are times I will remember forever." She helped her younger sister study and had taught her the effective study habits she herself had learned from her parents and teachers. When asked what family meant to her, Susan replied, "I feel secure. I look forward to coming home to a nice environment. . . . I hate going away."

To the Hills, family was a home, a safe place where you could say what was on your mind and always be accepted. The key to this family's success is summed up in Jack's statement: "I think spending time with the kids. I will drop what I am doing to play or help my children." Asked why he thought his children behaved whereas some others do not, Jack said, "[Those who misbehave] do not get enough attention at home; they act out and try to get attention other ways. It is not the house but the home; home is people, and people getting along with each other." This is the type of home the Hills have--it is people getting along with people.

The Start Family

Jane and Sarah Start had been given encouragement in terms of their education, a sense of responsibility, and a supportive family. In the last few years, they had been receiving more attention from their father. Larry admitted that he had not spent enough time with

the children when they were younger, and he was striving to be a better role model for them.

Myra had been given primary responsibility for raising the children because Larry worked long hours to support the family financially. Myra felt fortunate that they could afford to have her stay at home with the children. Larry put it this way:

> That's the way it was done; there was nothing special about it. Mom loved the kids, and it came naturally. We believed firmly that it was the best choice we made. There are a lot of people who say they really need an extra income, but they don't. They want that extra income because they want every toy that comes along, as opposed to staying home with the kids.

The Starts sent their children to preschool to expose them to other children their own age. "We lived in the country with no neighbors, and the kids never played with other children, and I felt that was really important."

Jane and Sarah had done well in school because of the work ethic they had learned at home. Jane said,

> When we were little, my dad was a real workaholic and we always had chores. Every Saturday was a work day, and I think that is where the experiences that we have learned from our family has helped in our life and education. We have an appreciation of work and where it will put us.

The girls were asked whether their parents were good role models and whether they were proud of their parents. They answered both questions affirmatively. Jane said,

> The reason we feel that way is because they don't sit home all day. They get stuff done. I admire their work habits; they both work hard and have done good jobs. I work at Little Caesar's Pizza; my manager is so lazy, and she does awful work, and I just can't stand it. You see that my parents have a good work ethic.

Jane defined family as "a purpose, security; these guys will always be here, and I'll be glad to see them. I really value talking with my parents." Sarah noted, however, "I will love it when I am on my own and get away." Tom Gates had an answer for Sarah, though, when he said:

> This is a home. You realize how much of a home it is once you go away. When you are here all the time, you want to get on your own. I enjoy being away, and a long ways away at school, but it is a great feeling once you come home.

The key to being a good parent, Myra thought, was "time, giving the kids my time. It is like the kids are my priority. They come first." Larry summed up the key to being a good parent as "priority, interest, and time."

The Brown Family

While they were growing up, Brenda and Bob Brown had been exposed to a supportive and cohesive family, resources to assist in their education, discipline, and a sense of responsibility. The children had an added advantage because their mother was a teacher.

Before they had children, the Browns made a decision that they believed had helped the children in their education and social life. Tom put it this way:

> Before the kids were born, we planned that Pat would stay home with the kids. Together we made that commitment once our kids were born. We were there for our kids. . . . When Pat was working, to help defray the cost, we set ourselves up so we wouldn't have to worry about the financial part of it.

Brenda and Bob had a head start educationally because they had attended preschool. Their parents sent them to preschool, not for academics but the social aspects. Pat said, speaking of Bob,

"Because there were no kids his age [in the neighborhood], we wanted him to play with other kids. We wanted the social aspect of it. He didn't need any of the other because I did it. I was home with him if he needed any help with school work." Tom added, "We thought it would make him a better kid."

Tom and Pat had tried to expose their children to experiences that would enhance their education. When asked whether the family did things together, they answered that they did almost everything together. Tom added:

> The vacations we have taken have helped our kids with their education. It helps them understand that we have things here that a lot of other people don't. They appreciate what we have, appreciate our state, how we live, and they see how other kids act.

The Brown children agreed with that statement. Brenda said, "Travel helps us in our education because we now know the places the teachers are talking about."

When asked what she thought was the key to being a good parent, Pat replied,

> Being willing to take the time that it takes. You have to be very unselfish together because we sacrifice a lot of time and things that we could be doing. Be there for the kids no matter what it is, even though we do not like to go.

Asked why they thought their children were good and why some other youngsters misbehaved and perhaps dropped out of school, Pat said,

> Two reasons. Basically, one of the reasons is that they may not be successful in school and other areas and they are compensating for this by causing problems. The other reason is that they are not cared for or they don't feel that they are cared for; maybe they are, but they may not feel it.

Tom added,

> I don't blame the kids. I blame the parents for not supporting them, not disciplining them when they should have. Most kids are good kids, and if the parents supported them totally, they would be all right.

The DePree Family

Wendy and Michelle DePree were being raised in an atmosphere of love, support, understanding, caring, discipline, and religion. The DePrees spent time together as a family, traveling and playing games together. When the children were young, Janet stayed home with them. Chuck said, "Mom stayed home with the kids. She was always home. That was a decision that was made before we had kids. That was our plan, and it worked out. I had a good-paying job at the time." Janet added,

> I never quit my job; I went on a leave when I had Wendy, and when I had her I never thought about leaving her with somebody. I didn't have to, and I didn't want to. You just didn't work when you had kids. Twenty-two years ago, that was the thing; when you had kids, the wife stayed home and the husband had a good enough job to provide for the family.

Most of the family's leisure time was spent participating in church activities. The family was devoted to their religion and professed it as much as possible. They read the Bible morning and night. Most of the activities in which the girls were involved were church related. Chuck said that "religion is number one" in their lives.

The DePrees' life style was characterized by hard work. All of the family members worked in and around the house. Michelle said, "We have chores and work to do. I have to dry the dishes, clean the

table, clean the bird cage, iron, vacuum, help with the wash." Wendy chimed in, "I set the table, dust the mirrors, vacuum. The role in this family is to help out." When asked what held this family together, they replied, "Love." Michelle added, "Having our parents means a whole lot to us. We would not be where we are now without them."

The Snider Family

Ken and Margaret Snider saw their primary responsibility as educating their children. They had tried to provide an environment conducive to learning, and they purchased educational materials to help foster their children's learning. They had sent their children to preschool and supported them throughout their school years. Margaret had stayed home until Brad was in sixth grade because, as she said, "I wouldn't leave them with a babysitter; it didn't feel right." The Sniders had taught their children certain values. Margaret said,

> Life isn't fair. We are not all dealt the same hand. We try to teach the kids to make the best out of what you have. You have to work for what you get. Another thing we have taught them is honesty. We push that hard. We teach them to be good citizens. We have come down hard on our kids on their citizenship grades more than we have on their [academic] grades.

The Snider children were active in many sports, and their parents attended as many of the children's activities as they could. When asked whether she put a lot of time into being a parent, Margaret answered, "Probably too much." Ken added, "98 percent of the time." Sarah concurred with this assessment and commented to

her parents, "You guys never go anywhere by yourselves; [it's] always with the family." When following their children's activities, Ken and Margaret often had to attend different events. As Margaret said, "There are times that Ken is at Tim's and I am at Brad's, and we meet in the middle. We always try to have someone at one of their games. You have to have someone at the event."

When asked what she thought was the key to being a good parent, Margaret replied,

> Number one is caring, and even more than that is selflessness. You have to know that the kids come first, and I think when you put yourself first, whether it is your job or your health club or whatever is your thing, you lose that caring.

The Sniders valued voicing one's opinions and beliefs. They did not have to accept the other person's opinion, nor were they afraid to challenge or argue. Yet, the adults clearly were the authority figures in this household.

The Madison Family

Marshall and Joyce Madison had devoted their lives to raising their children. Their youngsters were the parents' fun, entertainment, sorrow, joy, and everything in between. Joyce had given up a teaching career to care for the boys. When asked whether educating one's child is a basic function of a parent, Joyce and Marshall together said, "Yes." Joyce continued:

> We have separated ourselves, unfortunately, from some very good friends who don't share those values, and we don't understand it. People who have $100,000 boats say that Hope College is too expensive. We say, "Wait a minute, where are your values?"

Marshall added,

> I have people at work who tell me flat out, "If my children want to go to college, they will do it on their own. I am not helping them." They won't, either, and they have the means to. I look at it this way: It is our job to prepare them to live an adult life that is fulfilling. How can you have a fulfilled life and be ignorant?

The Madisons spent time together as a family. Family dinner time was an important part of the day. John said,

> In the early years, we made a pattern of doing things together as a family. It was always a tradition to eat dinner together, and we still do. [Our parents] never asked too much of us. When we did things, they never said, "You have to go here or there." They had a pretty good understanding when they were asking too much. Eating at the table all together is how they were brought up, and it is the one time of the day that you can pull all of us together.

Tony and John participated in many sports. When asked how important it was for their parents to be at their games, Tony replied, "The key thing was their support." The parents were asked whether they followed their children's activities. Joyce said, "That was our social life, and it was fun."

Tony and John realized the importance of family and of their parents' support. Tony said, "Fundamental to my success has been the family and the support I got from them." John concurred: "My parents took us as far as they could go. They set us up; they built the foundation. They took it as far as possible with their support, praise, and what have you."

According to Marshall, the key to being a good parent is:

> Love [and] unity of the parents. We may have disagreed on discipline, but we presented a united front. Strong parenting requires togetherness. If you don't have love there to begin with, then the family is doomed. If [the parents] did not have a good relationship, things would not get done. When the kids

see that love, they know there is something special happening in this family.

The Kort Family

Of the 11 families that were interviewed for this study, the Kort family was the only one in which the student sat with her parents to answer the questions. Ken Kort said, "We have nothing to hide from Mary, and she has nothing to hide from us." Their answers did not seem to be inhibited by the fact that they were answering in front of the person they were discussing.

Ken's being a varsity basketball coach and a teacher had been good for Mary. She had been brought up by parents who could help her with school work. Sue did not work while Mary was growing up and is there even now when Mary comes home from school. Mary said she appreciated having her mother at home after school. She commented, "It was important to me. It is important because, if I had a rough day, Mom was there to talk it over with."

Religion was an important aspect of the Korts' family life. Sue's healing of a debilitating illness had strengthened their faith. Mary, too, said, "If I have a problem or need an answer, I can get it from my religion. If I follow it and follow what I am supposed to be doing, it will work out. It gives me good morals, values, and attitudes." The values to which Mary referred were the Christian values her parents had instilled in her.

Keys to a successful family are showing love and consistency, sharing concern, and communication. In the Kort family, the lines

of communication were always open. Mary said, "I can talk to Mom about anything; we are really open to each other."

Upon entering the Korts' home, one senses an atmosphere of love and comfort. The Korts express great love for one another. If one hurts, they all hurt. The family members have a deep sense of feeling and respect for one another.

The Rosema Family

Tony and Carolyn Rosema had raised three children. Both parents were from Catholic backgrounds; they had brought up their children in the Catholic faith and attended church regularly. Carolyn stayed home for ten years to care for the children and, at the time of the study, was working as the medical manager of a clinic. Tony had just taken a new job as a construction superintendent.

The Rosemas' home was a haven for children; both Tony and Carolyn enjoyed young people, and their home was always open to visitors. The Rosemas were involved in their boys' sports and had been transporting them to various camps for three-on-three basketball tournaments. The boys loved their family vacations, especially when they went to their cabin in the northern part of the state. Rick said, "I love going up north." They fished, hunted, and just relaxed and enjoyed each other's company.

Authority was shared in the Rosema household, and family members talked out their problems. With regard to expectations for the children, Tony said, "What I expect them to be is good citizens,

whatever they go into. Whether they go to college or a trade school, whatever they do is to be honest and be a good citizen."

The Rosemas believed that a college education was extremely important because, for those without college, the future is not too bright financially. They stressed the value of college to Rick and Steve, but not to the point of arousing conflict. Rick said he intended to attend college: "The reason I am going is because I think in order to . . . have a good life after [high] school, you need a college education." Steve concurred: "To be successful you need to go to college, and my parents have said that it is hard to get a good job if you don't have [a college degree]. I always thought about college." For the Rosemas, the key to being a good parent was "love and consistency."

The Hart Family

Randy and Pat Hart had made numerous sacrifices for their children. Pat stayed home when the children were young; when she returned to work, it was on a part-time basis. At the time of the study, she was an assistant secretary at a church. This position allowed her to be home before the children left for school in the morning and when they returned home in the afternoon.

The Harts had sent their children to preschool. Pat said,

> We wanted them to play with children of their own age, and we wanted them to get into a routine. We wanted them to know what school was all about and not just watch *Sesame Street* on TV. We figured it would help them when they got to kindergarten. We wanted them prepared when they got to school.

The Harts also tried to be good models for their children. According to Randy,

> When I was young I appreciated a good drink. It comes to a point now that you can't sit here and tell your kids, "Don't let me ever catch you drinking" if you are going to do it yourself. It is so hypocritical. What you do speaks so much louder than your words, so you clean up your own act.

The Harts saw to it that Doug and Cheryl had chores and responsibilities. From early childhood there had been study time, with one parent there to help with homework. Vacations in the children's early years were enjoyable, but now that Doug had a job it was more difficult to schedule family trips. For the Harts, the keys to being good parents were support and trying to teach children responsibility and respect, basic morals, and caring about other people and their feelings.

Risk Factors Associated With Dysfunctional Families

Okey (1990) claimed that school dropouts' family experiences are characterized by conditions commonly associated with family dysfunctions. Then the reverse also might be true--that successful students' family experiences are characterized by a lack of conditions usually associated with dysfunctional families. The term *risk factors* has been used to refer to conditions that interfere with normal child development (Schorr, 1988). Such risk factors often are part of the dropout's family culture. Then it might be argued, as well, that if these risk factors are absent, normal child development can occur, and the very lack of these risk factors might be considered part of the family culture.

To determine whether the families in this study had any of the characteristics of dysfunctional families, they were given the Family Risk Factors Questionnaire to complete (see Appendix C). Survey responses indicated that very few of the risk factors associated with dysfunctional families were evident in the families interviewed for this study.

Frequent use of alcohol was found in only 1 of the 11 families, and that was not in the immediate family. Adults in these families consumed alcohol only on special occasions, or did not drink alcohol at all. None of the successful students had a drinking problem or even drank alcoholic beverages. None of the interviewees reported any mental and/or physical abuse.

None of the families in the study relied on welfare or Aid to Dependent Children for support. It was surprising that the DePrees were not on public assistance, but Chuck managed their money so well that they could survive until he again found steady employment. Each family managed its resources well enough that the mothers could stay home with the children while they were young.

All families were intact; none of the parents were separated or divorced. All the children, even those who had graduated from high school or college, lived with their parents.

Three of the 11 families had discontinued their church attendance, although they espoused strong moral values. Marshall Madison said,

> It was my decision, right or wrong, because of circumstances of conflict. Joyce was put through quite a lot of religious

> ceremonies and arguments, and she was not going to have her kids put through what she had to be put through with her family.

Joyce added,

> We read to the kids Bible stories, and we went to church occasionally and left them illiterate in Biblical terms. When something needed to be explained, we handled it. In college, they took classes on religion on their own. Their friends are all religious, and we as a family have every single value that these families have, and we have not gone to church. We gave them a choice of going if they choose to. We tried to give them every single religious value, moral value, that they were teaching in the church.

The other two families had similar beliefs regarding formalized religion. The parents had been brought up in religious families and had taken their children to church so that they would have that experience. They then let their children decide whether they wanted to continue attending church. Family traditions were being followed in the parents' generation.

None of the family members, including the students, smoked heavily or had serious health problems due to smoking. Two of the 22 students had health problems, but they were coping with them. None of the family members had criminal records.

The absence of a parent and strong family relations also were considered. According to Coleman (1988), parents have "skills and capabilities that make them . . . productive" (p. 221). This is human capital. Parents' ability to form relationships with their children in order to benefit from the human capital of the parent is "the social capital of the family" (p. 223). Low social capital can result from a parent's absence, parents lacking human capital, and

parents failing to form strong relationships. Low human capital was not evident in any of the families included in this study.

A poor male role model was evident in only one family. In this family, a close relative, not the student's father, was the poor role model. The findings pertaining to the presence of family risk factors are summarized in Table 3.

Analysis of the Findings

In this section, data were presented regarding the successful students' family experiences. It was found that the families in this study were similar in many ways. For one thing, 20 of the 22 students in the study had attended preschool. These children's parents thought the youngsters should go to preschool, not because of academics but for socialization. The Browns said, "We wanted preschool for the social aspect of it." Mary Hill said, "Susan was shy; [we thought] it would be good for her to go to a little preschool." Parents also took their children out to dinner to teach them the social graces. Nancy Coates said, "By taking them out to dinner, it helped them socially, getting them to act properly . . . and to act properly around adults."

In reviewing the data, the researcher discovered two key findings. The first was that all of the mothers who were interviewed had stayed home with their young children; just a few of the mothers returned to work after their children were in school. According to the literature, one of the characteristics of a good

Table 3.--Presence of risk factors in the families included in this study.

Family	Risk Factor												Total
	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J	K	L	
Coates	0	0	0	0	0	0	X	0	0	0	0	0	1
Gates	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Hill	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Start	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Brown	0	0	0	0	0	0	X	0	0	0	0	0	1
DePree	0	0	0	X	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
Snider	0	0	0	0	0	X	0	0	0	0	X	0	2
Madison	X	0	0	X	0	0	X	0	0	0	0	0	3
Kort	0	0	0	0	0	X	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
Rosema	0	0	0	0	0	X	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
Hart	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0

Note: Totals are purely numerical. No attempt was made to weight the factors.

Key: A = Alcoholism/substance abuse--parents or relatives
B = Alcoholism/substance abuse--students
C = Physical, mental, or sexual abuse
D = Unemployment
E = Welfare/ADC/Social Security/disability
F = Frequent or traumatic moves
G = Termination of religious practice
H = Smoking, poor health--parents
I = Smoking, poor health--students
J = Low social capital
K = Poor male role model
L = Criminal record--students

X = Evidenced in family
O = Not evidenced in family

home is that the mother or father stayed home during their children's formative years (Clark, 1983).

The second noteworthy finding is that these students respected their parents and held them in high esteem. The students indicated that their fathers and mothers were good role models. These parents had sacrificed and were willing to do anything for their children. The children were their lives.

Discipline and responsibilities were mentioned by all of the families. The word *consistency* was used when discipline was discussed. The parents did not let their children run wild. They knew where their youngsters were, and if students were going to be late, they called home to let their parents know. All of the families had curfews, and students were punished if they broke the curfew. Family members shared in the chores and responsibilities. By helping around the house and assuming responsibility, the students knew they were important members of the family.

Parents had high expectations for their children. These young people were expected to achieve well in school and to have the ambition to go on to college or a trade school. These parents instilled morals and values in their children, as well. Jack Hill said, "We emphasize three things: Be respectful, courteous, and obedient." When Susan Hill was asked to describe her values, she repeated the same ones her father had mentioned. She knew what her parents expected of her.

In addition, these parents tried to build high self-esteem in their children. Each of these students thought highly of himself or herself. Some admitted they still had a way to go but that they were developing self-confidence. For the most part, they thought highly of their abilities.

Finally, few of the risk factors associated with dysfunctional families were evident in the families included in this study. In looking at the 12 risk factors shown in Table 3, it can be seen that four families had none of these risk factors, five families had only one, one family had two, and one family had three. Of these factors, traumatic moves and termination of religious practice occurred most frequently. The effects of traumatic moves are alleviated over time. The parents who terminated their religious practice had sufficient religious training to teach their children and to live by a religious/moral code. These families were not dysfunctional, which helps explain why the students were successful.

The Successful Students' School Experiences

In the preceding section, the successful students' family experiences were presented. The focus was on the student as a member of the family collective. It was argued that the successful student's family is characterized by good role models, high self-esteem, a positive self-image, self-discipline, high expectations, respect for others, religious beliefs, responsibilities, trust, support, and a sense of belonging.

In this section, the findings regarding the successful students' school experiences are presented. The focus shifts to the successful student as a family representative. The researcher expected to find that successful students' school behavior would pattern what they had been taught at home and would coincide with school standards. As a result, these students' behavior will be what school personnel expect of them. The schools' expectations may be less demanding than those of the students' parents. The students will get along with school personnel because that is what their parents require of them.

Schools have a formal side and an informal side. The formal aspect includes academic expectations, class performance, general demeanor in class, relationships with teachers, compliance with rules and regulations, and an educational plan. The informal aspect includes relationships with peers and informal dealings with teachers and administrators. In the following paragraphs, the successful students' school experiences are discussed individually, followed by a summary of the findings for the entire student sample.

Sally Coates

Although Sally was easygoing, she took her school work seriously. In June, she graduated in the top half of her class. Sally had a positive experience with school. Her parents enrolled her in preschool to give her a head start on her education. Through the years, she became active in school-sponsored activities.

Sally was outgoing and had many friends because, as she expressed it, "I am happy." Asked why she had chosen certain friends, she said, "because they have nice personalities and are fun." When asked to describe a typical day at school, she replied,

> I get up, eat, and go to school. I drive myself. I go to class, eat lunch, and go into the halls and talk and then go to fifth hour and sixth hour. Then I go to practice, come home and eat, and do my homework.

Sally had established a routine, and she followed it every day.

"School has always been a good experience for me," Sally said. She planned to attend college the following year and major in theater or a foreign language. When asked whose choice it is to be successful, she said, "It is your own." Sally did not mention it, but her teachers and school administrators told the researcher she had been named the best all-around student in middle school for two consecutive years.

Jim Coates

Jim was finishing his sixth-grade year at the time of the study. He was very sociable and enjoyed hunting, fishing, and participating in various sports. Jim spent much of his time doing things with his father. Jim was a good student who had made the honor roll since elementary school. He was proud of what he had accomplished at school thus far and anticipated big things for himself in the future. Jim was a member of the science olympiad team, which is unusual for a sixth grader.

So far, Jim had not had an uncaring teacher; rather, he had enjoyed all his teachers. Jim described a typical school day as follows:

> I get up at 6:40 a.m. and get on the bus at 7:30 a.m. I get off the bus and play basketball in the gym. When the bell rings, I go to my class, exchange classes, eat lunch, get a treat and go to the gym and play. After lunch, I go to study hall and watch Channel One. I go to fifth and sixth hours, and if it is a nice day I walk home. I get home, get something to eat, and do my homework if I have any. Homework has been number one always.

Jim was focused on what his future would hold. He said, "When I grow up, I am going to be an archaeologist." He agreed with his sister that it is one's own choice to succeed or fail. Did he feel successful? In his own words, "Yes, I am somebody that gets fairly good grades and passes."

Tom Gates

Tom was finishing his junior year in college at the time of the study. Although he had experienced health problems throughout his school years, he had managed to overcome them and graduate in the top half of his high school class. Tom was an independent thinker who liked to do things his way; however, he would listen to advice before making a decision. Although he was self-confident, he had not always been that way. He said, "I am a very self-confident person now. I was not in the middle school. I gained a lot of confidence in high school and even more in college."

Tom had a difficult time in middle school. Some other boys deliberately injured him while they were playing basketball.

Although his mother wanted to transfer him to another school, Tom convinced her to let him stay and work out his own problems.

Tom had been involved in many high school activities. He had been the head major of the school band, which was one of the best in the state. Earning this position was a great honor. When Tom was asked whether other students teased him because of his honor classes and, if so, how he handled it, he replied,

> No. A lot of friends never thought of it. It was just the opposite. I think it was those people who were not taking these courses. If I had some friends who were not in those classes, they had a lot of respect for me because I was able to be in the upper-track classes. They would say, "Don't screw up, I wish I was in there."

Tom believed that succeeding or failing "is your own choice." Finally, when he was asked whether getting a college education had been worthwhile, he said, "To me, going to school half your life to live the other half of your life seems silly, so in that respect, no. Seeing we have to do it, it definitely will be worth it if you enjoy what you are doing."

Bill Gates

Bill was finishing his junior year in high school at the time of the study. Like his brother, Bill had experienced health problems, but even though he had to miss classes for extended periods, he had done very well in school. He was generally positive about school, although he thought some of his teachers had been uncaring. He was active in extracurricular activities.

Although Bill was a good student, he admitted he could do better. School work was easy for him. Bill said, "I am lazy; I

don't do a whole lot in school, but I still get good grades. I see more improvement has to be made." Bill planned to continue his education after high school and become an elementary school teacher.

Susan Hill

Susan was a friendly, outgoing seventh grader. She had not had any conflicts with her teachers. "I have always had good teachers and friends, and I like school," she said. When asked whether the teachers treated her any differently from other students, she replied, "Sometimes; you act in class like you're supposed to, and the teachers treat you like a princess."

Susan enjoyed school and was active in numerous activities. She was a member of the student council and worked as a student secretary in the middle school office. When asked to describe a typical day at school, she said, "Mom and Dad are here. We do our own things. Dad or Mom brings me to school. Regular day, at lunch I work in the office." Susan planned to attend college and perhaps to become a teacher.

Jane Start

A graduating senior, Jane was the valedictorian of her class. She planned to attend college and become an architect. Jane was very active in extracurricular activities; she said, "I love sports. It is important for a school to have sports."

Jane was particularly happy with her school. She said, "I am glad I went to [her school]. I like my classes, as we are all good

friends. I like my teachers. I really enjoy school." Jane commented on why some youngsters fail or get into trouble:

> Kids don't care, because school is not an important part of their life. They have jobs after school and they make money, and what does school mean to them? They say to themselves, "I don't need school anymore. I don't need to study." They think they can make it without an education.

Jane recognized the value of an education and how it would benefit her. She said, "A high school education will prepare me for college; a college education will prepare me for a job." When asked why she did not get into trouble, Jane answered, "I know what school can do for me, and also I would have to answer to my dad."

Sarah Start

Sarah was a high school freshman who received very good grades, apparently without trying. She appeared to be self-confident and independent. When asked whether she liked school, Sarah said, "No, I don't look forward to it." However, according to her teachers, Sarah was a good student who did what she was told and did it well.

Sarah had been involved in extracurricular activities and had been a member of the student council. She had not had any uncaring teachers, nor had she encountered any major problems at school. Once, in middle school, she had had a dispute with another girl and had been sent to the office. She said, "After talking with the principal, the problem was taken care of." Even though Sarah did not particularly like school, she had a positive view of education. She recognized that one needs a good education to survive in this world.

Bob Brown

Bob was a high school sophomore. Although he was a good student, he could do better in school; but he was satisfied for now. He had taken enough classes to graduate the following year and was thinking about taking classes at the local community college at night. Bob had a positive outlook concerning education. He knew he would be attending college but had not decided where. Bob wanted to become an airline pilot and had taken all the mathematics and science courses at school to prepare himself for such a career. He was not a discipline problem at school and had never been in trouble. Bob believed his family environment had helped him become the person he was.

Brenda Brown

Brenda was an outgoing and talkative seventh grader. She had a good relationship with school personnel, and the teachers enjoyed her. Brenda was involved in practically every activity available in her school. She had never received a detention or gotten into trouble. She knew that if she misbehaved she would have to answer to her parents.

Wendy DePree

Wendy was a graduating high school senior. It was a relief for Wendy and her parents that she was graduating because she had struggled through school. If it had not been for her parents' encouragement, Wendy probably would have dropped out. Yet she had

strong support at home and was determined to do as well in school as she could. In fact, some terms she did so well that she made the honor roll. Wendy's education was a basic one, with no accelerated or college-prep courses. Wendy and her parents recognized her capabilities and geared her classes toward them.

Wendy was positive about education and school. Although she had struggled, she said, "School is a plus." When asked what the expectations were of her, Wendy said, "Finish high school." Wendy did not cause trouble or fail because she did not want to face her parents if she did so. She had high regard for her parents and would do everything possible not to let them down. School had helped Wendy discipline herself to set a goal and strive to achieve it.

Michelle DePree

Michelle was a high school sophomore at the time of the study. She was outgoing and very talkative. In the interview, she did most of the talking. A bright girl, Michelle took school seriously and worked hard in her subjects; she had a 3.85 grade point average. The only problem Michelle had at school was that she talked and laughed too much. However, she was well disciplined, listened to her teachers, and got along well with them.

Michelle was taking certain classes whose enrollment was restricted to higher-level students; this made her feel special. If other students teased her because of her academic success, Michelle just ignored them. She said, "I ignore them because they are

jealous they are not in those classes. I don't let it bother me." Asked why she had done so well at school, she answered, "It is the environment I was brought up in. My parents have encouraged me to do my best, and they would be there to support me. It is a very happy environment." Michelle planned to go to college and become a nurse.

Sarah Snider

Sarah was a graduating senior at the time of the study. She was working to earn money for college, where she planned to study to be a legal secretary. She was disappointed with the guidance she had received at her high school with regard to choice of curriculum. Other than that, school had been a positive experience for her. She had a good relationship with her teachers and other school personnel. She believed she had been given privileges because she had established a good reputation. Teachers trusted her because she had always been a model student.

Sarah was involved in many extracurricular activities. She had been on the student council, had been a class officer, and had participated on sports and academic teams. She had taken an upper-level curriculum to prepare herself for college. Sarah's parents had taught her to finish whatever she started. This advice had helped Sarah see projects through to completion. She gave her parents much credit for her success in school and life. She stated,

> It is our choice to succeed or fail, but because of what our parents taught us. If they were not behind us pushing us and showing us the way it should be done and how to work, we probably would not have made it.

Tim Snider

At the time of the study, Tim was a sophomore in high school. He had done very well in school, as evidenced by his 3.5 grade point average. Tim was involved in many activities at school and, like his sister, was a member of the student council. He also volunteered his time to serve as a Special Olympics coach.

Tim planned to attend college and was taking college-prep classes. His sister had advised him about what classes to take. When asked why he did not get into trouble, Tim said, "I have no reason to; I am having fun not getting into trouble." He also admitted that was was in the "right crowd."

Tony Madison

Tony was about to graduate from college at the time the interview was conducted. He had been an excellent athlete in high school, earning all-state honors in football and a scholarship to play at college. Tony was a self-confident person who established goals and set out to achieve them. For him, school was a positive and enjoyable experience. He had been third in his graduating class in high school. Tony said that, in high school, he had been embarrassed because he received good grades:

> I was always embarrassed for getting good grades. I never could figure out why people would complain about things that were expected for you to do. . . . If I got a good grade on a test, I would blow it off and act stupid about things and say I was lucky.

Teachers and administrators liked Tony, and he was given special privileges. He was a member of the student council and

National Honor Society, as well as participating in sports. He was well liked by his fellow students and had a good time at school. When Tony was asked whether there was anything else he wanted to add to the interview, he said, "I can say one thing--that I cannot pay back all the things my parents have done for me. It is totally invaluable, the years I spent with them."

John Madison

John was a college junior. In high school, he had struggled to establish his identity and to determine his place in society. If it had not been for his parents, teachers, and coaches, he probably would have been at risk of dropping out of school. When he was asked whether school had been a positive, negative, or neutral experience for him, John replied:

> High school was neutral. I was not challenged. I did not have a lot of good friends. I just kind of drifted through high school. When I got to college, it was a very good experience. I like the challenge; it has opened me up. It made me more cultural about life.

John was a high achiever in school. He participated in athletics, was a member of National Honor Society, and was fourth in his graduating class. He had a positive view of education and intended to become a lawyer. When asked whether it bothered him to be Tony's younger brother, John said,

> Somewhere, somehow, Tony was a success and I would always be known as Tony's little brother. I grew up with that, and I knew I was not going to break it, and it never bothered me that much. In fact, I enjoyed it because it took the spotlight off from me. It actually took pressure off from me and it was easier in that I didn't have to worry about anything. At times

it bothered me, but it never motivated me one way or the other. Yes, Tony was my brother; it made me look better.

With regard to whose choice it is to succeed or fail, John said,

> I think it starts with the parents. The parents make the choice of "My kids are going to be this much better and this much further than we are. We are going to provide you everything necessary so you can be that much more successful than we were and that much more comfortable." I think they made the initial choice. They enabled me to make the next choice. I do want to go out there and bust my tail, and I want to do the things and make the sacrifices to become successful.

Mary Kort

At the time of the study, Mary was a sophomore in high school. Mary had had a positive experience in school; she had participated in a number of extracurricular activities, was very popular with her peers, and had numerous friends. She had been brought up to respect others, listen to her parents, and follow their guidelines. She was close to her family and enjoyed their company. She was taking an upper-level curriculum and had been on the honor roll.

Mary said that her teachers "let me do what I want because I am a good student." When asked whether she would be the same person if she were part of a dysfunctional family, she said, "No, because I would not have the morals, values, or good role models. I wouldn't have the self-confidence."

Mary had a purpose for being successful in school: She wanted to become a social worker. She said, "My parents told me if I worked hard, I would get somewhere. They have worked their hardest, and they are successful."

Rick Rosema

When the interview took place, Rick was a high school sophomore. An outgoing, friendly person, Rick had numerous friends. He also was well liked by his teachers, who characterized him as a good student. Rick had been the student council president in middle school and a class officer in high school. He had been on academic teams, had competed in the spelling bee, and had been on the honor roll since elementary school. He also was actively involved in athletics. Rick said he did not get into trouble at school because he knew he would be in even more trouble when he got home and had to face his parents.

Rick was a born leader who knew how to sway people to his way of thinking. He was an independent thinker and cared little about what fellow students thought of him. He ignored students who teased him about his good grades. Rick had a good outlook on life and said, "If I fail it is my fault, but my parents wouldn't let me be a failure."

Steve Rosema

Steve was a quiet and reserved eighth grader. A good athlete, he had competed in all the sports that were offered at his school. Although he did not have his brother Rick's self-confidence, he was working toward it. Steve was a good student, and his academic achievement had improved greatly during the past year. His seventh-grade year had been a tough one. His father threatened to take him out of the public school and enroll him in a Catholic school because

the friends he was associating with were a bad influence on him. School personnel and the family worked hard with Steve, and the situation had been resolved by the following year. Steve was not a discipline problem at school and complied with the school code of behavior.

Steve had received detentions for being late to class. Since he and his father discussed the incident, however, he had been getting to class on time. Steve had been on the honor roll, participated on academic teams, and was taking an upper-level curriculum.

Doug Hart

Doug was a freshman in high school at the time of the study. He had a 3.2 grade point average and was actively involved in athletics. Doug was working at a muck farm to earn enough money to buy a car. His parents were leery of his friends and their influence on him. Doug tended to be a follower, and his parents believed he needed to think for himself. Doug admitted that he would rather go to his friends than to his parents for advice.

Doug's family had been supportive as he attempted to discover his identity. When asked whether his parents were fair to him, he said, "Yes, we deserve the punishment. I don't agree with it, but I accept it." This seemed to be Doug's attitude toward school, as well: He did not agree with it, but he accepted it. Doug was the only student in the sample who had a negative view of education.

Cheryl Hart

Cheryl was a happy, outgoing seventh grader who was very popular in school. Her friends, unlike her brother Doug's, were acceptable to her parents; those friends wanted to succeed. Cheryl was a good student who was diligent about her studies. At the time of the interview, she was worried about her upcoming exams. She enjoyed being involved in school activities and had been active on the student council. She loved school and was positive about education; in fact, she would like to become a teacher. Cheryl easily became bored at school and noted, "We need more hands-on things and work in groups for projects." Cheryl said she did not get in trouble at school because, if she did, she would find herself in even more trouble at home.

Analysis of the Findings

It was found that the successful students' school experiences did not indicate any conflict in the formal school organization or in their informal relationships with peers and school personnel. The students accepted the formal school policies and practices, which were not appreciably different from what their parents expected of them. The successful students in this study had many friends and participated in a number of school activities. They just ignored those students who were antagonistic toward them.

Conflicts with school personnel and policies were practically nonexistent. The students did say that they were late for class occasionally or had a disagreement with a teacher that subsequently

was resolved. Asked whether they deserved any punishment they might have received, the answer was affirmative. On the whole, these students portrayed school personnel as caring and helpful.

The findings relating to successful students' school experiences indicated that these youngsters had had very positive experiences throughout their school years. They had to work through some difficulties, but as they thought back over their school years, the students decided their school experience had been positive overall. All but one of these students had a positive outlook on education.

These students had experienced success at school. They had qualified for the honor roll, top ten, and/or National Honor Society; had participated in extracurricular activities; had run for the student council; had taken accelerated classes or an upper-level curriculum; and had attended school regularly. All but one of these students had qualified for the honor roll at least once. Five of the nine students who were eligible for the National Honor Society were members of that organization. Four of seven graduates had been among the top ten students in their graduating classes. All 22 students had participated in extracurricular activities, including band, theater, athletics, and academic competitions. Thirteen of the 22 students had run for or were on the student council. All of the students were taking a basic or upper-level curriculum.

Table 4 contains a summary of characteristics of the successful students' school experiences.

Table 4.--Summary of characteristics of successful students' school experiences.

Student	Characteristic of School Experience											
	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J	K	L
Sally Coates	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	O	X	X	X	X
Jim Coates	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	O
Tom Gates	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	O
Bill Gates	X	X	O	O	X	X	X	X	O	X	X	X
Susan Hill	X	X	O	X	X	X	X	O	X	X	X	X
Jane Start	X	X	O	X	X	O	X	O	X	X	X	X
Sarah Start	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	O	X	X	X	X
Brenda Brown	X	X	O	X	X	X	X	O	X	X	X	X
Bob Brown	X	X	X	X	X	O	X	O	X	X	X	X
Wendy DePree	X	X	O	O	O	O	X	O	X	X	X	O
Michelle DePree	X	X	O	X	X	O	X	O	X	X	X	O
Bob DePree	X	X	O	O	O	O	X	O	X	X	X	O
Margaret Snider	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Ken Snider	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	O	X	X	X	X
Brad Snider	X	X	O	X	X	X	X	O	X	X	X	X
Tony Madison	X	X	O	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
John Madison	X	X	X	X	X	O	X	O	X	X	X	X
Mary Kort	X	X	O	X	X	X	X	O	X	X	X	X
Rick Rosema	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	O	X	X	X	O
Steve Rosema	X	X	X	X	X	O	X	O	X	X	X	O
Doug Hart	X	X	O	X	X	O	X	X	X	X	O	X
Cheryl Hart	X	X	O	O	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X

Key: A = Honor roll
B = Participates in extracurricular activities
C = Member of an academic team
D = Special programs/gifted and talented program
E = Basic/upper-level curriculum
F = Student council
G = Family has good name
H = Uncaring teachers/negative teacher examples
I = Honors/top ten, National Honor Society, athletic awards
J = Regular school attendance
K = Positive view of education
L = Attended preschool

X = Evidenced
O = Not evidenced

Interactions Between and Among the Students, Family Members, and School Personnel

In earlier sections of this chapter, findings regarding the successful students and their families were presented. The home setting and background of the students and their families were discussed in the first two sections. The focus of the third section was the grandparents' and parents' school experiences, whereas the fourth section was concerned with the students' family experiences. The fifth section contained the findings regarding the successful students' school experiences. In this section, the discussion centers on the families' interactions with the school.

It has been argued that successful students carry to school the behaviors and experiences they have learned, practiced, and accepted in their families. Most of these behaviors also are taught, learned, and accepted in school. The high expectations of the family culture mesh well with the demands and competition for achievement in the school culture. As school demands increase, the successful student adapts and concentrates more time on meeting this demand.

Further, it has been argued that successful students' families do not have the risk factors associated with a dysfunctional family. The students in this study did not smoke, skip classes, get into fights, or engage in substance abuse. Thus, they were not in conflict with the school culture.

The family influence with regard to school experiences, the family-school relationship, and the individual student's decision to

be successful still remains to be described. In this section, the investigator focuses on the interactions between and among the successful students, their parents, and school personnel. In the following paragraphs, the findings are presented regarding the family members' perceptions of their interactions with the school.

Parents' Involvement in the School

The parents in this study were very involved with their children's education; that involvement increased as the students advanced through school. The levels of involvement of the parents in this study are summarized in Table 5. The parents perceived the school as their children's second home. Communications between home and school were positive, and the messages the parents received from their children about school also were favorable. School was a place to learn and to socialize. Involvement in school activities comprised the parents' social life. They had made some of their best friends through the school.

It also was found that the culture of the family coincided with that of the school. The successful students' families had high expectations for their children and held the school responsible for helping the youngsters fulfill those expectations.

Success in school was viewed as a team effort. The parents did not expect the school to do everything for their children; rather, it was a cooperative effort in which school personnel and parents would both play a part. If there was a conflict, the parents and

Table 5.--Parents' involvement with the school.

Level of Involvement	Mother	Father
High involvement: Sets appointments, confers with teachers, observes classes, calls school to check on child's progress	Nancy Coates Corrine Gates Pat Brown Janet DePree Margaret Snider Joyce Madison Carolyn Rosema	Ken Snider, Marshall Madison Tony Rosema
Average involvement: Attends parent conferences, open houses, other scheduled school events	Mary Hill Myra Start Sue Kort	Dave Coates Marty Gates Jack Hill Larry Start Tom Brown Chuck DePree Ken Kort Randy Hart
Low involvement: Occasionally attends parent conferences, open houses, other scheduled school events		
Negative involvement: Goes to school only when required to deal with matters of discipline or problems with attendance		
Noninvolvement: No evidence that parent ever went to school		

Note: Parents themselves were asked to indicate the degree of involvement that best described them.

school personnel would discuss and resolve it. The more involved the parents were, the better the partnership. When a student was having trouble at school, the parents were notified and advised on a course of action. Parents took it upon themselves to help resolve the problem. There was no prolonged conflict among parents, school personnel, and students because it was expected that the parties would work together to solve whatever problems might arise.

Parental involvement and friendly communications with school personnel were found in all of the successful students' families. Both parents took responsibility for initiating communication with the school when it was necessary. If a major problem arose at school, both parents went to school to discuss the matter. Generally, however, the problems were so minor that they could be resolved with a telephone call.

When the children were in elementary school, their mothers were the primary parent who participated at school. Because none of these mothers worked, they were room mothers and members of the Parent-Teacher Organization. They headed up the committees for room parties and field trips. Although the fathers could not participate in school activities during the day, they attended school functions in the evening.

By the time the students were in middle and high school, when many parents start to withdraw from school activities, these parents became more involved. The children participated in sports, drama, and band/orchestra, and their parents became active in the booster

clubs for those groups. The Sniders, the Rosemas, and the Harts were all members of the sports boosters. The DePrees spent much time helping with band concerts and musicals. The Coateses were involved with the drama group because their daughter was the assistant director of the school play. These parents sold refreshments at athletic events to help raise money for the school. Randy and Pat Hart, Tom and Pat Brown, Ken Kort, Dave and Nancy Coates, and Tony and Carolyn Rosema volunteered their time at the state track meet. When volunteers were needed for events such as field trips, these parents willingly offered to help.

A second element of the family perspective is how parents feel when they enter the school building. Two parents, Pat Brown and Ken Kort, taught at their children's schools, so they felt very comfortable there. David Coates commented, "I feel very comfortable; I sit down with the staff and have a cup of coffee. I feel very welcome at the school." Considering that these parents' children did not get into trouble or cause problems at school, and the parents themselves were positive about the school, the teachers were happy to see them.

A third aspect of the family perspective is the portrayal of teachers and other school personnel as caring and attentive to the students' needs. The parents said, as did the students, that a teacher must be respected. Jack Hill said, "We teach [our children] three things: obedience, respect, courtesy." These parents taught their children to respect adults. Even though a teacher might be wrong, he or she still must be respected.

Still another element of the family perspective is communication. Again, there was no evident problem with communication in these families. The administrators and teachers knew that if they called these parents about a problem, appropriate action would be taken. In general, the students worked out difficulties with the school so that their parents would not need to be called.

The successful students and their parents had no conflict with the school because they had adapted their lives to what the school demanded, or it might be that the schools had adapted to the expectations of the supportive parents. If a conflict arose between school and family, the parents worked with the school to solve the problem, not as enemies but as partners. The school rules and regulations were essentially the same as those at home.

The Individual's Decision to Be a Success at School

To the students in this study, success meant doing what was expected of them. The successful students had high expectations for themselves, and these expectations were generated at home. Parents helped build their children's self-confidence. The more the children succeeded, the more self-confidence they perceived. When asked whether they felt successful, all 22 students responded affirmatively. Tony Madison commented, "Fundamental to my success has been the family and the support I got from them." To these students, success meant feeling good about themselves. Tom Gates said, "I am content now; I am happy in every aspect of my life."

These successful students were accepted by their peers and adults because of the way they had been raised. These students had worked hard to achieve good grades and a respected position in the school. Their parents had devoted many hours to them, as well. These students had solid family backgrounds. On average, their parents had been married for 21 years, and the solidity of their marriages showed the children commitment. The Sniders said, "When our kids start to do something, they finish it." The Madisons commented,

> We may have disagreed on discipline but we presented a united front. Strong parenting requires togetherness. If you don't have love there to begin with, then the family is doomed. If [the parents] did not have a good relationship, things would not get done. When the kids see that love, they know there is something special happening in this family.

Success was evident in these students' immediate families. The successful students viewed their parents as successful people. Likewise, the parents believed they were successful in what they did. In describing her father, Mary Kort said, "[He's a] great guy; he would always listen to me, good provider, put morals in me. He is a good role model; he is liked by basically everyone." John Madison described his parents in these words:

> Dad--You could always mistake my mom wearing the pants because she is more outgoing, but when it came down to it a lot of the times, you knew who was the boss. I respect my dad, and he respected where I was coming from. When he did punish me, I deserved it, and I have come to respect him. It has been awhile, a long process. He has some qualities that he has our best interest in mind.
>
> Mom--She is more talkative and personable. She was an important figure as Dad was. She got you to say what you wanted to say and respected it, and she has her own set of rules and you had to respect it.

These students' success and the way they conducted themselves had been instilled in them since childhood. Their parents had stressed certain values to them, and their home lives were stable. For these parents, the key to successful parenting was that they had taught their children how they should conduct themselves. In conclusion, the individual's decision to be a success can be explained and given a common theme: It was expected of me.

Analysis of the Findings

In this section, the findings regarding the interactions between and among successful students, family members, and school personnel were presented. The data relevant to the family perspective indicated a positive view of school personnel and their treatment of the successful students. The positive view was evidenced by the parents' high degree of involvement with the school, the quick response to school personnel when there was a problem, and topics of discussion at home. School communications were positive. These parents kept track of what was happening at school and participated whenever possible. Conversely, school administrators responded to parents' concerns about particular teachers.

Chapter Summary

In this chapter, the researcher presented and analyzed the findings regarding various aspects of the family's influence on the individual's decision to be a success at school. The family

settings were described in the first section. Demographic information on the successful students and their families was provided in the second section. Next, the data regarding the parents' and grandparents' school experiences were presented. Section four dealt with the successful students' family experiences, whereas the succeeding section pertained to these students' school experiences. Interactions between and among the successful students, family members, and school personnel were described in the sixth section, which concluded with a discussion of students' decision to be a success at school.

It was found that the family and school cultures were similar. Success meant doing what was expected. In essence, these parents and their success-oriented children believed in upward mobility through education and hard work, values that were learned from the culture of the family.

CHAPTER V

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS, CONCLUSIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH

Introduction

This qualitative study was undertaken to address the need for research on the features of family life that lead to students' success in school. The researcher's overall purpose in conducting this study was to investigate the conditions of family life and culture among students who are successful in school. The intention was to gain a better understanding of why certain students are successful by examining the students' family experiences, their family history, and family-school interactions. The researcher was interested in understanding the behavior of successful students and the factors underlying students' success in school.

A secondary purpose was to describe how the subjects' involvement in the family as a dynamic social unit influenced their decision to work hard and succeed in school. The researcher was interested in discovering whether the students' perceptions of their families' views regarding the importance of education influenced those students' decision to succeed in school.

In attempting to accomplish these purposes, the researcher examined the complex interrelationships that exist among successful students, their families, and the schools.

Previous chapters contained a description of the problem, a review of related literature and research, an explanation of the methodology, and data gleaned from interviews conducted with successful students and their families.

In this chapter, the general findings are presented first. Then the findings pertaining to each research question are summarized, and the researcher's original expectations concerning the questions are supported or revised, based on those findings. Next, conclusions drawn from the findings are presented. The findings are then compared to the findings from previous research. Finally, recommendations are made for further research.

Summary of the Major Findings

The findings pertaining to the family backgrounds of the successful students indicated that, out of necessity, the grandparents had entered the work force at an early age, but they did not want the same experience for their children. They wanted their children to graduate from high school and said they would support them if they chose to go on to college. Parents of the successful students were going a step further and strongly encouraging their children to pursue a college education. Each generation was encouraged to seek a higher level of education than their parents had received.

Even though many of the successful students' grandparents did not finish high school, in some instances they became influential figures in the community. The students' parents had graduated from

high school; some had gone to college, and a few had finished graduate school. Parents viewed an education as a "ticket to a job" as well as to prestige in the community. To them, education was a chance to fulfill a dream. As students, parents had enjoyed school and put forth a good effort. Some had received academic honors; others admitted they had had too much fun and should have concentrated more on their studies.

The findings further indicated that the culture of the family provided much preparation for school. Grandparents were strong believers in education and made sure their children graduated from high school. They had served on the local school board and volunteered their time at the school. Parents and school personnel supported each other.

With regard to the successful students' family experiences, it was found that the family culture that supported the school continued into the successful students' generation. Aspects of the family experience of these students included the following: Mothers stayed home and did not work when the children were in their formative years; family rules, norms, and expectations were clearly set forth; family members expressed strong positive feelings about the necessity of school; school personnel and parents worked together as a team for the betterment of the student; parents and students were involved in school activities; parents believed in the necessity of postsecondary education, whether trade school or college; there was consistency of supervision and close monitoring of children's performance; parents taught their children values and

morals and a sense of right and wrong; parents communicated with and listened to their children; family members supported, trusted, and respected one another and showed respect for others; parents were good role models; and parents helped their children develop a positive self-concept.

Concerning the successful students' school experiences, it was found that these students were actively involved in school activities. They were the school leaders. These students were popular and rarely got into disputes with their classmates. The social aspect of school was the highlight of the school day. In addition, the successful students saw a purpose for getting an education: It would prepare them for a good job. They were focused on a long-term goal of satisfying employment and financial security.

The findings also indicated that the successful students had been rewarded for their achievements through membership in clubs and societies, participation on academic and athletic teams, awards from state and national organizations, college scholarships, and a feeling of satisfaction with their accomplishments. All but one of the students had had a good experience in school and expressed a positive attitude toward education.

With regard to the interactions between and among successful students, their parents, and school personnel, it was found that the majority of families were actively involved in their children's education. The family perspective on education was influenced by

that high degree of involvement and the school messages received by the family.

The culture of the family and that of the school were found to be similar. School became a source of entertainment and, in many cases, constituted the parents' social life. These parents spent a great deal of time at school and at school activities. They admitted that their lives had been enriched by attending their children's activities. In fact, many parents enjoyed school more through their children than when they themselves had been in school.

The findings indicated that the parents in this study did not expect the school to teach children everything; they, too, were involved in educating their offspring. To these parents, educating the child was a team effort. Their philosophy, which they shared with their children, was that school is an institution; if you follow its rules you will succeed, and if you don't adhere to its rules you are likely to fail.

The researcher formulated tentative expectations regarding the findings for each research question before interviewing the successful students and their parents. Those expectations are reviewed in the following discussion, and they are either supported or revised based on the study findings.

1. How do successful students define their families? The data supported the researcher's expectations that the successful students would see themselves as members of their families and as having a close relationship with other family members. The students in this study all thought they were important, contributing members of their

families. Their positive self-concepts and high aspirations had evolved from the family. Familial interactions conveyed to these students their importance to the family.

Specific psychosocial orientations and home activity patterns were observed in the successful students' families. These processes and patterns were most evident in parents' methods of helping their children adjust to the student role by grooming them for that role. The communication patterns in these homes were marked by many parent-child conversations, strong parental encouragement and support in academic pursuits, the establishment of clear and consistent limits for the student, warm and nurturing interactions, and consistent attention to students' use of time.

The successful student represents the family at school. Jane Start had established a good reputation, and the family was praised by school personnel. This positive attitude unites the family and challenges succeeding generations to uphold the family's reputation.

2. <u>What is the student's family background?</u> The researcher expected that the successful students' family backgrounds would include experiences with school and learning, and that their success had been built on the experience of previous generations. The findings indicated that certain behavioral patterns in the successful students' families had been transmitted from earlier generations. The parents described their childhood relationships with their own parents as being characterized by clearly defined role boundaries and a sense of appreciation. Parents thought that

their own parents had been diligent and direct in their supervision. The grandparents seemed to possess and convey a keen appreciation of their children's need to obtain an education and to strive for educational success and economic self-sufficiency.

Most of the parents in this study expressed the wish that they had gone further in school. Believing that a better education would have led to more financial security, they were encouraging their children to pursue further education as a means of achieving personal progress.

3. How do successful students' family members react to and interact with members of the school community? The findings supported the researcher's expectation that the parents would react to the school based on their past experience and their sense of how school personnel viewed them. In general, because these parents themselves had had a good school experience, they wanted to convey that positive attitude to their children. Dave Coates was an exception. He wanted his children to succeed and enjoy school because he had not done so. These parents were highly involved with their children's schools. Their youngsters participated in many activities and, because these parents followed their children's interests, they, too, became involved. Being involved, these parents became fixtures at school and were welcomed there. They were a positive force at school.

Messages that were sent home from school were generally positive. Because of the high degree of parental involvement, the successful students did not develop a negative attitude toward

school. They viewed school as a place to learn, a place where they could participate in activities they liked and where they could enjoy other people's company.

4. What were the school experiences of successful students' family members? The researcher expected to find that a positive experience with school had continued in these students' families for several generations; this expectation was supported. Once family members established a good reputation at school, others tried to live up to that performance. Frequently, these families had more than one successful student. The nine sets of siblings and sisters interviewed in this study all were successful in school.

5. Is there a relationship between students' success in school and their family experiences? The researcher expected that family beliefs, values, structure, and morals are of major importance to the families of successful students. This expectation was borne out by the study findings. As very young children, these students had been taught morals and values. They learned the difference between acceptable and unacceptable behavior. One way the parents managed to convey a positive attitude toward education was by enrolling their children in preschool.

The children also were taught skills related to being a good student. They were taught to organize their thoughts and time, solve problems and make decisions, ask and answer questions, display the social graces and adhere to standards of etiquette, and listen carefully to others.

These families did not have multiple risk factors; thus, the students' quality of life was not affected by such concerns. There was frequent parent-child dialogue, parental encouragement and support, warm and nurturing interactions, and consistent and fair discipline. The parents were good role models, set goals for themselves, and were proud of what they had accomplished.

6. How do successful students' family members view the importance of education? The researcher expected that the successful family would create a culture of acceptance that would mesh with the culture of the school. This expectation was supported by the findings. Many of these parents started their children in preschool. By working with the children, they established in the youngsters a positive attitude toward education. They taught them that school is a place to learn, behave, and show respect for others. The parents had high expectations of their children and of the school. These parents expected the school to provide discipline, control, and a safe environment in which to learn. The school's expectations of the student should not differ from those of the parents.

Education was regarded as a key avenue to economic advancement. The successful students were aware of the multiple practical uses of schooling in everyday life. In the school environment, these students were goal directed and success oriented. Jane Start said, "High school education will prepare me for college; college education will prepare me for a job." School was a means of fulfilling their goals.

7. What meaning does being successful have for the individual? The researcher expected to find a direct relationship between family expectations and the students' decision to be successful in school. Success to these students meant doing what was expected and what came naturally to them. Home was where their success started. These students had been taught how to work; their parents had assured them that anything is possible if one works hard enough for it.

The family's faith in them, the support they received at home, and the confidence the students had in themselves led to their success. Parents conveyed to these students that the individual alone controls his or her own destiny.

8. How does the successful person succeed? The researcher's expectation that successful people align themselves with others who are successful was supported by the study findings. These students companioned with other students who had the same values and morals as they did. The success the students experienced at home and at school engendered more success. According to the students, success meant doing what was asked of them and a little more.

These students' parents were models of success. The children observed what their parents did and imitated their actions. Parents taught their children that the key ingredient to success was to play by the rules.

Conclusions

The successful students' family background, the family's school experience, and the students' decision to be successful were analyzed in terms of the culture of the family and the school. The families in this study viewed education as providing upward mobility. Parents expected that their children could succeed if the family and school worked together. The family experience was an important aspect of students' understanding the role of the school. Parents' acceptance and support of these students created an environment conducive to their being successful in school. A lack of family risk factors such as alcoholism, abuse, poor role models, and unemployment also was a major factor contributing to the success of these students. Freedom from these factors allowed the students to concentrate on their school work rather than on family problems.

Comparison of the Findings to Those From Previous Research

This study was inspired by research conducted by Okey (1990) and Clark (1983). Okey's study was limited to dropouts and their families, and he recommended that a similar study be conducted to determine "the conditions of family life and culture among those who are successful in school" (p. 266). Clark examined the relationships among the individual, the family, and the school, and the factors that influence whether students succeed or fail in school. In this section, the findings from Clark's study are compared with those from the present investigation, to gain insight into the

differences between the families of successful and unsuccessful students.

Clark's findings were consistent with those from the present research. Parents were completely dedicated to the well-being of their children. Parents of high-achieving black students in Clark's study had taken responsibility for "guiding, nursing, and protecting their children during the pursuit of competent adult behavior" (p. 111). The parents in this study had taken the same responsibility in raising their children.

As very young children, the students in Clark's study had been taught morals. Likewise, students in the present study had been taught moral values at a very young age. All of the parents taught their children the difference between right and wrong. They also taught them the social behaviors that were appropriate in various circumstances, such as eating in restaurants.

A common theme in Clark's study and the current research was that parents maintained consistently high expectations for the students. Also, the parents made clear that when failure occurred it was not a reflection on the "goodness" or "badness" of the child (p. 115).

Clark found that the parents of successful students believed in their own ability to provide for the needs of their children, to steer them in the right direction, and to encourage them to accomplish what they set out to do. In both studies it was found that achievements were made through practice and hard work.

Another similarity between Clark's study and the present one pertained to family norms, rules, and expectations. Clark found that children responded to parents' requests because they recognized parents' "legitimate power" (p. 121). Children accepted the parents' power because they had been taught that authority figures should be obeyed. In addition, they respected their parents. Children in both studies understood what was expected of them and the advantages to doing what was expected. Clark found four fundamental dispositions among parents of successful students that were similar to those found in this study: (a) Mothers were willing to put their children's growth and development needs before their own wants; (b) parents did not believe the school should provide all of the child's academic training and support; (c) parents firmly believed that their children should attend class, listen, and participate; and (d) parents expected that the students would participate in some form of secondary training, not necessarily college; they should "try to do better than I [the parent] did" (pp. 122-124).

Parents in both Clark's study and the present research served as models and advisors who encouraged risk-taking behavior. In this study, the students asserted that their parents were good role models and that they would raise their own children as they had been raised.

Recommendations for Further Research

This study of the family's influence on students' success in school was conducted with a small population of two-parent Caucasian families living in rural areas, whose children attended public schools. To provide further insights into why certain students succeed, additional research needs to be done on the following topics:

1. A comparison of family life and culture in families of successful students from a variety of racial and ethnic backgrounds.

2. A study of family life and culture in single-parent families with successful students.

3. A comparative study of the family perspective of successful students in Christian or Catholic schools and those in public schools.

4. A study of whether children who are successful in elementary school continue to be successful later on. Do parents need to encourage and support their children throughout the educational process?

5. A study of whether students who plan to attend college take school more seriously than students who do not plan to continue their education beyond high school.

6. An investigation of whether power and authority relations in the home affect students' academic performance.

7. A study of whether one parent's staying at home with the children during their formative years improves the academic success of the children.

8. A replication of the present study with families in large metropolitan areas.

Reflections

There are many good students in the educational system. Studying a few of these students was refreshing because they are preparing themselves for future job and leadership opportunities. It was interesting to discover the type of work ethic these students were learning from their families. Each student knew what work was about and considered his or her school work to be important in reaching particular goals. These students probably will do very well in succeeding years and continue their education in college and graduate school.

As a result of listening to the students' conversations, the researcher anticipates that these young people will be an asset to society and will raise children who are as responsible as they are. In looking at this segment of society, one should feel good about the future of the nation. Sometimes people focus on the worst aspects of American society; instead, they should look at what has made that society great. A part of American society that often has been overlooked is the families--how successful they are and what a success their children have been because of the love and commitment family members have bestowed on them.

America's school system has been criticized because students' ACT and SAT scores have been declining. One must remember, however, that more students are taking these tests than ever before. The

students in this study who took the ACT or SAT test did very well and were accepted by the colleges of their choice. Educational writers and researchers should take notice of the success of these students and learn from that success. Future researchers should consider the findings from this study and pursue further investigation on the skills needed to succeed. Educators' slogan is that "all students can learn," but they could also say that "all students can succeed." The environment in which a person lives influences whether the individual will succeed. There will always be exceptions to the rule, but, in general, if a child is raised in an environment that is conducive to learning and success, the youngster will succeed.

Educators should not be looking solely at at-risk students in attempting to solve their problems. They also should be investigating the characteristics of successful students, to learn how to help parents and students develop an environment conducive to success. School personnel say they need more money; that may be true, but schools could do a better job with the resources available to them if educators became more involved in the students' education. Teaching is not an 8:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. job but one that requires continuous dedication, time, and effort. Many schools have improved as a result of efforts to enhance leadership and communication.

The same characteristics that make schools successful also hold true with families. If the family is stable--if family members can

communicate and be involved with each other, have high standards, are warm and understanding and respect others' feelings, and establish goals for themselves--it is likely such a family will be successful. It helps to have the financial means to supply children's needs, but a loving, caring family is more important than the things money can buy.

A student's education is only as good as the student will permit it to be. Educators cannot force students to learn. Rather, students must accept the education that is provided for them and do the work required on their part. But for students to accept education, they must be taught at home the benefits of education. They must have parents who are dedicated to them and encourage them throughout their school years. This is a key factor in students' academic success.

APPENDICES

APPENDIX A

FAMILY CHARACTERISTICS INVENTORY

FAMILY CHARACTERISTICS INVENTORY*

Family Name _____

Date _____

The following statement fit some families better than others. Please circle the number that best decribes how well each statement fits your family.

	Does not fit Our Family At All		Fits Our Family Some		Fits Our Family Very Well
1. We live in a good Neighborhood	1	2	3	4	5
2. Our family talks things out	1	2	3	4	5
3. There is an opportunity for each member to express himself in his own way.	1	2	3	4	5
4. We have a sense of humor.	1	2	3	4	5
5. There are activities which we all enjoy doing together.	1	2	3	4	5
6. We respect each other's feelings.	1	2	3	4	5
7. In our home, we feel loved.	1	2	3	4	5
8. We have the right kinds of friends	1	2	3	4	5
9. Discipline is moderate and consistent.	1	2	3	4	5
10. Educational goals are important to us.	1	2	3	4	5
11. There is a sense of belonging in our family	1	2	3	4	5
12. Our family is reliable, dependable family	1	2	3	4	5
13. We establish reasonable goals for ourselves	1	2	3	4	5
14. We encourage development of potential in all members of our family.	1	2	3	4	5
15. We express appreciation of what we do for one another.	1	2	3	4	5

	Does Not Fit Our Family At All		Fits Our Family Some		Fits Our Family Very Well
16. We plan ahead.	1	2	3	4	5
17. We share experiences.	1	2	3	4	5
18. We live in a good school district.	1	2	3	4	5
19. Father is a good provider.	1	2	3	4	5
20. There is enough money for special things.	1	2	3	4	5

* Please fill this questionare out as a family

APPENDIX B

FAMILY HISTORY SURVEY

FAMILY HISTORY

1. name _____ 2. Telephone _____
3. Address _____
4. Husband's occupation _____ 5. Company _____
6. Title _____ 7. Years employed _____
8. Telephone _____
9. Wife's occupation _____ 10. Company _____
11. Title _____ 12. Years employed _____
13. Telephone _____
14. Number of marriages: Husband _____ Wife _____
15. Year of current marriage _____
15. Children

	AGE	SEX
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____

17. Any deaths in the immediate family? _____
_____
18. Do you own or rent your home? _____
19. How many rooms? _____
20. Does any one outside immediate family live in the home?
_____
_____
21. Husband's birth place _____
22. Husband's education level _____
23. Religious affiliation _____
24. Wife's birth place _____
25. Wife's education level _____
26. Religious affiliation _____

APPENDIX C

FAMILY RISK FACTORS QUESTIONNAIRE

Family Risk Factors Questionare

1. Has there ever been any alcoholism/substance abuse in your family? yes no

2. Have you ever had a problem with alcoholism/substance abuse? yes no

3. Has there ever been any physical, mental or sexual abuse? yes no

4. Has there ever been any unemployment in the family? yes no

5. Have you ever collected on welfare/ADC/social security disability? yes no

6. Has there ever been any traumatic moves that had to be made? yes no

7. Because of factors, have you terminated religious practices? yes no

8. Do you or any family member smoke and cause poor health?
   Dad yes no
   Mom yes no
   student yes no

9. Are you in the lower, middle, upper bracket of income? Please circle one

10. Is there a poor male role model in the family? yes no

11. Does anyone have a criminal record? yes no

12. Has anyone ever failed or been retained? yes no

APPENDIX D

LETTER OF APPROVAL FROM THE UNIVERSITY COMMITTEE ON RESEARCH INVOLVING HUMAN SUBJECTS

MICHIGAN STATE UNIVERSITY

OFFICE OF VICE PRESIDENT FOR RESEARCH
AND DEAN OF THE GRADUATE SCHOOL

EAST LANSING • MICHIGAN • 48824-1046

April 29, 1992

Thomas C. Jeltes
3585 Apple Hill Dr.
Ada, MI 49301

RE: THE PERSPECTIVE STUDY OF FAMILY LIFE WITH DIRECT RELATIONSHIP TOWARD THE SUCCESS OF THE STUDENT, IRB #92-189

Dear Mr. Jeltes:

The above project is exempt from full UCRIHS review. The proposed research protocol has been reviewed by a member of the UCRIHS committee. The rights and welfare of human subjects appear to be protected and you have approval to conduct the research.

You are reminded that UCRIHS approval is valid for one calendar year. If you plan to continue this project beyond one year, please make provisions for obtaining appropriate UCRIHS approval one month prior to April 24, 1993.

Any changes in procedures involving human subjects must be reviewed by UCRIHS prior to initiation of the change. UCRIHS must also be notifed promptly of any problems (unexpected side effects, complaints, etc.) involving human subjects during the course of the work.

Thank you for bringing this project to my attention. If I can be of any future help, please do not hesitate to let me know.

Sincerely,

David E. Wright, Ph.D., Chair
University Committee on Research Involving
Human Subjects (UCRIHS)

DEW/pjm

cc: Dr. Samuel Moore

APPENDIX E

CONSENT FORM

CONSENT FORM

To whom it may concern,

The purpose of this study is to gain a better understanding of why students succeed in the regular school system. I will be asking you some questions about your family background, your family experiences, and how other members of your family experienced school. In addition, I will be asking you about your family's involvement with your schooling. Finally, I will be seeking permission to talk with other members of your family. This interview will take approximately one hour. If we do not complete all of the questions, I would like to talk to you again. The total time involved in our interviews will not exceed three hours.

All the results will be treated with strict confidentiality and your name will not be used in any research report.

Participation is voluntary; you may choose not to participate at all, refuse to answer some questions, or discontinue the interview at any time. There is absolutely no penalty for taking any of these actions. If you wish to have a copy of the general findings of this report one will be furnished upon request.

By signing this form, you indicate that you understand the purposes of the study. GUARDIAN (IF UNDER 18)_____

RESPONDENT'S NAME_____

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