

GOAL FRAMING AND INTRINSIC MOTIVATION: IMPACT ON
UNDERPERFORMING STUDENTS

By

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ABSTRACT

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This qualitative study was facilitated at a local high school and investigated how a student's achievement (e.g. grades, behavior, or attendance record) is influenced by his or her desire to fulfill his or her goals once they have successfully made the connection between the ability to fulfill those goals and the education process. This study also investigated how students articulated motivation in the context of whether students were externally or intrinsically motivated or whether students exhibit a combination of both. Each of the 14 student participants recruited were represented in an individual case study. The individual case analysis was gathered from numerous sources of data collected over a four-month investigative time frame.

This study entailed numerous methods of data collection generally used in qualitative case study design – interviewing, observations, and document analysis. Additionally, cross-case analysis brought to light recurring themes experienced by the students. In observing the participants, we see that the majority of the students demonstrate a combination of goal dependent framing. Aspects of hedonic goal framing, gain goal framing, and normative goal framing have been observed in almost all of the participants. Students use goal framing and motivational practices at school to internalize and personalize their school experience.

It is also important to note the role teachers and parents play in students' academic and personal development and the creation of their goal framing. Students that experience academic challenges often face untraditional struggles and often don't internalize school on a deep level. That is to say, many students are only motivated by extrinsic factors such as grades and the possibilities of graduating from high school or going to college. However, research suggests student that are intrinsically motivated, learn for the enjoyment of learning and have a much better academic experience.

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To Dede (my best friend and bride) Jalin and Jayda (God's gift to me): Words cannot express my love and gratitude for the sacrifices you've made and for sharing me with others.

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Chapter 1: INTRODUCTION

The worst form of inequality is to try to make unequal things equal.

-Aristotle

The right to equal educational opportunities has been at the forefront of the civil rights struggles in the United States and remains so today. While significant gains have been made in this regard, data suggests the educational outcomes for high school students of color are dismal at best and have worsened in recent years. Yet despite tireless efforts, a large achievement gap between African American and Latino boys and their white counterparts has remained for more than 30 years (Murrell, 2002).

A number of factors contribute to dismal academic performance among urban students. Among them are lack of motivation and a lack of belief in the American education system. Low motivation and the reluctance toward learning is a growing problem. Unmotivated students are less engaged in learning activities, traditionally score lower on assessment tests, and are more likely to feel alienated in the school environment (Haywood, 2008).

The factors for student disengagement vary. For some, it is the inability to make learning meaningful. They are unable to make the connection between their day-to-day challenges and how school-related activities can equip them to meet those demands. They fail to see the personal value in school; they are unable to see how English, Math, and Science are of any real value. However, another group of students lack confidence in their academic abilities. These students are not confident in their academic skill set and don't believe they have the academic aptitude necessary to achieve any significant academic success.

Ultimately, disengagement in all its forms potentially leads to low persistence and high dropout rates nationally. According to the *National Center for Education Statistics* from the U.S. Department of Education's Institute of Education Sciences, every year, over 1.2 million students drop out of high school in the United States alone. That's one student every 26 seconds—7,000 students per day. About 25% of high school freshmen fail to graduate from high school on time.

Historically, the United States had maintained some of the highest graduation rates of any developed country. However, the country currently ranks 22 out of 27 developed countries with comparable graduation rates. In 2010, 38 states had higher than average graduation rates. Vermont had the highest rate, with 91.4% of students successfully graduating, and Nevada had the lowest with only 57.8% of students graduating successfully. Nearly 2,000 high schools across the United States consistently graduate less than 60% of their students (Nevada Department of Corrections, 2012). These statistics point to a significant problem in the United States and drive the current study to explore how goal setting may help to motivate disengaged students to engage more fully in the educational process.

Statement of the Problem

When it comes to graduation rates, 2006 figures from the Department of Education's Office of Civil Rights, the latest statistics available, show that out of 48.5 million students nationwide, 56% were White, 17% were African American, and 20% were Hispanic. But of those who received a high school diploma in 2006, 67% were White, 13% were African American, and 14% were Hispanic.

In 2009–10, the national graduation rate for Black male students was 52%. The

graduation rate for White, non-Latino males was 78%. For the first time, during this year more than half of the nation's Black males in ninth grade graduated with regular diplomas four years later (Schott Foundation for Public Education, 2012).

More alarming is a recent report from the Schott Foundation, titled "Yes We Can," which shows the graduation rate in 2008 for African American males to be 47%, well below the 78% tallied for White males. It's a familiar refrain in American education: African American children score lower on standardized tests, graduate high school at lower rates, and are considerably more likely to be suspended or expelled than the general population (Loury, 2004). Long-term data on the much-discussed achievement gap between White and Black students shows uneven improvement over the past few decades (Lundy-Wagner & Gasman, 2011). The National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) results since 1980 shows that gaps in fourth- and eighth-grade reading and math scores have either narrowed or, at worst, stayed the same. But the most current data from 2009 still show great gaps.

Academic Performance

Black male students are often comparatively less prepared than are others for the rigors of college-level academic work (Bonner & Bailey, 2006). In 2002, Black men comprised only 4.3% of students enrolled at institutions of higher education, the exact same percentage as in 1976 (Harper, 2006; Strayhorn, 2010). On average, Black twelfth-grade students read at the same level as White eighth-grade students. The twelfth-grade reading scores of African American males were significantly lower than those for men and women across every other racial and ethnic group. Only 14% of African American eighth graders score at or above the proficient level. These results reveal that millions of

young people cannot understand or evaluate texts, provide relevant details, or support inferences about the written documents they read (Palmer, Davis, & Hilton, 2009).

Purpose of Study

The purpose of this study was to investigate how motivation affects student engagement in the classroom and how engagement influences academic progress. This study further assesses the utility of goal framing in aiding students to further engage in the education process as a means to getting them intrinsically motivated, as many students may not be motivated by grades, awards, or other extrinsic values. This study considered what type of factors influence how students of color and students from economically disadvantaged backgrounds create and pursue their goals. It also sought to explore how environmental and internal stimuli affect the choices of students who are disengaged in the education process, how these extrinsic and intrinsic influences work to motivate or demotivate students, and how goal framing can be used as a tool to aid students in developing or reconnecting with the education process as evidenced through class participation, class attendance, performance, and behavior.

In short, this study explored the relationship between goal setting, motivation, and academic success and how factors such as environment (e.g., neighborhoods, family, friends) and core needs (e.g., fulfillment, self-esteem, self-actualization) affect them.

Rationale for Study (Emphasis on Individual Goal Setting)

A large body of research regarding academically underperforming Black students, students of color, and the economically disadvantaged student population has examined reform from a purely legislative and community-centered vantage point. Specifically, research shows that educational advocates address the issue of education reform and the

urgent need to close the achievement gap predominantly through the narrow lens of policy reformation and legislation. Mandates such as the No Child Left Behind Act have arguably functioned to exacerbate the issues in our education system as opposed to eradicating them. In the few instances where the focus does shift from policy and legislation to something more imminent, a strong push for professional development on the administrative and instructional level has heightened in recent years along with a push for community and parental partnerships within school as a reform initiative. These initiatives have proven to be marginally effective at best, and some can even be said to have broadened the achievement gap. Conversely, a limited amount of research has examined the student-centered vantage point (focus) as a means of reform. Namely, what happens when students become their own change agents? This study explored self-motivation and the process of setting personal goals as a means of reform.

Understanding how goal setting and aligning one's goals with the educational process have on academic affects outcomes provides insight into narrowing the achievement gap.

Importance of Study

This study is important because it explored strategies that will address the dismal academic outcomes of students of color and economically disadvantaged students. Based on the research that examines these students K–12 experience and graduation rates, Black students, other students of color, and economically disadvantaged students are, in general, not succeeding at the rate of their suburban and rural counterparts. The lack of academic success is a major concern because of the long-term implications on Black students', students' of color, and economically disadvantaged students' quality of life, which is to say their economic, social, and relational well-being. Understanding the

relationship between motivation, goal framing, and academic outcomes, specifically among students of color and economically disadvantaged students is a significant step in addressing the achievement gap in these communities and some of the accompanying long-term implications (e.g., earning power, unemployment, quality of life).

Earning Power and Unemployment. A 2012 U.S. Census Bureau survey highlights the disparity between high school dropouts and those who leverage their educational opportunities. The report shows students who dropped out of school earned, on average, \$10,386 less annually than individuals who graduated from high school. And the disparity between high school dropouts and those who obtain a 4-year degree is even greater. The report shows that, on average, college graduates earned \$36,424 more annually than their peers who did not finish high school.

Race and Employment. In addition to the traditional implications associated with underperforming academically, race-related challenges are a major factor regarding employment opportunities. In fact, according to Harper (2006) and Strayhorn (2010), Black dropouts were the least likely to be employed (31%) followed by Asians (43%), Whites (46%), and Hispanics (53%). This implies a jobless rate for Blacks of 69% followed by Asians at 57%, Whites at 54%, and Hispanics at 47% (Harper, 2006; Strayhorn, 2010).

Family Life. According to The Center for Labor Market Studies at Northwestern University (2009), “The nation’s young dropouts experience a wide array of labor market, earnings, social, and income problems that exacerbate their ability to transition to careers and stable marriages from their mid-20s onward” (p.2).

Quality of Life. A 2011 National Center for Education Statistics study showed that between the ages of 18 and 24, high school dropouts, with a poverty rate of 30.8%, were more than twice as likely to live in poverty as peers who graduated from college. Furthermore, according to a 2009 study by researchers at Northeastern University, high school dropouts ages 16 to 24 were 63 times more likely than college graduates of the same age to be incarcerated.

Critical Terms and Definitions Used in this Study

Below are the critical terms and their definitions as used in this study.

Goal Framing. This study defines goal framing as a strategy for helping students identify a “why” for academic achievement. Specifically, students are asked to seek, identify, and explore their life-long goals, as well as the goals they hope to achieve in the immediate future.

Goal framing is not only an educational exercise, but also a practical tool that can assist in governing one’s own cognitive and motivational processes. Goal framing is of the utmost importance as it relates to assisting underperforming or disengaged students because of the effect goals have on students (Lindenberg, 2007). Goal framing identifies:

- What students attend to
- What information they are sensitive toward
- What information they neglect
- What information they are interested in
- What information disinterest them
- What aspects of knowledge they embrace
- What aspects of knowledge they activate

- What criteria for goal achievement is being applied

Motivation. Attribution theory is probably the most influential contemporary theory with implications for academic motivation. This theory incorporates behavior modification in the sense that it emphasizes the idea that learners are strongly motivated by the pleasant outcome of being able to feel good about themselves. Furthermore, it incorporates cognitive theory and self-efficacy theory in the sense that it emphasizes that learners' current self-perceptions will strongly influence the ways in which they will interpret the success or failure of their current efforts and hence their future tendency to perform these same behaviors (Weiner, 1980).

According to attribution theory, the *explanations* that people tend to make to explain success or failure can be analyzed in terms of three sets of characteristics (Weiner, 1992):

- First, the cause of the success or failure may be *internal* or *external*. That is, we may succeed or fail because of factors that we believe have their origin within us or because of factors that originate in our environment.
- Second, the cause of the success or failure may be either *stable* or *unstable*. If the cause is stable, then the outcome is likely to be the same if we perform the same behavior on another occasion. If it is unstable, the outcome is likely to be different on another occasion.
- Third, the cause of the success or failure may be either *controllable* or *uncontrollable*. A controllable factor is one that we believe we can alter if we wish to do so. An uncontrollable factor is one that we do not believe we can easily alter.

Note that this factor is distinct from the previous two categories. An *internal* factor can be controllable (we can control our effort by trying harder) or uncontrollable (most people cannot easily change their basic intellectual ability or change from being an introvert to being an extrovert). Likewise, an *external* factor can be controllable (a person failing a difficult course could succeed by taking an easier course) or uncontrollable (if calculus is difficult because it is abstract, it will still be abstract no matter what we do).

Student Engagement. The fundamental idea underlying engagement theory is that students must be meaningfully engaged in learning activities through interaction with others and worthwhile tasks. While such engagement could occur without the use of technology in principle, technology can facilitate engagement in ways that are difficult to achieve otherwise. So engagement theory is intended to be a conceptual framework for technology-based learning and teaching (Schneiderman, 1994).

Although engagement theory is not directly derived from other theoretical frameworks for learning, it has much in common with many such frameworks. For example, it is very consistent with constructivist approaches due to its emphasis on meaningful learning. Because it emphasizes collaboration among peers and a community of learners, it can also be aligned with situated learning theories. Because it focuses on experiential and self-directed learning, it is similar in nature to theories of adult learning (e.g., andragogy), according to Schneiderman (1994).

“Engaged learning” means that all student activities involve active cognitive processes such as creating, problem solving, reasoning, decision-making, and evaluation. In addition, students are intrinsically motivated to learn due to the meaningful nature of the learning environment and activities.

Another aspect of engagement theory is based upon the idea of creating successful collaborative teams that work on ambitious projects that are meaningful to someone outside the classroom. These three components, summarized by “Relate-Create-Donate,” imply that learning activities (Schneiderman, 1988):

- Occur in a group context (e.g., collaborative teams),
- Are project-based, and
- Have an outside (authentic) focus.

Chapter 2: LITERATURE REVIEW

What you get by achieving your goals is not as important as what you

become by achieving your goals.

- Henry David Thoreau

Background

In high schools across America, the decline in student success is of epidemic proportion. Subsequently, school districts across the country are developing and implementing reform measures to address the decline. Among the reform efforts is a close examination of student engagement. In fact, according to a Gallup report, the decline in student engagement begins long before it is detected in high school:

“engagement diminishes steadily and dramatically each year that students stay in school. Specifically, 76 percent of students are engaged in elementary school. But the percentage drops to 44 percent by the time they reach high school” (Gardner, 2013).

The 2009 High School Survey of Engagement (HSSE) fully documented the progressive withdrawal that transpires once students enter high school. HSSE disclosed that fewer than half of respondents (49%) reported giving their maximum effort in “Most” or “All” of their classes. Only 9% of students reported giving their maximum effort in “None” of their classes, while the remaining 42% responded that they give their maximum effort in “1 or 2” or “Some” of their classes. In response to the question, “In about how many classes do you put in very little effort?”, 19% of students reported putting in very little effort in “Most” or “All” of their classes, while 27% reported giving very little effort in “None” of their classes. The majority of students (64%) reported giving very little effort in either “None” of their classes or “1 or 2” of their classes; thus

these students are giving more than minimal effort in almost all of their classes. At the same time, the majority of students are not giving their maximum effort in “Most” or “All” of their classes.

A closer examination of the 3,328,750 students suspended and 102,080 expelled reveals that one or more of the following reasons contribute to the numbers listed: disobedient or defiant attitudes; repeated interference; detrimental behavior; destruction of school property; drug violations; alcohol violations; tobacco violations; 1st, 2nd, or 3rd vehicular assault; 1st, 2nd and 3rd degree assault/disorderly conduct; dangerous weapons; robbery and other felonies. The alarming increase in truancy occurrences over the last decade discloses the seriousness of student disengagement which also contributes to the low persistence rates and high graduation rates the nation’s schools are experiencing. A report on truancy and dropout prevention reveals that, from the period of 1995 to 2007 alone, the number of court-petitioned truancy cases processed by juvenile courts went up by a staggering 67% (from 34,100 cases in 1995 to 57,000 cases in 2007).

Further research highlighted that, in 2009, 50% of students who participated in the HSSE survey report having skipped school either “once or twice” or “many times.” Within that group, 16% have skipped school “many times.” The report lists several reasons for their disengagement: “I didn’t like the school” (50%), “I didn’t see the value in the work I was being asked to do” (42%), and “I didn’t like the teachers” (39%). Sadly, many of these same students report goals of wanting to become lawyers, doctors, and teachers. Almost all of these students admit to wanting a stable career and finances as well as the ability to take care of their families. Thus, the goals of these students do not align with their behavior or, more to the point, the value they place on the education

process. This is not to say that engagement is the only influence on student performance. There are several powerful multifaceted influences that are interrelated, including poverty, social deprivation, school setting, low teacher morale, high teacher turnover, poor classroom instruction, inadequate teacher knowledge and skill, and crime infested neighborhoods. However, the purpose of this study is to look at student engagement as a factor in academic success. Thus, the following question must be posed:

RQ1: Is there a relationship between a student's ability to connect their interests with the education process and student achievement?

Theoretical Frameworks

Student motivation and performance is impacted by academic expectancies, beliefs, values, and goals (Bandura, 1996). This suggests that achievement, namely, academic achievement, is strongly influenced by a student's environment as environment has been attributed to shaping beliefs, values and goals (Bandura, 1996). Multiple theories have examined the motivation-to-achievement relationship. Among those theories are the Goal Framing Theory, the Human Ecological Theory, and the Self Determination Theory (SDT). All three of these theories investigate motivation and how it relates to goal achievement. These theoretical perspectives guide the current study and help to frame the research questions (Eccles-Parson, Adler, & Kaczula, 1982).

Goal Framing Theory

The Goal Framing theory has emerged from different sources, but it is most strongly influenced by research in cognitive social psychology about the influence of goals on cognitive processes (Locke & Latham, 1990). At the core of goal framing is the belief that goals shape or "frame" what is meaningful, how meaning is formed, what is

valuable, what takes precedence, how to assign priorities, how decisions are made, and ultimately, how one pursues life. For example, a musical artist by the name of Big Tobe uses a line in his song, "Momma I Made it" that says, "That means it's my time to shine. I'm what passion and purpose looks like combined!" The lyrics then discuss his excitement in being able to tell his mother, who sacrificed for him throughout his childhood, about his success as an adult. For Big Tobe, a personal goal of his, as expressed in his lyrics, was to be able to take care of his mother in the way that she took care of him. Young listeners, who can relate to wanting to be, at some point, in a position to support their parents, may be inspired to increase their level of engagement in school, sports, or life in general so that they too can one day achieve this goal. Thus, in this case, the lyrics have become a tool to help listeners frame what is meaningful to them in a way that inspires them to pursue a course or develop a goal. While several tools can be used similarly, the effect of the tool can often be influenced by other factors. For instance, in the case of Big Tobe's lyrics, the significance of the goal to take care of one's parents might be influenced by the level of passion the artist is exerting in the song (an indicator of how passionate others are about life and their purpose), the presence of the artist (as a possible source of one demonstrating high levels of motivation and passion toward purpose versus demonstrating apathy and disengagement toward purpose), and might be felt by the student and excite them to operate in their passion and purpose more energetically. Therefore in this study, I utilized a series of questionnaires and surveys that specifically addressed the sources of motivation, environmental influences, and desired goals of the students to help them frame what is meaningful to them and explore whether

these tools contribute to a change in the way that students think about the education process.

According to Lindenberg and Steg (2007), goal-dependent framing can be understood from three perspectives. First, a *hedonic goal frame* activates one or more sub goals that promise to improve the way one feels in a particular situation (such as avoiding effort, avoiding negative thoughts and events, avoiding direct uncertainty, seeking direct pleasure, seeking direct improvement in self-esteem, seeking excitement etc.). In this frame, the criterion for goal realization is evidenced through improvement in the way one feels. Thus, people in a hedonic frame are especially sensitive to those things that increase and decrease their pleasure and affect their mood. For example, the realization that several homework assignments are incomplete may produce feelings of anxiety and stress that one would prefer to get beyond. However, completion of the unfinished homework assignments would likely require one to miss out on other enjoyable activities. This extra effort can, in turn, create feelings of discomfort. Finishing one's homework assignment and turning it in on time does not require as great a deal of effort, in comparison, and creates a euphoric sense of accomplishment once completed. In short, when done on time, the homework assignment is completed with comparatively very little effort and with more immediate gratification.

A *gain goal frame* will make people very sensitive to changes in their personal resources. Its time horizon is middle or long term, and the criterion for goal realization is an improvement of (or prevention of decrease in) one's resources or efficiency of resources (Lindenberg & Steg, 2007). For example, if participating in illegal activities on school property could benefit one financially, but on the other hand, put one at risk of

being expelled from school and/or incarceration, a person in a gain goal frame will choose the former because of the potential of increasing one's financial situation. Sub goals having to do with resources (i.e., saving money, increasing one's income, dealing with threats to one's financial security), will be easily activated, but sub goals having to do how one feels are pushed into the cognitive background. Furthermore, norms can play an important role in a gain goal frame to the degree that the individual is focused on positive or negative sanctions.

A *normative goal frame* activates a variety of sub goals associated with appropriateness (i.e., behaving the right way, contributing to a clean environment, showing exemplary behavior). Normative goal frames will make people especially sensitive to what they think one ought to do. Thus, the important aspects of a situation are normative, both in the sense that one is sensitive to "oughts" according to self or others and sensitive to what one observes other people doing. For example, a student operating in the normative goal frame would volunteer and assist a substitute teacher with her transition into a new class merely because it's a noble act to do. When people are in a normative goal frame, then sub goals having to do with how they feel and with personal resources are pushed into the cognitive background.

Self-Determination Theory

Self-determination theory asserts students' motivation and achievement is contingent upon the fulfillment of their valued goals (Kasser, 2002). Goals are extremely personal; therefore, what motivates one student may or may not motivate a different student. For this reason, some academic goals are better than others depending on the student. Motivation and achievement are influenced by an innate tendency to grow and

developed and an innate desire to fulfill one's psychological needs (Deci & Ryan 2000). These innate characteristics are influenced by the choices people make absent of any external influences or interferences.

Traditionally, student motivation has been examined from two constructs: intrinsic motivation and extrinsic motivation (Vansteenkiste, Lens, & Deci, 2006). Intrinsic motivation refers to a student engaging in a learning activity for its own sake, simply because he or she enjoys it and it is gratifying in and of itself (Deci & Ryan, 2000). For example, a student may enroll in a high-level math course that is not required simply because he or she wants to develop math skills, or a student may enroll in a foreign language class that is not required in order to develop their language skills. Extrinsic motivation, on the other hand, refers to a student engaging in a learning activity for a purpose unrelated to the learning activity itself (See Figure 1.). For instance, a student might complete a homework assignment to participate in a field trip or class party.

These innate characteristics are influenced by the choices people make absent of any external influences or interferences (Ryan, 2000).



Figure 1: Self Determination Chart

Therefore, this study investigated how a student's achievement (e.g., grades, behavior, or attendance record) is influenced by their desire to fulfill his or her goals once they have successfully made the connection between the ability to fulfill those goals and the education process. This study also investigated how students articulated motivation in the context of whether students were externally or intrinsically motivated or whether students exhibit a combination of both.

Human Ecological Theory

The **human ecological theory**, presented by Bubolz and Santog (1993), also provides insight into the dismal academic situation of a growing number of urban students. The human ecological theory involves studying the environment and its impact on academic progress. The theory purports that student motivation and outcomes are influenced by interactions of humans within all aspects of their environment including

social, physical, and even biological components. This study specifically examined the home and school social aspects that may influence student motivation as well as individual goal framing. In addition, this study examined the home and school social aspects that influenced student motivation as well as individual goal framing. For instance, many student interview questions inquired about parents' values and beliefs on education, whether education is emphasized in the home in any way, and whether this emphasis or lack thereof serves as a driving force in the student's motivation to engage in the academic process.

It was important to explore the similarities and the differences that occur in the creation and the function (how and why goal framing is used in school and at home to support success) of individual goal framing during school hours and at home. In addition, it was critical to explore the similarities and the different motivational and goal choices that occur at home versus in the school environment. This may provide valuable information about the factors that affect student motivation and success. In short, the environment in which students engage in individual goal framing may significantly influence the attitudes and practices of goal framing.

RQ2: What type of individual goal framing decisions and motivation practices are students using during school hours and in their home environment?

RQ3: How do students' goal framing and motivational choices in school compare to their goal framing and motivational choices in their home environment?

RQ4: What is the relationship between *Home-Based Practices* and *Student Motivation*?

RQ5: What is the relationship between *School-Based Practices* and *Student Motivation*?

RQ6: What *Home-Based Practices* do students report after *Individual Goal Framing*?

RQ7: What *School-Based Practices* do students report after *Individual Goal Framing*?

Numerous young boys and men of color are not reared in environments in which the cultural and behavioral norms of home, neighborhood, and school are seamlessly integrated and reinforced. Indeed, many of them experience cognitive and emotional dissonance every day as they move from the world of the home to the world of the streets to the school environment. For example, goal framing may be foreign to students who come from environments where they've seen few to no prior examples of family members accomplishing their goals or achieving self-actualization. This is important, because this puts them in the situation where they lack the knowledge or the motivation necessary to take full advantage of goal framing and goal achievement. On the other hand, students who come from environments where they've been exposed to examples of family members who have achieved success on various levels as a means of goal setting are more likely to reproduce or emulate the success that their parents have had as a result of goal framing.

The Human Ecological Theory can be used to heighten teachers' awareness about the varied cultures of their students to broaden their pedagogical approaches and better serve underrepresented students (Bubolz & Sontag, 1993). The theory takes all aspects of the human environment into consideration and analyzes the interactions of humans with their environments (Bubolz & Sontag, 1993). Factors such as social, physical, and even biological components are examined in this theory and it can be used to explain why underrepresented students fail academically in comparison to their more privileged peers.

For instance, prior sections assert that low-income students do not perform as well as their more affluent peers. This phenomenon can be attributed to the fact that students

from lower income families have to contend with daily challenges that affluent children do not face (i.e., emotional and social challenges, health and safety issues, and other stressors). As a result, their brains have adapted to conditions in a way that undermines good school performance and thus makes academic success even more of a challenge (Jensen, 2013).

Such realities don't make academic success impossible, but it is important that teachers understand the realities affecting their low-income students as well as the circumstances affecting their other underrepresented students to make academic success a possibility for all of their students (Jensen, 2013). Using the Human Ecological Theory as a foundation, providing teacher education on cultural relevancy would make it possible to educate all children at high levels in spite of their varied backgrounds. This suggests that it is possible for schools to take actions that can reverse the patterns of low achievement among underrepresented students (Edmonds, 1979). The fact that some schools and programs manage to do so already is further evidence that the possibility exists of altering these trends to the degree that we accept the concept that human beings have the capacity to resist submission to cultural patterns, demographic trends, environmental pressures, and constraints. Actions such as these could be the key to changing academic outcomes and altering the direction of negative trends for underrepresented students (Freire, 1972).

In addition to goal framing and human ecological theory, the impact of expectations on academic achievement has been examined. Expectations play a major role in student's attitudes and performance (Green, 1987). The impact of student: expectation on student engagement and achievement cannot be underestimated. For example, students who have little to no belief in their academic abilities or have yet to

learn what they are truly passionate about are less likely to see the benefits of participating in goal framing activities and thus will not be as willing to participate in these type of activities at school or at home. On the other hand, students who have a strong sense of what they want to achieve in life seem to be motivated or more likely to participate in goal framing exercises at home and at school.

This study specifically examined if student expectations influence their belief about and ability to engage in individual goal framing. It was important to explore the different ways attitudes and expectations affect beliefs and abilities in relation to individual goal framing.

RQ8: How does a student's academic attitude impact *Individual Goal Framing*?

RQ9: How does a student's academic attitude impact *Home and School Practice*?

RQ10: How does a student's academic attitude impact *Student Motivation*?

Low academic expectations can adversely affect students' self-esteem and belief in their academic abilities, resulting in academic disengagement and, even worse, academic failure. Student reform must seek ways to raise student expectations if schools seek to combat the academic crisis plaguing urban schools. "The first step in breaking down the barrier of low expectations is helping students discover and believe in their own potential. If we can help convince young Black men and all students at risk of academic failure that they can succeed and have choices, it won't be long before their resignation turns to anticipation of a brighter future, and the cycle of low expectations is broken" (Communities In Schools 2012, pg. 3). A recent survey conducted by the National Center for Education in 2009, which evaluated ninth-grade students who indicated that they expected to obtain a minimum of an undergraduate degree from college, revealed that

students of color have lower academic expectations and aspirations than their ethnic counterparts. The statistics revealed that fewer students of color have internalized the possibility of pursuing their education beyond primary and secondary levels. The survey indicated that 65% of African American males and 65% of Hispanic males desire to pursue an undergraduate degree compared to 71% of White males and 79% of Asian males. The numbers for females who desire to pursue an undergraduate degree are higher in general, but the gaps are parallel: 73% of Hispanic females and 74% of African American females compared to 81% of White females and 89% of Asian females.

In addition to student expectations and its influence on individual goal framing and student motivation, this study also examined teachers' expectations and the influence it may have on individual goal framing and the accompanying effects on student behavior. For example, I witnessed first-hand my daughter's attitude towards the pursuit of her goals when she transferred from one school district (one that encouraged her to engage in goal framing activities) to another less supportive district. Throughout her educational experience in the former district, she was encouraged by her teachers to set her goals high and because of this she spoke and planned in a way that conveyed an interest in setting and achieving goals—during this time she spoke very passionately about her desire to pursue a law or business degree at Harvard University. However, when she transferred districts, she began to complain that her teachers overlooked her and left her out of extra-curricular activities and other goal-oriented activities. The teachers in this case did not set high expectations for her; as a result, she withdrew from goal framing at school and reserved it for home. She would mention that it appeared teachers had a high level of expectations of other students in her classroom her and they would

encourage those students to get involved even if they didn't volunteer certain information that would normally welcome those types of conversations. When she was home, she demonstrated more comfort engaging in goal-framing activities and conversations, but there was still a marked difference between her engagement at school in the new district compared to that of the old district.

In his biography, Malcolm X mentioned his dreams of becoming a lawyer to his teacher, and his teacher told him that he should pursue a career as a custodian instead. This was the effect of the new district on my daughter—the teachers limited her based on pre-conceived notions of what they believed she was capable of. On the other hand, when teachers had high expectations for students, those students were encouraged to participate in goal-setting activities. Thus, it is important to ask the question about potential influence (how teachers empower or discourage student goal framing) and their outcomes.

RQ11: What role do *Teacher Expectations* play in *Individual Goal Framing*?

RQ12: What role do *Teacher Expectations* play in *Home and School Practices*?

RQ13: What role do *Teacher Expectations* play in *Student Motivation*?

Teacher expectations are potentially correlated to student engagement and student achievement. Additionally, teacher expectations can assist in the reigniting of school passion and helping students push beyond their academic boundaries and embrace life-long learning. As Green (1987) asserted:

School quality, teacher quality, and teacher expectations, however, are the more important elements of socialization for college and career readiness, and like academic preparation of African American males will be important to address in

order to mobilize them toward higher educational achievement and career success (pg.21).

Multiple studies support the belief that the academic success (i.e., interest in learning, time on task, low behavior behavioral incidence) of students of colors largely be attributed to positive, healthy relationships with teachers, coaches, or activity leaders who motivate and consistently demonstrate love and support. In addition to the characteristics mentioned, those who hold them academically, socially, and personally accountable when they divert from the course can positively affect academic success.

Finally, this study looked at the influence parental expectations may have on individual goal framing and on student behavior. Another body of research that explored the influence of parental expectations, Eccles-Parson, Adler, and Kaczala (1982), found a correlation between the parents' perceptions and expectations for their child's engagement and achievement variables pertaining to a student's own academic expectations, perceptions of a task difficulty, and self-efficacy. For example, parents who have not achieved their life goals may feel trapped or feel like failures, and may subconsciously or consciously discourage their children from pursuing their dreams or passions because they do not want them to be discouraged as they were in their past experiences.

In contrast, parents who have experienced self-actualization are more likely to encourage their children to engage in goal framing activities because they've experienced the first-hand benefits and want to see these benefits duplicated in their children's life. In many cases, parents start this process early and consistently by doing such things as enrolling them in academic programs, summer programs, and enrichment programs that

encourage goal achievement.

Consequently, it was important to ask the question about potential influence (how parents empower or discourage students' goal framing) and their outcomes.

RQ14: What role do *Parental Expectations* play in *Individual Goal Framing*?

In addition to parent expectations, a body of educational research supports the notion that students' standardized test results are highly influenced by parent engagement in effective study habits at home (Epstein, 1991). Thus it was important to examine how parent engagement at home affects both school and home practices and student motivation.

RQ15: What role do *Parental Expectations* play in *Home and School Practices*?

RQ16: What role do *Parental Expectations* play in *Home and Student Motivation*?

A growing body of research supports that the beliefs parents hold regarding person attitudes, language, and engagement in school activities influences how their children view school (Noguera, 2003). In fact, Eccles-Parson, Adler, and Kaczala (1982) argued that parental belief has a stronger influence on a child's academic outcomes than the child's previous academic history.

Interestingly, according to Coleman and Hoffer (1987), there is research that matriarchical expectations have significant impact on student achievement. For example, the dropout rates of students whose mothers' had high expectations for them were lower than students whose mothers had low to no aspirations. It has been reported that fewer than 12% of students whose mothers have aspirations for them to attend college actually drop out of school, whereas the rate almost doubles (21%) for students whose mother's do not expect them to attend college (Coleman, 1988). Further data indicates that having

a mother's support decreases the likelihood of disruptive behaviors, being held back, and students being expelled compared to that of a father's support. However, having a supportive father increases to some extent the academic outcomes compared to mothers.

The data show that students who have the active support of both parents from kindergarten through fifth grade are nearly twice as likely to succeed than those who do not. Additionally, students with the support of both parents are believed to enjoy school more and have higher levels of academic success as those without the same type of parental support.

The emphasis on parental expectations and support cannot be overlooked. While, teacher quality and teacher expectations are critical in student achievement; the significance of a supportive system cannot be underestimated. This supports Bronfenbrenner's (1981) theory that everything in a child's environment affects how a child grows and develops.

Chapter 3: RESEARCH DESIGNS AND METHODS

“Everything that can be counted does not necessarily count;

everything that counts cannot necessarily be counted.”

-Albert Einstein

This study utilized the narrative approach which affords researchers a meaningful way to explore and better understand the student’s individual identity, and their culture and social world indicate the following about the narrative approach (Lieblich, Tuval-Maschiach, & Zilber, 1998):

The mission of psychology is to explore and understand the inner world of individuals. One of the clearest channels for learning about the inner world is through verbal accounts and stories presented by the individual narrators about their lives and their experienced reality. (p. 31)

Some scholars, however, express caution about the validity of the narrative method. In fact (Denzin and Lincoln, 1994) argue in their book, *The Handbook of Qualitative Research*, that the qualitative research field has a series of contradictions and hesitations. Lieblich, Tuval-Maschiach and Zilber (1998), however, take a more middle of the road approach. They state that:

We do not advocate total relativism that treats all narratives as texts of fiction. On the other hand, we do not take narratives as face value, as complete and accurate representations of reality. We believe stories are usually constructed around a core of facts or life events, yet allow a wide periphery for the freedom of individuality and creativity in selection, addition to, emphasis on, and interpretation of these remembered facts.

In short, for those engaged in the formation of change in the educational arena, narrative study research allows a unique and rich exploration of a range of complexities and practices that may provide researchers with a key to discovering identity and understanding it.

My research questions were best explored through the use of a narrative approach. The narrative approach incorporates two major components that are consistent with Casey's (1995-1996) oral study and Lieblich, Tuval-Mashiach and Zilber's (1998) holistic-content reading model for classification of narrative approaches. The biographical study is a form of narrative studies that is designed to portray the experiences of people's lives through recordings and writing (Creswell, 2012). In this type of study, the narrative is secondary to helping advance the understanding of a broader issue, as the researcher has an external motive that extends beyond an accurate representation of reality. In this study, the narrative conveys a level of clarity and insight into the daily complexities of Black students, other students of color, and economically disadvantaged students both in and out of school. By identifying these complexities and exploring the impact of the IGF strategy, scholars and practitioners will be able to design programs that help students achieve higher levels of academic success.

The second form of narrative studies, holistic-content reading, is designed to capture one's whole story and focuses specifically on its content. The holistic-content reading approach is employed to, "focus on studying a single person, gathering data through the collection of stories, reporting individual experiences, and discussing the meaning of those experiences for the individual" (Creswell, 2012).

Setting and Participants

This study will be conducted at King High School, one of three high schools in an urban school district in the Midwest (note that pseudonyms are used throughout for the names of the school, the district, and students). The King High School district serves 13,183 students in kindergarten through twelfth grades, according to the district's demographic reports. The 2010 Census places the city's population at 114,297. The median income per family was only \$34,833, according to Census data. During the 2011–2012 school year, just over 50% of students participated in the free and reduced-price lunch. The percentage receiving free or reduced lunch increased a little more than in the 2010–2011 school year.

Racially, the district is diverse, with 46.5% of its student body identifying as minority (23.5% African American; 10.3% Hispanic; 5.1% Multiracial; 2.6% American Indian; 3.4% Asian; and 1.5% other), while 53.5% is classified as White. King High School serves 1,390 students in ninth through twelfth grades and is identified as a Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematical academy with a focus in Performing Arts. Alarming, 70% of its student body is identified as economically disadvantaged and 60% of their student population was eligible for free or reduced-price lunch program. The school's cultural identity does not mirror that of the district in that 81.54% of King High School students are classified as non-White (44% African American; 15% Hispanic; 3% Multiracial; 1% American Indian; 12% Asian and 0% other), while only 28.6% are White. The State's Department of Education data reported that, in 2010, more than a quarter of the district's students failed to graduate (see Table 1 below).

Table 1: District and School Demographics

2013 data	School District	King High School
Percentage of economically disadvantaged students		70%
Percentage of minority students	46.5%	74%
Graduation rate		75%

The district, including King High School, has placed a heavy emphasis on interventions designed to decrease behaviors of academically unproductive student since the inception of No Child Left Behind. As a result, the district formed and empowered a Professional Learning Community (PLC) whose sole purpose is to meet with principals on a regular basis to share information and solicit feedback on activities at the building level that lead to an increase in student engagement. Specifically, the function of the PLC and the principals is to create opportunities for collaboration between Central Administration and Building Administration regarding the success of interventions designed to decrease academically unproductive student behaviors. The focus of the Culture of Care for the 2013–14 school year is to reduce the number of unproductive behavioral incidents by 15%. Thus, the district’s creation of new guidelines helps educators aggressively explore alternative methods that assist underperforming and economically disadvantage students in dealing with their life situations in order to help them decrease their number of tardies, absences, and suspensions; spend more time in school; and increase academic achievement. Thus, this educational environment provides

an opportunity to work with students at King High School and explore the study's research questions and the relationships between IGF and various academic outcomes.

Description of Sample and Selection Procedures

The New York State Education Department (NYSED) helps to identify the sample population that will be comprised of students who attend schools in urban areas rather than a rural, small town, or suburban area and that have a relatively high rate of poverty. The sample population has a relatively high proportion of students of color (as reported by NYSED), has a relatively high proportion of students who are Limited English Proficient (as reported by NYSED) and has been designated as "High Need" by NYSED.

The school's faculty and staff will assist in selecting and recruiting from the student population. Additionally, the faculty and staff will assist in distributing and collecting consent forms (see Appendix C). Finally, guidance counselors will be asked to observe student behavior and response to motivational stimuli and report findings for documentation.

After the school's faculty and staff identify the initial pool of students, sixteen students will be selected from King High for participation in the current study. These sixteen students will be selected based on meeting three of the following four characteristics: behavioral challenges, held back at least one academic year, borderline or underperforming academically, and economically disadvantaged. Furthermore, participants will be students who describe themselves as African American or Multiracial with one of the descriptors being African American (see Figure 3 Below). Students will not receive monetary compensation for their participation; however, soda and pizza will

be provided at each group meeting. In addition, participants will be informed that the results of the study would be shared with their school administrators.

Table 2: Participants

Name	Code	Gender	Age	Grade	Race
Student 1	John	Male	16	10	African American
Student 2	Steve	Male	17	11	African American
Student 3	Roger	Male	15	10	African American
Student 4	Laura	Female	16	11	African American
Student 5	Marcus	Male	16	10	African American/ Hispanic
Student 6	Trevor	Male	14	9	African American/ Hispanic
Student 7	Victoria	Female	15	10	African American
Student 8	Thomas	Male	15	10	African American
Student 9	Carley	Female	16	10	African American
Student 10	Brandon	Male	16	10	African American/ Hispanic
Student 11	James	Male	15	10	African American
Student 12	Riley	Male	16	10	African American/ Hispanic
Student 13	Camille	Female	15	10	African American
Student 14	Darius	Male	17	11	African American

The Participants

Although the only selection criteria for students engaged in this project was low classroom engagement and lack of academic motivation, the list of study participants grew to be quite diverse. The growth is reflected in the mix of age, grade levels, and ethnic background (See Figure 4). By gender, 64% of the participants were males (12 students) while 36% were females (4 students). Ages range from 14 to 18, with the median age 15. By race, 100% of the students identify as minorities (African American; two Latino-African American). Their classroom behavioral activities were well represented: five have been reported as very engaged during class; four have been reported as having some engagement challenges, which is to say they have demonstrated behavioral outburst in one or more classes or several times throughout the school year; and two have been reported as not engaged in learning process at all, which is to say they are extremely disengaged. They have been kicked either removed from the classroom setting on more than one occasion, sent to an afterschool suspension program, suspended from school, expelled from school at some point, or transferred to this school from other. Below is a summary of the behavioral activities of the participants.

Table 3: Behavior and GPA Assessment

Focus Group / Participant Chart			
Name	Code	Behavior Assessment	GPA
Student 1	John	No Problems	2.33
Student 2	Steve	No Problems	2.67
Student 3	Roger	Extreme Problems	0.875
Student 4	Laura	No Problems	2.0
Student 5	Marcus	Some Problems	2.06

Table 3 (cont'd)

Student 6	Trevor	Some Problems	2.37
Student 7	Victoria	Some Problems	1.66
Student 8	Thomas	No Problems	1.25
Student 9	Carley	Some Problems	2.1
Student 10	Brandon	No Problems	2.08
Student 11	James	Some Problems	2.43
Student 12	Riley	Extreme Problems	1.72
Student 13	Camille	No Problems	1.91
Student 14	Darius	Extreme Problems	2.09

John. John, a sophomore, is an African American male. He lived with his mother for the last 16 years, but his mother and biological father just recently married. He has 10 siblings in total, two by his mother and father together and seven by his father. In terms of his level of excitement about school, he says he puts forth about a 65% effort toward school. He is a borderline student with a 2.33 overall grade point average. He has not been reported for any major violations, but his teachers have complained on multiple occasions about John's classroom behavior. Specifically, teachers have complained about excessive talking, joking, and being distracted doing class. He maintains that he is capable of doing better but finds it difficult to stay as motivated as he was the beginning of the school year.

Steve. Steve, a junior, is an African American male who lives with his mother. He has three siblings, two brothers and one sisters. However, he currently lives with his youngest sister and his mom. When asked what level of effort he puts forth toward school, he said 80%. Despite his below average grade point average, he insists that his academic failure is mainly due to freshmen year woes. Steve shared that out of 13

classes, he failed nine, and scored a C and a B in other courses. Surprisingly, he has had not behavior challenges in or out of class. When asked about his academic future, he simply believes that, had it not been for his freshmen year, his grade point average would be much higher and he will use the next few semesters to improve his GPA.

Roger. Roger, a sophomore, is an African American male living with his mom. After speaking with him about the effort he puts in school, he confessed that he is putting less than 60%. He says that he struggles to find a reason to be passionate about school. He says that he doesn't have any problems staying focused in class but does have a challenge putting forth effort toward class work and homework. Roger is underperforming academically; he managed to fail six out of seven of his courses last semester and was held back a grade due to his academic struggles. He currently has a .875 GPA, but he plans on setting some higher academic goals for himself and bringing his grades up to at least a 2.0 his final semester.

Laura. Laura, sophomore, is an African American female. She currently lives with her mothers, brother and 3 older sisters. Laura did not speak much about her father. She never mentioned if he was in her life or if he lived in the area. When asked about her commitment to school and her academic workload, she confidently said she gave a 70% effort. Her effort spoke directly to her 2.0 grade point average. Regardless of what her grade point average might suggest, Laura has had absolutely no behavioral challenges in or out of the classroom.

Marcus. Marcus, a freshman, is multicultural African American/Mexican. He currently lives with his mother but his father is fighting for custody. Marcus' father recently was released from prison after serving a seven-year sentence. The custody battle

has weighed heavy on his motivation and school focus. In fact, he had a 3.0 grade point average his first semester of his freshmen year, but dropped to a 2.06 grade point average his second semester. In addition to the custody battle, Marcus has had to attend school while facing major economic and emotional challenges as well. At some point during the school year, his family's electricity and water was shut off. Surprisingly, despite all the out-of-school distractions, he has not had any behavioral challenges.

Trevor. Trevor, a freshmen, is a bi-racial male living with his mother. He mentioned he has a brother but his brother currently lives with his father. When I asked if his brother and father lived in another city, he said yes, they lived in a neighboring city. However, he did mention that he and his mother had an estranged relationship. After speaking to with Trevor about the effort he exerts academically, he said he only puts about 40% into his schoolwork. During the initial interview process, he mentioned on more than one occasion how one's home life plays a big major part in one's academic success. Specifically, Trevor's grades and classroom behavior reflects his home life challenges. He went from earning a place on the honor roll one semester to failing drastically the next. In addition to his academic spiral, Trevor has repeatedly displayed acts of aggression and insubordination. Trevor currently has a 2.37 cumulative GPA and has made a personal commitment to put more effort forward academically in order to fight his way back to the honor roll.

Victoria. Victoria, a sophomore, is an African American female. She lives with her mother and her two older sisters. Her elder sister is a recent graduate from Everett High School and her other sister is currently a junior at Everett high school. Victoria mentioned that she and her father have an estranged relationship and that he lives in

Ohio. Victoria insists that she puts at least 70% effort toward her schoolwork, but she currently maintains a 1.66 GPA. In addition to her academic challenges, she has had even greater challenges behaviorally. Victoria admits that she has, at minimum, at least one behavioral incident a week. She has been kicked out of class for excessive talking and sent to the guidance counselor for truancy issues on several occasions. In fact, once during a scheduled observation, I was told she was in the principal's office for being disruptive in the hall during class periods. However, when I went to the office in search of her, the administrative assist informed me she had rudely walked out of the office without permission.

Thomas. Thomas, a sophomore, is an African American male whose living condition have changed drastically. Ten months ago, his mother was incarcerated for fraud and sentenced to five years. When I asked him about his father, he said his father lived in Phoenix and he had not spoken to him in quite some time. For now, his stepfather has custody of him and Thomas has no brothers or sisters. Thomas' grades reflect his social challenges; he currently has a 1.25 GPA. In addition to his academic challenges, Thomas has been written up by teachers on several occasions. His teachers have complained about excessive talking, his disruptive behavior, joking, and playing during instruction. When Thomas was asked what effort he exerts toward school, he said about 50%. It's obvious that the absence of his father during such a crucial time and his mother's incarceration has created undue pressure and stress.

Carley. Carley, a sophomore, is an African American female who currently lives with her mother. Her father lives in a neighboring city, but Carley says she does not speak with her father much; she additionally describes the relationship with her mom as

“rocky.” Her GPA is currently at 2.1. When asked how engaged she was in school and the effort she put forth academically this year, she say about a 70–75% effort.

Brandon. Brandon, a sophomore, is a bi-racial male. He lives with his mother and his two brothers. Brandon says he only gives about 60% effort when it comes to school and he also mentioned in our initial interview that he viewed school as very stressful. His records show that he has had no behavioral problem to date. However, a close examination reveals that his effort toward school plays a major role in the disparity in his grades. Of the grades in 13 of his classes, six of them were a B or higher (three Bs and three As). A number of the courses he scored a B or higher were weighty courses (economics, world history, and algebra). However, seven of grades were below average, one C, three Ds, and three NG). It is obvious that when Brandon is motivated to learn, he has the ability. He promises to be more focused this the final semester and bring his grades up.

James. James, a sophomore, is an African American male. He lives with his mother, two older brothers and his younger sister. When asked how he would rate his level of engagement toward school and what effort he exerted toward his schoolwork, he stated about 60%. There appears to be a direct correlation between his level of engagement and his academic outcome. He currently has a 2.43 GPA. In 11 of his 13 classes, he has received an average to below average grade (4 Cs and 7 Ds). In addition to his grades, Michael has had several problems with his teachers. In one of the more severe incidents, Michael was sent to the principal’s office for using his phone during class when the teacher reminded him of the “no phone during school hours” rule and he refused to cooperate. Michael says the cell phone was an isolated incident and it does not

represent who he truly is. He has accepted the challenge to demonstrate he has the ability to stay out of trouble and he has ability to bring his grades up to par.

Riley. Riley, a freshmen, is a bi-racial male. He lives with his mother and has a sister. When asked how motivated he was about school and the effort he has exerted, he said about 60%. Riley currently has a 1.72 GPA and has had a number of behavioral challenges. A number of his teachers have complained about him constantly disrupting the class, joking, and playing. Others have complained about his poor work ethic, time on task, and lying a great deal about homework assignments. Riley admits he needs to mature and that he needs to raise the level of his commitment toward his school work.

Camile. Camile, a freshman, is an African American female who currently lives with her great-aunt. Almost a year ago, Camile's mom died and her great-aunt assumed custody. Her father is local, but she mentioned they do not have a close relationship. When ask how engaged she was in school and her schoolwork, she surprisingly said 80%. Despite the fact that her GPA is 1.91, one has to consider that the death of her mother has affected her academic focus. Camile seemed very resilient under the circumstances, but she did say that, at times, the loss of her mother and the peculiar relationship with her dad weighs on her. In the face of her struggles, however, she has managed to stay out of trouble and has had no trouble with her teachers or staff.

Darius. Darius, a junior, is an African American male. He has lived with his mother for the last 16 years but his mother and biological father just recently married. He has 10 siblings in total, two by his mother/father and seven by his father. Darius says his effort in school is about 50%. His 50/50 attitude reflects his borderline 2.09 GPA. His grades reveal his borderline GPA is less about aptitude and primarily about attitude ; he

had one A and 6 Bs on his last report card marking. Darius's record also reveals he has had a number of behavioral challenges that range from fighting to insubordination. On several occasions, teachers reported Darius to either the principal's office or his guidance counselor for excessive talking or for being disruptive.

Methods

The following materials were used in this study:

Student Survey: The student survey consists of a document with questions about future goals, career desires, and motivational influences.

Goal Framing Tool: The goal framing tool is a document with a series of questions designed to make students do internal reflection.

Supplementary Goal Framing Tools: The supplementary goal framing tools comprise eight documents with reinforcement activities to help students focus on their goals.

Process

The student survey was prepared by identifying common factors that influence what most would consider to be "desirable outcomes." For instance, a good job, a comfortable income, the ability to take care of one's family, and a safe place to live are common intrinsic and extrinsic motivators. Both the goal framing tool and the supplementary goal framing tools were prepared by generating a list of many of the same intrinsic and extrinsic motivators and combining those with activities that will help students to focus on the aspects of life that motivate or influence them the most.

To begin this process, administrators of a local urban school were contacted. Specifically, the school's counselors were briefed on the study and the anticipated outcomes. These same counselors were asked to identify students in their school who

had demonstrated a history of excessive absences, behavioral problems, truancy, low grades, and disengagement in classroom activities. This group of students was brought together in a preliminary meeting (along with their counselors) where the purpose of the study, its importance, and anticipated outcomes were presented. Students were then given permission slips to take home to their parents or guardians for proper approval to participate in the study; they were instructed to return the permission slips to their counselors. After notice was taken of students who had been given permission to participate in the study, a second meeting was held where students were given a survey containing questions about their current feelings or experiences with school and their values, motivators, and influences. The data from these surveys were taken and chronicled thematically according to the following themes: Beliefs, Values, and Attitudes; Gratitude; Family History; Personality; and Self Awareness. These themes were subsequently used to develop the supplementary goal framing tools.

During the third meeting, students were given the goal framing tool, where they identified their short term and long term goals, time frames for completion, core beliefs, and people in their environment or influence they deem to be successful. Students then shared their answers with the group and discussed with their counselors and/or teachers how their performance in school is immediately connected to their ability to achieve the outcomes they listed on the goal framing tool. These discussions were recorded. For four months following this third meeting, students met with the researcher and counselors once a week during the students' lunch hour. Group meetings started with one of the eight supplementary goal framing activities or a handout, exercise, or motivational video. After the exercise, group debriefing occurred in which the moderator asked students

questions, provided feedback about the purpose of the exercise, and provided recommendations for applying the principles to their academic or behavioral development. Students were then required to turn in weekly progress reports from their teachers at the end of each session. The discussions of each session and all reports were documented and recorded.

Counselors were instructed to observe each student's behavior on a weekly basis by making unscheduled visits to teachers as well as monitoring truancy and class attendance. Researcher will meet with the counselors for an hour on a bi-weekly basis to obtain their reports and any additional feedback.

Data collection

Case studies are a widely used qualitative research method and are often characterized as being shaped by the researcher's experience in collecting and analyzing the data (Creswell, 2012). Hence, the researcher is the instrument that shapes the process of the research. Admittedly, the researcher brings their values, biases, assumptions, and knowledge base, as well as the value-laden nature of information from the field. However, researchers continue to use the case study method with much success in real-life situations and problems. In this study, efforts were made to stay as objective as possible throughout the research process. This study drew from several forms of data collection most commonly used in case studies: semi-structured interviews with participants (e.g., face-to-face, phone, or written responses), observation data (e.g., researcher observations from weekly meetings and teacher and guidance counselor reports), document data (e.g., individual goal framing weekly handouts and student

weekly progress reports including writing samples), and academic outcome data (e.g., student grades). Data collection spanned over a four-month period.

Interviews. Interviews were the primary method of collecting data in order to explore whether students' learning experience is more intrinsic in nature versus extrinsic (Kvale, 1996). Kvale defines qualitative research interviews as "a conversation that has a structure and a purpose. It goes beyond the spontaneous of views in everyday conversations, and becomes a careful questioning and listening approach attempts with the purpose of obtaining thoroughly tested knowledge."

The interview process with each student ranged anywhere from an hour to an hour and a half (see Appendix A for interview protocol). The interview probed into each student's school experience and assessed the importance of school in the grand scheme of their future success and to what extent they have internalized their school experience. The questions also sought to understand their goal orientation: were their school experiences more intrinsic in nature or extrinsic? The interviews were held in the school's audiovisual department on the art and technology wing of the school during A and B lunch. If students were unavailable during this time, the researcher used a phone interview method to ask each question. For participants that were unable to complete face-to-face or phone interviews, the questions were given to them during one of the weekly meetings and they were asked to respond in written form.

The standard open-ended interview format was used because it is the most structured and efficient of the qualitative interviewing techniques and is useful for reducing bias when several interviewers are involved, when interviewers are less experienced or knowledgeable, or when it is important to be able to compare the

responses of different respondents (Patton, 2002).

According to Creswell, Hanson, Plano-Clark, and Morales (2007) the standard open-ended framework “allows the participants to contribute as much detailed information as they desire and it also...allows the participants to fully express their viewpoints and experiences (pg. 240).” Further, the qualitative framework allows the researcher to ask probing questions as a means of follow-up.

Although the initial interview used a standard open-ended approach, which allows for little to no variation from the script, there were follow-ups to this initial interview where each student was able to be more specific (if they so chose) and share more in-depth responses or clarify some of their previous responses. Further, more directed questions were considered in an attempt to draw further information from those participants who did not respond well to the open-ended questions.

When possible, the initial interviews were followed by informal interviews at different times throughout the course of the last academic semester during A and B lunch or after school.

Observations. A second form of data collection entailed classroom observations. Marshall and Rossman (2006) suggest that “observation is a fundamental and highly important method in all qualitative inquiry...used to discover complex interactions in natural settings.” Observations give the researcher the ability to see the entire picture and gain a peculiar insight on a known phenomenon. Additionally, and more importantly, observations allow the researcher to see and record events, comments, and interactions that potentially uncover a more comprehensive understanding of the “why” of a phenomenon. Therefore, each student participant in this project was observed at least five

to six times during the semester in order to collect data on the students' classroom behavior and classroom engagement.

While the interview process affords the researcher rich context in reference to participants' behavior, observations are added to support and strengthen the study. Fields notes were also incorporated throughout the process to ensure that the researcher captured the student experience in an accurately and timely manner for further analysis.

The process included the use of a legal pad. The researcher drew a line down the middle of the pad and labeled the left side "classroom engagement" and the right side "classroom behavior." During each observation, a series of notes based on the researcher's perceptions were taken based on the participants' classroom behavior in both areas over the four to six scheduled observations. Additionally, follow-up questions and/or other thoughts were jotted on the back of the page to address during follow-up interviews with participants.

Document Collection. A third form of data collection comprised student writing samples and goal framing. Hodder (2005) makes a strong argument for the use of document collection by stating that "it holds a key meaning of the underlying lived cultural group of person. Unlike the spoken word, endures physically and thus cannot be separated across space and time from its author, producer or user." Therefore, document collection offers information that is authentic, personal, and timeless. Documents capture some aspect of the past that can be reexamined over time without experiencing change (Lincoln & Guba, 1985).

The researcher examined both the students' writing samples related to their ongoing perception of school as well as their personal goal framing samples. Examining

student samples is a skillful form of data collection because it assists the researcher to “uncover meaning, develop meaning, and discover insights relevant to the research problem” (Merriam, 1998). In addition to the main purpose of examining student writing samples, I was able to look further into beliefs about school, the relevance of those beliefs to their personal life, and their competency beliefs regarding their academic abilities.

Data Collection Management

The following section detailed the system I used to organize the data. Several forms were constructed to guide the research and to track students’ demographical information and data collection of a multiplicity of types. Additionally, a schedule was devised to help organize my time and track the various classroom observations over the course of the four months. The forms are as follows:

- Participants’ Consent Form. This form, along with each of the other instruments listed below, was submitted to the University Institutional Research Board for approval (see Appendix C).
- The Research Study Participant Code List. This list allowed me to identify participant’s names, codes, sample demographics (reader, writer, or both), gender, age, grade, and race (see Appendix D).
- The Progress Chart. This chart listed students by code and left places to verify recipient of consent form, completion of the in-depth interview, completion of interview transcription, collection of documentation, pictures and other artifacts, and completion of all observations (see Appendix E).
- The Observation Dates Chart. This chart listed students by code and recorded

dates for each observation for each student. This process allowed me to synchronize each student's schedule with their appropriate interview throughout the year and ensure that there were no conflicts due to scheduling problems (see Appendix F).

- The Observations Schedule. The schedule provided a grid of each student's class schedule and lunch blocks/hours so that students could coordinate their observations (see Appendix G).
- The Observation Log. This log was created for students. It summarized their responses from the in-depth interview. The form chronicled dates and timeframe of observations and provided much needed feedback regarding the perception of the observations. This provided me with a quick reference sheet for my extensive observation field notes (see Appendix H).

Upon completion of the initial interviews, the formal data analysis began.

LeCompte (2000) suggested that analysis be grounded in five phases: (1) organization of data; (2) sifting through the data for frequency, omission, and declaration; (3) creating data sets through the creation of assembling groups; (4) creating patterns by grouping sets meaningfully together; and (5) creating an overall description of the problem (2000).

Subsequently, informal data analysis was conducted throughout the data collection process. Throughout each interview session and classroom observation, key points were scribed in a journal and filed upon use in a locked file cabinet. There was also an ongoing comparing and contrasting of the key points to further broaden and clarify new themes of interest. Beyond journaling as a means of gathering key points throughout in-depth interviews, video and audio recording was also a key component.

Standards for Quality

Data Collection Management. Several forms were constructed to guide the research and to track student data. Additionally, a schedule was devised to organize and track the various classroom observations over the four-month period. The forms are as follows: participants consents forms, research study participant code list, progress chart, observation dates chart, observation schedule, and observation log.

Member Checks. Lincoln and Guba (1985) called member checks the most crucial technique for establishing credibility. Member checks allow participants to review collected data, interpretations, and conclusions to ensure consistency with what they intended to communicate. Both formal and informal member checks occurred continuously during the study, beginning with interviews. Throughout the formal in-depth interviews, I verified information with students to confirm my understanding of the information they shared.

Verification of observational data continued throughout follow-up interviews with students. Emerging themes were also checked with students throughout the semester.

Triangulation. Triangulation refers to utilizing multiple data sources tests for consistency in findings. Patton (2002) describes four kinds of triangulation that can contribute to the validity of qualitative analysis: 1) methods triangulation, which checks consistency of different data collection methods; 2) triangulation of sources, which checks consistency of different data sources within the same method; 3) analyst triangulation, which relies on multiple researchers to review the findings; and 4) theory/perspective triangulation, which uses multiple theories to interpret the data.

In this study, I used the triangulation of qualitative data sources to compare the

consistency of information within different qualitative methods. According to Patton (2002), “studies that use only one method are more vulnerable to errors linked to that particular method” (p. 556). Three types of data collection (interviews, observations, and documents) provided a variety of data sources from which to examine student motivations for literacy activities. By using a combination of data collection methods, I was able to reduce the risks inherent in using only one method, and I was able to offer a more complete perspective of my participants and the issue under examination.

CHAPTER 4: RESULTS

The world is shaped by two things: stories told and the memories they leave behind.

- Vera Nazarian

The purpose of this chapter is to present the parental, peer, and environmental influences, distractions, and goal setting norms of the students who participated in this study. Moreover, this chapter looks at how parental involvement in school, articulated belief systems concerning education, and role models in education influence the goals that participants set for themselves. In addition, this chapter examines how well students connect their goals with the education choices they are presently making. Fourteen interviews were conducted, in-class observations were made, and documentation on the academic progress of the students was gathered.

Participant One

In this section, the data suggest that Participant One was extrinsically motivated as much of his commentary concerning his reasoning for pursuing academic success revolves around his family. According to Deci & Ryan (2000), students who are extrinsically motivated engage in activities for reasons that are unrelated to the activity itself.

In this case, Participant One is being raised by both his mother and father who have the responsibility of supporting several other children. He shared with me that he has seven siblings—six brothers and one sister living together in one small apartment.

Goal Creation. Participant One was very soft spoken. At our first meeting, we were able to discuss the goal of the study and his thoughts about the information that would be collected. He was extremely excited about doing anything that would help him

reach his future goals. When asked about his short-term goals, Participant One responded by saying:

I have to make my dreams a reality. I have to break the cycle because mom works two and three jobs and long hours to support me and my family. One of these days she is not going to have to work no more because I am going to be in the NFL or an engineer! . . . I want to become an engineer. I'm not 100% sure what my focus is going to be regarding engineering but one thing was for certain, I have my hopes set on becoming an engineer.

Here, Participant One's interview response is consistent with Bandura's (1996) assertion that academic achievement is influenced by a student's environment. By his own admission, the circumstances of Participant One's parents helped shaped his belief systems and goals: his statement, "I have to break the cycle because [my] mom works two and three jobs..." demonstrates the impact of Participant One's home life on his desire to attend college and play in the NFL.

Furthermore, Participant One lives with his mom and new stepfather, who had just been married a few months prior to the interview. It was easy to hear the excitement in his voice when he mentioned his parents had finally gotten married and that he and his siblings lived with both parents. He stated this as though it were an anomaly, as if marriage was rare in his community and that he and his siblings had won the lottery. Despite the fact his parents waited over 16 years to marry, it was something he was proud of. However, he mentioned how difficult it was staying focused and being motivated about school once at home. He spoke about being distracted at times because he missed his father so much and found his mind wondering off and wishing his dad was home. In

addition to longing for his father's presence, he attributed his academic struggles to living in an overcrowded house. In a journal entry he stated: "It's extremely difficult trying to buckle down and study or for that matter, find a quiet place to study in."

Barriers to Achievement. Participant One has had the unfortunate experience of witnessing the criminal behavior one of his brothers, and the consequences that followed. His family environment had a great deal to do with why he was so focused on setting long-term goals. Not only was his father not involved in his school life, he doesn't encourage him or help him with his studies. Additionally, neither of his parents graduated from high school; it was obvious that all of these factors helped shaped his view about school. In fact, you could see the disappointment in his eyes and the shift in his voice as he stated:

Growing up without the presence of my father really affected me. Obviously I love my dad but he rarely spends time with me because he is constantly on the road. My father drives a freight truck and is hardly ever home.

Participant One's focus on setting long-term goals may be due to the fact that his parents never attended college and he personally witnessed the long-term effects of not having an advanced education (i.e., his mom works multiple jobs and he hardly ever sees his biological father). Interestingly, he has set this goal for himself even though he wasn't exposed to a university environment and was not certain of the process. Regardless, he was enthused with the idea of attending college. It was apparent that he felt some anxiety because he never received the type of information that would put him in the situation to be knowledgeable about the full process. I found it somewhat interesting that he finally decided on Michigan State University, the University of Michigan, or Western Michigan

University. Not only do his collegiate choices speak to his environmental influences—as all three of the universities mentioned are major universities in the surrounding area—it also speaks to Lindenberg and Steg’s (2007) hedonic goal framing theory, as he set a goal that would (in his eyes) put him in a better financial situation, which would greatly improve the way he feels about his current situation. In a journal entry he stated, “As long as I am accepted into a Big Ten school it wouldn’t matter.”

Again, the universities he mentioned were less than a 90-mile radius from his residence. It was interesting that he never mentioned any universities outside of the state. It finally dawned on me that he probably never considered which university in the country offered the strongest engineering program as one of the major criteria for which school he should attend. Though he clearly made the connection that Big Ten schools are associated with success, he limited his options to the few that were closest to his hometown. Again, the effects of environment on his goal choices are further illustrated, as Participant One’s exposure to the concept of college did not seem to have been derived from home but from what he was exposed to in his community.

When asked about his goals for the next five years, Participant One stated:

In five years I see myself in college in some business class, on the way to owning my own business and playing football in college, trying to make it to the National Football League (NFL) and eventually playing for the Detroit Lions. If football doesn’t work I’m getting in business and the stock market and I’m going to make money.

It was evident in Participant One’s voice that his career choices were not motivated solely by fortune and fame. It seemed that each business course and his future profession as a

whole was a means to an end. He had a much bigger “why” He was motivated to provide his family with a lifestyle they only dreamed about but never experienced.

When Participant One was asked to identify potential obstacles that could derail him from reaching his academic goals, he mentioned,

Talking too much in class and not getting my work done on time. My behavior is causing me to fail my environmental class but I promised myself that I was going to do everything in my power to correct my behavior and bring up my grade.

It was obvious from his body language that he was not proud of the fact that he was struggling to manage his disruptive behavior and that it was troubling him internally. In fact, he held his head down in shame when he shared it. The audible sincerity in his voice implied that he acknowledged that he was personally sabotaging his future and the future of his family. A few weeks after he made that commitment, he shared a weekly progress report with me from his environmental science teacher that revealed he had made significant progress with his behavior in the classroom. In fact, by the end of the semester, he improved drastically and his grade increased from a D in the third marking period to a B+ in the fourth marking period. When asked to describe his general thoughts about school and the purpose it serves, Participant One stated:

School is a chance to make something of yourself and it’s free. It could be better though if we had more disciplined and better teachers. It’s like students just run over the teachers sometimes and it makes it hard to be serious, and then you have some teachers who are good but some are just by the book.

I could sense his frustration because he was able to excel in some classes and even enjoyed them, but on the other hand, there were classes he struggled in because he was

unable to make the connection either with the teacher or the curriculum. He shed light on the situation stating: “I like it better when teachers don’t just go by the book and make it more personal. Sometimes when I know teachers are just going to be boring and teach the same stuff, I skip class with my friends.”

It was personally frustrating knowing that Participant One was motivated to learn and had the ability to excel academically, yet he was forced into an academic setting that he feels does not holistically understand him as an individual person or student.

Participant One seemed to be generally motivated about attending school. When asked about specific motivating factors, he stated:

I’m pumped up about school every day. I love to see my friends and go to my Geometry and History class. I really started liking school in the eighth grade because my teacher was cool. She was more personal and not by the book. However, the excitement was short-lived as we shifted from him to his peers’ thoughts about school. He was asked why he thought so many kids were disengaged and disliked school. He replied stating:

I think most kids just go to school because they have to. I sometimes feel like that, but then sometimes I feel like going if I had a good day the previous day or the teacher said we were going to do something fun. Sometime I just hate going when the teachers give us too much work.

I could not help feeling somewhat overwhelmed as I listened to the internal struggle and uncertainty in Participant One’s statements. On one hand, he stated he loved going to school and learning, but on the other hand, he felt like his peers, who only go to school out of habit. It seemed to have less to do with his attitude or aptitude, and more to do with

the inconsistencies in instruction and the instructors. If all of his classes mimicked his geometry and history courses, he might be highly motivated to learn and have a totally different learning experience. It is safe to say that Participant One's parents' educational history influenced his thinking as it relates to who was a stakeholder in his learning process. Throughout the interview process, he never referred to his parents when he spoke about school. In fact, when asked who had the greatest influence on students in school, he replied that it was teachers who have the most influence. His answer alone was not surprising, but the authority in which he stated it was. He said it emphatically, as though there were no other logically response or other influence. When asked to explain why he felt teachers had the greatest influence, he stated: "If the teacher is interesting the kid is going to want to go to class and learn, if the teacher is boring a kid is going to probably be bored and not feel like doing nothing." I shifted the focus somewhat and asked him how engaged he felt he was with his overall learning process. I was probing him to see if he felt as though he was to some degree a potential stakeholder himself. He replied, "I think most kids including myself give about 65% in most classes overall."

After this statement, I followed up by asking him how he would feel if he were more engaged and was his own advocate, would it have a greater impact on his learning. He stated: "I guess you could say that, I could do better but the classes aren't interesting for me." I must admit, I was slightly disheartened by the fact that Participant One placed so much emphasis on his teachers as stakeholders. For one reason or another, he was unable to grasp the concept that he himself was a stakeholder in his educational experience and that he possessed more power than he realized. Here, I realized that Participant One's motivation was extrinsic, as he engaged in the learning process for

reasons not related to the learning activity itself, as theorized by Vansteenkiste et al. (2006). Participant One was asked what role school culture plays in a student's development. This question was posed to him to help identify how he felt about the role the school environment played on his school experience. He replied, stating:

The school has a pretty good environment. Everybody gets along for the most part because we all have so much in common. We don't have to worry about all the fighting and gangs because we are all equal. We don't have all of the gun stuff other schools have either.

One could look into Participant One's eyes and hear in his voice a deep sense of community. It was unusual for a sophomore to make such a comparison, but somehow he was convinced that a common socioeconomic status and other challenges unique to urban students unified them. He was asked if he thought the school's spirit and sense of community helped him academically. He replied with, "Yeah I think so. I mean, some of the kids come from places where they're all real smart." I assumed that, by that statement, Participant One meant he found solace in the fact that there were individuals in his peer group who, despite their circumstances, have been able to achieve a level of academic success. And more importantly, I believed that if his peers could excel academically, so could he.

Mentors. In one of his journal assignments, Participant One was asked if he could identify a family member who set a long-term goal and accomplished it. He responded stating:

I don't know nobody in my family that set a goal and accomplished it. My cousin is in college right now and he is on the way to fulfill his dream. He plays for a Big

Ten team and his name is AC. He is one person in my family that I see is on a good roll because he took the steps to get a full ride to a major university and graduated from high school.

When Participant One was asked if his parents were actively involved in his school experience, he stated that his mom was the most active parent of the two. Though he made it clear that neither of his parents were extremely active, he did credit his mother with being selectively involved with his education process as she would attend PTA meetings that involved bringing baked goods and would visit the school at the request of a teacher for her son's sporting events. It was obvious that he was extremely embarrassed by the fact his mother was only slightly involved and that his father had little to no involvement at all. Whenever the subject came up, he defended his father and mentioned the only reason his father was not involved in his education was strictly due to his job. He responded during a journal entry saying:

My father is a truck driver and his job has him on the road a lot. Even when he is home, he's sleeping because he has been on the road so much. Plus my dad never graduated from high school so you can kinda tell he does not feel very comfortable when it comes to school stuff.

Participant One also seemed bothered by the fact his father was a truck driver and how little time he had to invest in his life in general. This might explain why he placed so much emphasis on his teachers being responsible for his academic development. The academic culture of his family—the fact that his parents aren't involved in his schooling—is likely a contributing factor to his academic achievement. Participant One is very focused and driven academically. Despite some of the criminal behavior he has

witnessed with his older brother (e.g., getting expelled from school for drug possession); he has somehow maintained his focus and has continued to do the things necessary to make his dream become a reality.

Self-Awareness. When asked who is most responsible for his academic success, Participant One replied:

I am. With my family challenges, it can be hard to stay on track and out of trouble but Coach Jones and couple of my teachers go out of their way to make sure I have the support I need to graduate and go to college.

It is evident that he believes himself to be his own motivator, but he credits his coach and teachers for having a large stake in his academic success. Because he does not get the support from the sources he desires (his parents), he somehow views himself as his primary support despite his support system at school.

Participant One was asked if school was productive or unproductive. When asked what motivates him, if anything at all, he stated:

I get a lot of life lessons in school that are going to help me in the long run. The opportunity to go to college is what motivates me the most. Watching my older brother getting ready to graduate this year, being the first male in the family to graduate and accomplish his dream of playing football on a scholarship is something special for me and for my family; especially my mom who has always been there for us.

The fire in his eyes was evident when he mentioned his brother's graduation. In fact, if I did not know any better, I would have thought participant one was graduating himself. Although he had a number of distractions and obstacles he had to overcome, it was

apparent that his older brother's example served as fuel to motivate and drive him to stay the course. His other brother plays on the football team at MLK High and is on track to graduate after a rough few years and play football for a division III college in the Midwest. Participant One believes that motivational videos and other positively centered messages from social media have been key in helping him stay focused at home. In a journal entry he stated:

I use the positive messages from the internet to help me stay focused while I am doing my homework or sometimes I use it to set the mode. Sometimes I get distracted or don't feel like studying, so I turn on one of Eric Thomas' videos and I feel like I can accomplish anything. I also watch the videos to encourage myself. They remind that my dream of being an engineer is possible as long as follow the principles in the videos.

Summary of Analysis. Consistent with the theories presented herein, Participant One demonstrated in his interview that his environment has greatly influenced the goals that he has set for himself. It is evident that he is making some connections between his goal to go to college and become an engineer with the education process, because he mentions the role that teachers play in his academic success. However, the connection appears superficial as he identifies the teacher as being the primary stakeholder in his education and fails to identify himself as playing an integral role, thus demonstrating that his motivation comes from an extrinsic construct. Furthermore, this participant seems to identify with a normative goal frame, behaving in a way that he believes is right according to the examples set by his cousin and older brother. The desire to please his mother in the same way that his older brother who is graduating this year has, combined

with his admiration for his cousin who is playing collegiate football, further demonstrate how extrinsic motivation influences the goals that Participant One has made for himself.

In summary, the data suggest that though participant one has established goals for himself, he has not made the connection between his ability to realize those goals and the academic process.

Participant Two

In the interview with Participant Two, we discovered that, similar to Participant One, Participant Two is also extrinsically motivated. For him, making his mom proud was the driving force behind his goals. Further analysis also demonstrated how goal framing, as suggested by Lindenberg and Steg (2007), helps students to frame what is meaningful to them. In this case, Participant Two created his goals from a variety of goal framing perspectives. Specifically, we see evidence of both a normative and hedonic framework in his approach to setting his goals.

Participant Two is an 18-year-old African American male who attends King High as a senior. He is being raised by his single mother who has the responsibility of supporting four children. He shared with me that he has three other siblings; a twin and two sisters.

Goal Creation. Participant Two was very articulate and seemed to be an overall gentlemen and scholar. When asked to complete the *Academic and Personal Goals Survey*, participant two was asked about his personal long and short term goals. He responded with,

“I never thought about it before but I need to set a goal for myself. I need to get all A’s on my final exam. I need to try and get on the honor roll.” Getting on the honor roll was

impressive, but it was not Participant Two's desire to finish the current semester strong that moved me to tears, it was his motive, his the single mother who has

My father abandoned us and my older brother did not go to college. I have to go to college. I cannot explain it, but it was something about writing my goals down and looking at them and seeing how my grades could affect my family. It's not like I am a bad student and I have never failed a class. But I have never put forth all my effort either.

Participant Two was very interesting to interview, as during the interview, he was able to make the connection between success in school and success in his personal and family life. The exercise had such an impact on him that he stated in a journal entry:

I have to go college; I have to go to college. I am not sure what I want to take up once I get there but I want to go. My mom and sister went to college but I will be the first male to go.

Here, even though both his sister and mom went to college, he expresses what appears to be a dire need to go to college after confessing that his father abandoned them and that his older brother didn't go to college. This confession supports Lindenberg and Steg's (2007) normative goal framing perspective, as it stands to reason that at least in some part his goal to go to college is based off of what he feels. Later, Participant Two was asked who had the strongest influence on his life as it related to school. He slightly hesitated, then replied:

My mom, yea, my mom has the strongest influences on my life period. My momma did go to college but even though she went to college, she still has to get

up and go to work every single day. It has not been easy for my mom to raise 2 boys and two girls in this generation.

It was apparent in his tone that Participant Two was appreciative of his mother's sacrifice. In fact, as he was sharing the details, it was if he had gone into a trance and had an "a-ha" moment. In those few moments, school had taken on a new meaning, a deeper meaning. His apathy for learning had evolved into a means of providing for his mother and siblings one day. Curiously, I inquired about his father's educational level or level of influence. As the words were coming from my mouth, his facial expression shifted to a more somber expression as he stated:

I do not know my father's level of education or him. I have not had the opportunity to meet my father as of yet. But it's ok, actually I'm going to use the pain of my father abandoning me and my mother to create a new meaning for school and life in general. It's actually one of the reasons I feel the need to reach my potential. I am not going to leave her like he did, I want to be able to provide a better life for my mother and help my siblings.

One could reasonably argue that Participant Two is operating from a hedonic goal frame as, by his own admission, he seeks to use the pain of an absent father to drive his efforts at reaching his potential. This achievement, should he reach it, would significantly improve the way he feels about himself as it relates to his role in his mom's life when compared to his father. Participant Two, when asked about school influences and any positive influences in his school, replied, "The classroom is a very healthy environment. This school is full of teachers who not only want me to succeed, they are also willing to give me help when I need it."

Barriers to Achievement. Participant Two was asked about his peers and how their attitude towards school affects him academically. He thought about it for a moment, then quietly responded:

I'm negatively affected, it's hard to stay motivated in an environment with a bunch of people who are not motivated and have no goals outside of sports. And let's not talk about all the violence and how that brings even more negative energy to the whole school environment. Most of the kids at this school have no purpose and they don't know what they want to do after graduation.

The abandonment by his father coupled with his exposure to violence, and years of watching his mom struggle to provide for him and his siblings created a mesosystem that according to Bronfenbrenner, has gravely affected Participant Two's development. He admits that its "...hard to stay motivated..." except for his desire to create a "new meaning for school and life". Even here, we see the influence of extrinsic motivation—his desire to do well in school isn't as much about the learning process as it is about his desire to please his mom and not bring her the same pain that was brought to her by his father. For him, going to college would be a significant step towards this goal.

Mentors. Students spend a great deal of time at school. As an athlete, Participant Two shared he spends an average of 8 hours at school not including actual game days. For that reason, it is safe to say his school environment greatly influences his motivational and goal framing choices. Specifically, he noted in one of his journal entry that he has been heavily influenced by one of his basketball coaches. I spoke with him about his basketball coach and asked him what specific characteristics he admired about his coach. He stated:

He made it!!! Coach D grew up in the same neighborhood as me and went to the same school as me and he made it to the NBA. He is the only person from the block that made his dreams come true. Plus, he came back to the city to coach us. He did not have to come back to this city, he could have moved anywhere in the world. My teammates mean a lot to me and they also have a positive impact on my life.

Deciding to play the Devil's advocate, I asked how positive an influence one teenager can actually have on another teenager. Before I could get the words out of my mouth, Participant Two interrupted respectfully, stating:

More than you can imagine. See, like me, a lot of dudes on the team do not know their father or their father is barely in their life. So we all trying to use basketball, like Coach D did to make it out the hood and give our mothers a better life.

In short, Participant Two feels that school activities like basketball provide him with a great opportunity to be around positive people. He believes the opportunity to play sports will enable him to change his mentality, improve his work ethic and make better life decisions, which will ultimately change his family's life as well.

Many of the interview questions addressed the distractions that impede students from goal attainment. On the surface, identifying one's distractions may appear to be a simple task, but it is not. However, Participant Two did not hesitate to rise to the occasion. He was able to clearly articulate his primary distraction: "Procrastination has been a major struggle and is one of the reasons I have not done my best in school or in sports for that matter."

Participant Two's counselor also agreed that he was a good student, but had a serious problem with procrastination. In fact, after reviewing several comments on his progress reports, his teachers mentioned repeatedly that he would have every opportunity to be a good student once he changes his habit of procrastination and work towards following through on his assignments. Once he is able to focus his energies and eliminate procrastination, he can reach whatever academic goal he sets for himself. In a journal entry, Participant Two stated, "In order to be successful I need to limit the amount of time I spend being unproductive. Procrastination has hindered me from reaching my highest potential." In order for Participant Two to reach his immediate goal of receiving an A on his final exams, he thought the best way to overcome procrastination is to work on his time management skills and develop a system to help him prioritize his assignments.

Self-Awareness. Learning how to cultivate motivation and sustain it after school hours can be challenging. Curious, I asked Participant Two what were some of the motivational choices he used to stay motivated once he left the school's property. In his very articulate and radio personality-like voice, he stated:

I use a number of different things to keep myself motivated. Not sure the order or which one I use the most but I like movies, music, books and YouTube videos. I love movies that are based on true stories like *The Pursuit of Happyness*. It's inspiring to see someone overcome all those challenges and still succeed. I listen to all kinds of music. It just depends on my mood and what I feel at the time. I have a lot of music on my iPhone, such as Hip Hop, R & B, even a little classical believe it or not. I watch a lot of National Football League games and shows. Watching football keeps me focused on my future goals and I get motivated when

I see African American men doing what I want to do one day. I also watch Eric Thomas' YouTube channel and I get a lot of advice and motivation from my older siblings. Mainly, I just want to be better than my father. I want to provide my mom with a better life than he provided for her. She deserves it because she has worked so hard.

Summary of Analysis. Participant Two proved to be a rather unique case. When asked about his personal goals, he reported that he desired to go to college and major in Insurance Finance. While this is an admirable goal, it seems almost detached from reality. From his interview and academic record, it appears that his goal had nothing to do with a clear academic path but was more connected to his longing to have a relationship with his father. He identified that his father is an insurance agent. Thus, Participant Two believes that, by becoming what his father is, he can somehow develop a relationship with his father. Similarly, he reported wanting to play basketball, but he's not playing ball in school; thus, again, he states goals that appear detached from reality. Perhaps, again, Participant Two believes that if he played basketball he could please his absent father.

Participant Three

The data suggest that, although Participant Three has created a definite goal of going to college, a disconnect exists between his understanding of his goal and his understanding of how his engagement in the education process will enable him to meet his goal. Further, one could also infer from the data the influence that Participant Three's environment has had on his motivation and his development in the context of being able to connect with his teachers.

Participant Three is a 16-year-old African American male who attends King High as a sophomore. He is being raised by his single mother who alone has the responsibility of supporting four children. He shared with me that he has three other siblings, all of them boys.

Goal Creation. Participant Three was asked about his personal long and short term goals. He responded to the survey stating that his goal for the current school year is to minimize his social time in class. He gets into a lot of trouble and gets kicked out of class frequently for being disruptive. This school year, he aims to make every effort to give his full attention during instruction time and talk less throughout the day. In order to make a positive step in that direction, he acknowledges the need to dedicate more time to listening and paying attention when the teacher is teaching. He states: “If I really want to do better as far as my grades, become a more productive student studying and being able to achieve my short-term goal, I will have to study a lot more and turn in my homework.” However, on the surface, Participant Three seems to say all the right things, but his body language and his actions never seem to add up.

Participant Three made several declarations with regards to improving his behavior, but he spoke with little to no feeling, and little to no passion. During the interview process, he seemed disengaged. He never looked directly at me, but spoke while looking at the wall. In addition to asserting his desire to work toward developing better study habits, he also stated in a journal entry that his long term goal is to major in insurance finance while attending college, and to go on to become a professional basketball player. He has hopes of paying for that college degree by receiving a

basketball scholarship to Michigan State University. When asked why he wanted to go into the insurance business, his answer was puzzling. He stated:

My mother, grandmother, uncle, and other members of my family all work at McDonalds. I do not want to be like any of them. My mother barely takes care of my siblings and me on her McDonald's salary. I hate my mother and I wish I could go live with my dad. I am tired of my friends teasing me about the fact that my mother works at McDonald's. They text me or tell my friends at school my mother took their order whenever they go to McDonald's. It's embarrassing.

When I inquired if he ever asked his mother if he could move out or if he ever called his dad and asked his dad if he could live with him, his response was:

I don't really know my father. I have never spent any time with him either. I know who he is and I know he lives in the same city but he has never been a part of my siblings or my life. Even though I have never really spent any time with him, my grandmother told me he is currently an insurance agent for a big insurance company and he is currently attending Michigan State University pursuing a business degree. I want to be like my dad and have a real career. I don't want to be like my mother. She can barely take care of us.

Here, we see that Participant Three has set his goal of attending Michigan State University from a hedonic goal frame. According to Lindenberg and Steg (2007), people who frame their goals from a hedonic goal framing perspective set their goals according to what will improve the way they feel. It is evident that Participant Three is not happy with his mom's (and, by extension, his own) financial circumstances; as such, he has

created a goal that he believes will put him in a position to improve his financial situation, thereby improving how he feels.

I wanted to better understand what Participant Three's vision was for getting into college and earning a scholarship. Neither of his parents completed college, and his grades, an array of Cs and Ds, were hardly suitable for college entry. When asked about the reason for his grades and behavior in class, he stated:

I mean, I want to go to college but the teachers give us all this homework and never really explain anything. Plus, they don't give us enough time to do the work and turn it in. Like I said, I want to go to college but I will not be able to if these teachers keep giving me these low grades.

The disconnect was glaring after this statement along with his subsequent answers. Specifically, Participant Three wants to attend Michigan State University, but he has poor grades and blames his teachers for his academic struggles. Moreover, by his own admission below, he allows himself to become too distracted prior to the goal framing exercises to commit to adapting his behavior in a way that will help him reach his goals.

Barriers to Achievement. Participant Three's response to a journal entry highlights the fact that his peers provide a lot of distractions that hinder his performance in the classroom. He stated:

I would do a lot better in school if it were not for my friends. I generally come to class thinking I am going to get focused and do my work but as soon as I try to settle down, one of my friends starts acting up and before you know it, I get distracted.

Participant Three also implies that wasting too much of his energy on talking results in missed information during instruction time. According to his progress reports, the two classes that he needs to focus on are science and history. He admits that he struggles with understanding new methods of learning. In a journal entry he stated:

I have a difficult time understanding some of the information. It's the way the teachers teach. It's like they only have one way to teach and if you cannot understand that one way, it's too bad for you. And to make things worse, the lack of sympathy I receive from some of my teachers is very discouraging. If I am ever able to get focused, put forth my best effort and eliminate unnecessary distraction, I will be one step closer to making my dreams of college and the NBA a reality.

Participant Three's response to an "Academic and Personal Goals Survey" identifies that both his mother and his father have influenced his attitude towards school. He stated in a journal entry:

The importance of education was instilled in me from a young child. I know school is important but there are so many distractions. There is a mixture of both good and bad things in high school that affect my learning. The good things are sports. If I want to play sports I am going to have to get my grades up. I realize I have to have at least a 2.0 GPA to play basketball and right now I have under a 2.0. I also like the mentoring program, and after-school tutoring program the school offers. It is programs like these that make school interesting. What I do not like are the teachers in the school. It's hard to do good in school when you do not have a positive relationship with the teachers. Most of them act like they do not care about the students, so I do not care about them or what they ask me to do.

Unlike the previous topics, Participant Three was very animated when he expressed his feelings about the negative and positive aspects of school. The look of disappointment on his face when he spoke about not being able to even tryout for the team due to his low GPA was immediately evident. I could sense the hurt he experienced not being able to make an emotional connection with his teachers. It appeared he wanted so desperately to make an emotional connection with them, but it is possible his family dynamics made it challenging to achieve this. It is reasonable to infer that, because he hasn't established healthy relationships with the people closest to him in his home, it would be difficult to establish relationships with people outside the home. As Bronfenbrenner suggests, we see the potential effects of Participant Three's mesosystem on his development as he repeatedly reports not being able to connect with his teachers. Participant Three is aware that in order to accomplish his short-term goal of making the basketball team, he needs to bring his grades up by the next basketball season. He made a personal commitment of using his goal framing activity to get on track and identify an improvement strategy. During the activity he stated:

I'm going to make a real effort in the next 30 days to get all my school assignments completed. I'm going to attend after-school tutoring so I can get all of my homework completed and turn it in by class time the next day. I will also work to control the conversations I have during class time so that he I'm not always distracted.

One of the common themes for Participant Three is his need to settle down in class and minimize his distractions. It is apparent that he is preoccupied and distracted a great deal of the time. Nevertheless, it appears he recognizes the goal framing activity as

a means to reengineer his school experience. He believes by creating a plan of action and following through with his desired goals, he will be able to obtain his goal of playing basketball in the fall of his sophomore year.

Mentors. Participant Three's response to an "Academic and Personal Goals Survey" helped him identify that he did not personally know anyone who was able to make his or her dreams a reality. He replied to the question stating:

I'm not sure what my mother's goals and dreams were as a younger person but I'm almost sure it was not to work at McDonald's. But I guess since my grandmother and . . . her brother all worked there she decided to also. I know my father is doing better for himself than my mother but I do not know him well enough to know what his dreams and goals were when he was younger. All I know is that I do not want to work at McDonalds. I want to be the first person in my family to go to college.

Here, we can see that Participant Three's motivation and goals are strongly influenced by his environment. This is consistent with Bulbolz and Santog's (1993) Human Ecological Theory, which purports that student motivation and outcomes are influenced by interactions of humans within all aspects of their environment including social, physical, and even biological components. His environment simultaneously functions as the agent that both discourages him and motivates him. He feels discouraged by his teachers, is distracted by his friends, and resents that his family all work at McDonalds; however, because he believes college will change his life, he has created the goal to be the first in his family to go, even though he has no clear understanding of how to get there or what he should pursue if he gets there.

Participant Three spoke with a sense of passion when he referred to his mother and family members' career choices. It was clear he did not want to end up making the same career choices. However, when he spoke about going to college and playing professional basketball, he did not sound very convinced. It was obvious that he had invested a great deal of time contemplating on what he did *not* want to do as a career path, but he hadn't investigated what it took to get into a good college and secure a full scholarship. Participant Three was asked who he thought was responsible for holding him accountable for his academic success. He responded:

It is my responsibility. I am responsible for doing my assignments and keeping my grades up. I am probably only putting up about 60% effort in school. I have to admit, I have never given much effort since I have been in high school. I do not pay attention half the time in class, I have not done a good job of turning in my assignments, and from time to time I have skipped class. I know I could do better if I put forth more effort.

Self-Awareness. Participant Three is very aware of the changes he needs to make. In fact, unlike many students in his predicament, he has not passed all of the blame on to his teachers. He fully acknowledges not being engaged in the learning process is the main challenge and he recognizes it as part of the problem. He states that he feels the mentoring program offered at his high school provides him with an opportunity to experience a new perspective. In a journal entry, he stated:

Before being a part of the program I personally felt like I only put forth about 40% of my energy into my school work. After spending some time learning from ET's motivational videos and the program mentors, I realize anything is possible.

In order to do better in every area of school I need to give 110% effort every day. ET has become a deep inspiration and he gives me the motivation necessary to work towards bettering myself and making my school and personal dreams come true. Sports also serve as a real motivation for me. Once my attitude towards school changes, my work ethic in every area will improve, including my study skills and sports. My chances for college and the NBA will also increase.

Summary of Analysis. In summary, Participant Three demonstrates Kasser's self-determination theory because the driving force behind his aspiring to go to college (i.e., his motivation) was to not be like his family. The self-determination theory states that goals are extremely personal and that what motivates one student may not motivate another student. Participant Three, who reports being abandoned by his father, states that he never connected his desire to take care of his family and right the wrongs done by his father with making As in school. He says, "...[there] was something about writing my goals down and looking at them and seeing how my grades could affect my family." Successfully making this connection, combined with his desire to provide for his family and use the pain of not having his father in the home with him to push him to meet his goals, appear to be paramount in this participant's ability to reconcile the disconnect between his goals with the education process. A subsequent progress report noted that Participant Three began going to class consistently, had fewer behavioral infractions, and didn't talk back to his teachers as often after participating in this study. This information suggests that the goal framing exercises assisted Participant Three in understanding how his behavior affected his ability to meet his goals.

Participant Four

Participant Four is a 16-year-old African American female. She currently attends King High as a junior. She lives with both of her parents and two younger siblings. She seemed to be full of life, had a very inviting personality, and spoke willingly.

Goal Creation. When asked to complete an “Academic and Personal Goals Survey,” it was very apparent that she put forth all of her energy to express her true feelings about her academic success. Her athletic ability seems to play a major role in the academic standards to which she holds herself. She displayed great time management skills she had developed through her exposure to athletics. She seemed reserved and only felt the need to make a connection with one of the other students in the program, which also spoke volumes about her character. The individual she attached herself with is also a diligent student focused on attaining the highest level of success. Participant Four’s responses provided understanding of the amount of emphasis she feels is necessary to place on education:

My goal for the current school year is to increase my percentage in each course by at least one letter grade. In order to make a positive step in that direction, I need to dedicate more time to studying and working on my time management skills. I have become an average student at best because I have not been able to overcome my time management issues. I promise, when I leave class I plan on finishing my homework but between sports, my social life and helping take care of my siblings, I never find the time to get it done. I am a much better than an average student. Once I am able to get passed that, I will prove that I have what it takes to achieve my goal of becoming an excellent student.

She continued:

Finding a way to stay motivated is half the battle. It seems like we are in school forever and God knows it hard to stay focused day in and day out but I have to stay motivated if I plan on reaching my personal goals and dreams, especially if I am going to accomplish my 21-day goal of spending at least 45 hours getting my assignments done.

Participant Four was unassuming, to say the least. She was not very talkative, but when she decided to speak, she did not waste words. She spoke with a sense of pride and a confidence that said, “I plan on reaching my personal goals and dreams, especially if I attend college and make my dreams a reality.” In addition to working toward developing better study habits and time management skills, she also stated in a journal entry:

I feel like me going to school and taking care of my business is something I should do because that’s a way I can repay [my parents]. All I want to do is go to school for forensic science and be successful. I know that by me doing this I’ll become someone’s model and inspire someone.

Here, Participant Four appears to have adopted a normative goal frame because she believes that going to school is something she “should do.” Later, we also see a normative goal frame in a more negative context, as, by her admission, she succumbs to the peer pressure of her friends and does what she believes she “ought” to do in the context of her peer environmental influences, which contradicts her goal to do well in school. This supports the assertion of the influence of environment in the Human Ecological Theory. Still, it is apparent that Participant Four is motivated and excited about turning things around academically. Additionally, it is encouraging to know her

passion to improve academically is very personal. Participant Four is extremely focused and motivated about her future. The creation of her long-term goals has produced this self-motivated and self-regulated person that months ago did not exist. What's also encouraging is that beyond knowing what she wishes her future to look like, she has set a number of realistic goals to heighten the chances of her reaching both her short-term and long-term goals.

Barriers to Achievement. A journal entry identified impeding obstacles to the short term goals she has set for herself, she stated:

My peers are a major distraction. Most of my friends I went to elementary and middle school with are not focused. If they are not distracting one another during class, they are distracted by their cell phone. I try my hardest not to get off task and I do pretty good the first few minutes of class but I must be honest, I feel pressured to join. They make me feel as though I have to choose between them and school. I also feel as though my lack of motivation comes from not turning in my assignments on time. Once I get behind a few assignments, I feel as though I am too far behind to catch up and that's enough to discourage the best student.

According to Participant Four's progress reports, the two classes that she needs to focus on are Spanish and geometry. She strongly feels that better support and help with homework assignments would lead her in the right direction. She also states that the lack of enthusiastic educators contributes tremendously to the classroom's unproductive learning environment. Her responses to an "Academic and Personal Goals Survey" revealed that the only real pleasure she receives from school is through sports and the

high school's mentoring program. However, after attending a field trip to Michigan State University with her peers, she says everything changed for the better:

I learned so much new information from the campus tour. That was my first visit to a major university; it was unreal. I am so inspired to continuing pushing myself toward my long term goal of attending a major university on a full ride academic scholarship.

Mentors. Participant Four was asked about parental influence in regards to her education. She indicated that both her mother and father have influenced her attitude about education:

“The importance of education was instilled in me as a child by both my mother and father. College was not an option; both of my parents encouraged me to go to college before I could talk.” She continued:

Even though my parents pushed me to go to college, neither one of them actually finished school. My father is currently working hard to receive his four-year degree. He dropped out of college when he and my mom started having kids and my mom got her GED but did not go to college. That is one of the reasons I feel the need to surpass both my mother and father academically to make sure I am able to make all of my dreams become a reality. I also feel like my parents are hypocrites. On one hand, how can they tell me to college to when they did not finish? But on the other hand I guess they are trying to save me from what they are going through, struggling financially to take care of my siblings and me. I guess they do not want me to struggle like they did. I have to respect them for wanting more for me than they were able to accomplish themselves.”

Participant Four states that there are a few negative things present within her learning environment that negatively influence her learning. She believes the negative relationships between a number of her teachers and her contributes to the confusion. She recognizes the lack of positive emotional involvement among her and her teachers hinders her from establishing the kind of student-teacher relationship that would foster a deeper love for learning:

It's hard sitting in class sometimes with a teacher you do not care for or have a relationship with, especially when you have a difficult time understanding the lesson. On one hand I want to raise my hand and ask for help but it feels awkward because the teacher and I do not have a relationship. I am not sure if they are going to embarrass me or help me, and staying after school for help is even worst. I would not feel comfortable being in a classroom alone with most of my teachers.

Self-Awareness. Participant Four was asked, "Who is responsible for your academic success?" She acknowledged that it is her responsibility to make sure she is academically successful:

Honestly, I am probably only applying about 70% of my effort toward school and less during instruction time. Plus, I am going to have to stop skipping classes. It's a bad habit I started doing with my friends while in middle school. I didn't do it often but it did spill over to high school. I can truly say I know the big and small changes I need to make so I do not miss out on any academic scholarship opportunities for college.

Her post-study progress report shows that from the beginning of the semester until now, participant four has grown substantially. She has set high academic and career goals and

is willing to take personal responsibility with regard to making the changes necessary to do so. Her behavior indicates that she is making an effort to bridge the gap that existed between her goal choices and behavior choices. Indeed, reports stated that she is getting tutoring for calculus and is doing an early-start program at a community college.

When she was asked what motivates her to learn within school, Participant Four stated:

The school's mentoring program motivates me to learn. I really look up to the young college students that volunteer their time. The program provides me with an opportunity to see people like myself in college and what I can become if I stay motivated. Before being a part of the program I know I did not put forth about 100% of my energy into my schoolwork. After spending some time with the students and learning from E.T.'s videos and reading his books, I realize I have to give 110% every day. E.T. has become a deep inspiration that provides me with the motivation necessary to work towards bettering myself.

When asked what motivates her to learn outside of school, Participant Four stated:

The only thing I really do to stay motivated is watch motivational speakers' YouTube clips. And most of the time, I watch E.T.'s YouTube channel. I do not know what it is but I feel so inspired to do my homework or just something positive after his videos. Even my teachers show his videos sometime in class.

Summary of Analysis. In summary, Participant Four illustrates classic aspects of the Human Ecological Theory. The failures of her parents motivate her to have a better life. Moreover, the activities that she delights herself in—in this case, sports—also play a significant role in motivating her to pursue her goals. We can see how the macro system

can have a positive or negative effect on a child's development. In this case, the participant grew up in a family that valued education, but couldn't complete school (until later in life, as in her father's case). Though disengaged in the education process, she knows the significance of an education due to her father currently working on getting his four-year degree and living in a college town. From the lens of the Human Ecological Theory, we see how these environmental influences (her father's belief system about college, the prevalence of MSU basketball on TV, ads in her community, etc.) have impacted her personal goal of going to college and playing basketball. Additionally, Participant Four began to engage more in the academic process after participating in the goal framing activities.

Participant Five

The data in this section suggests that students can be both intrinsically and extrinsically motivated. Participant Five is a 15-year-old bi-racial male.. He currently attends King High as a sophomore. He lives with his mother and three younger siblings. He seemed to be reserved and soft spoken at our first meeting.

Goal Creation. When asked to complete the "Academic and Personal Goals Survey," he made a genuine attempt to express himself fully in his answers. The responses helped to shed light on the fact that he has clear academic aspirations and goals, and that he has clearly thought about his career options:

My goal for the current school year is to be recognized as an honor student. I want to see my name on the honor roll with all the other honor roll students. In order to make it happen though, I know I will have to start turning in assignments on time and putting way more effort into my work more consistently if I am going to

make the honor roll. It's not like I do not have A's and B's in some of my classes but for some reason I cannot seem to ever get all A's and B's. I struggle to stay focused all semester long. I have managed to get some Cs and even Ds in some classes.

He continued:

My long term goal is to major in and to attend college and become an engineer. I know some people do not think it's possible but I want to go to college on an athletic scholarship. I want to attend a division 1 college and play basketball. I know I did not get the best start in high school as far as my grades but I feel like I have what it takes to do better.

It is clear that Participant Five understood the importance of making better choices and investing the necessary time and effort into his schoolwork.

Consistent with Deci & Ryan's (2000) definition of intrinsic motivation, Participant Five appears to be engaging in learning for its own sake, because he enjoys it. Participant Five believes that a good education is necessary in order to accomplish his goal of getting his family out of poverty. However, his response from a journal entry implies that, in some part, his educational goals are related to his mother's inability to find steady work:

My father has been in jail most of my life and my mother has not been able to provide for us. We have lived without water and electricity on a regular basis. I have to finish high school and go to college on a basketball scholarship. It's the first step toward accomplishing my ultimate goals. I have to admit that school can be overwhelming at times with all the outside distractions.

Because he is gratified by the learning process, it stands to reason that he is ultimately intrinsically motivated, even though factors extrinsic to the gratification of learning also influence his decisions. This suggests that motivation is neither purely intrinsic nor extrinsic but more so exists on a spectrum. Furthermore, we observed that similar to other participants in this study, Participant Five struggled with peer pressure. Again, Bubolz and Santog's (1993) Human Ecological Theory purports that student outcomes are influenced by humans interacting with all aspects of their environment. Peer-to-peer social interactions for Participant Five, along with many other participants in this study, have adversely influenced their academic outcomes, which, in turn, has contributed to the disparity between their stated goals and their actual behavior.

Barriers to Achievement. Participant Five's response to a journal entry reveals that, indeed, his peers are undoubtedly a distraction and they hinder him from his peak academic and social performance in the classroom:

I am too focused on what my boys think about me. It's hard to explain how it works. Nobody is forcing me to talk in class or waste time after school doing stupid stuff but I do feel the pressure. I am afraid I might not be accepted by my peers and I think about that more than I do the honor roll. I focus too much on my image. If you do not have a pair of Jay's and not any pair, but the new releases, you are a nobody. And who wants to be a nobody—we all want to be in the “in” crowd. This is a problem because I can honestly say I spend more time and energy on being “swagged” out than I do on getting on the honor roll. It's also hard when you are the only one in your group trying to get on the honor roll.

While responding to the “Good Excuse Goals” worksheet, Participant Five stated that he knows in order to be successful, he needs to limit the amount of time he spends being unproductive and socializing with his friends during instruction time:

I have to admit I lose focus at times and find myself acting out in class. I joke a lot and I know it’s wrong but I do it because laughing makes the pain go away, if only for a few minutes. Not being able to see my dad and living without the basic necessities is enough to make anyone go crazy. But I do know this, if I do not get a grip on it all, the consequences won’t be worth it. As hard as it is, I have to keep my grades up, do well in basketball and stay out of trouble because my mother needs me bad.

Participant Five seems very confident that he will receive a basketball scholarship and is doing everything in his power to bring his grades up. His academic situation is slightly different than that of the other participants: his grades range from an A to a D. He seems to have the aptitude to reach the honor roll, but lacks the concentration needed to do well consistently amid all his challenges.

Mentors. Despite the numerous challenges he faces in his personal life, he mentioned during our interview that sports has brought him some sort of solace:

Our coach is more than just a coach—he is like a father and mentor. Every day after school we have practice and the first thing coach does is ask us about our day in school and makes sure we have something to eat. I can honestly say there have been times where the meal during practice was my first and last meal of the day. Coach also sees to it that we do our homework and he offers us help if we need it. Without fail, coach shows us one of E.T.’s motivational videos every

practice and that's enough to motivate anybody. The greatest thing though is that coach played in the NBA, so he knows what it takes to get in college, through college, and into the league. Playing ball also helps me stay off the streets. By the time I get home from practice and am done doing my homework, I am exhausted. Here again, we see through Participant Five's response the role environment plays on his motivation. This student is obviously facing adverse circumstances that would otherwise impede his motivation; but because of the atmosphere established by his coach, the effects appear to be reversed. The participant has not fully succumbed to the effects of his impoverished environment and he demonstrates hope in his future and desires to do well academically; still, he has not fully made the connection of how his actions affect his ability to achieve his goals.

Participant Five's response to an "Academic and Personal Goals Survey" stated that he had been heavily influenced by the failed attempts at success by his other family members and particularly his father, who has been incarcerated the last seven years. He stated:

I don't know of anyone personally that has achieved their dream. Although, I know my uncle always wanted to be a doctor he messed up in high school because he was too focused on his friends who got him into drugs and he didn't even make it all the way through high school. In his senior year he dropped out so being a doctor was already out of the question. Now he's a bum on the streets. I even have family members around my age who are now choosing to be unproductive members of society.

Participant Five is, without question, attempting to break some of the negative family cycles that have plagued his family. His grades, his success in sports, and his overall motivation in spite of the challenges he has faced demonstrate his resilience. However, despite his best efforts, his family environment has played a major role in shaping his motivational and career choices. There are, however, several positive examples that have shaped his behavior and attitude towards school:

Believe it or not, despite everything I have gone through, both of my parents have had some type of influence on my life. I remember as a child visiting my father and he would always remind me that school is the key to making your dreams a reality. And my mom, even though she does not have a college degree, seeing her get up and go to work every day to feed and raise her children on a limited income was inspiring. I feel the need to pass both my mother and father academically to make sure I am able to make all of my dreams come true. I think the thing that hurts the most was seeing my parents get a divorce because of money problems. I am beyond motivated; I am determined to make it to the NBA so I can take care of my mother and my future family.

Self-Awareness. Despite witnessing an ugly divorce, living through his father being incarcerated, and living amid a poverty-stricken environment, it appears that Participant Five has maintained a close relationship with both of his parents. The work ethic he has learned from his Spanish-speaking mother as she has worked to take care of her family has proven to be the driving force behind his goal choices and resilience. Having parents who are not college educated but highly supportive of his academic and athletic goals is especially beneficial for him because he has a pair of individuals who

love him and are holding him accountable for reaching his dreams. His responses imply that his mother is deeply involved in his personal and academic development. It seems as though she has made every attempt to support his short and long-term goals:

My mom has always worked days so she is home when my siblings and I get home from school. Even though she cannot be of much help, she holds us accountable and is always trying to find someone to tutor us. Besides checking our homework and looking on the computer every other day at our grades, mom watches E.T.s videos with us and quizzes us on what we have learned and how we can apply it to school and home.

When asked what motivated him to learn at home, Participant Five stated:

When I am feeling real down and out, I listen to your mix tapes and also engage in activities on “E.T. the hip-hop preacher” mobile application. I also follow his daily motivational quotes on Instagram.

Summary of Analysis. In summary, Participant Five has demonstrated that he is both intrinsically and extrinsically motivated. He values education for the sake of learning and finds some pleasure in it but there are also other factors that drive him to engage in the learning process as well. The effects of his environment on his development and the goals that he has shaped for himself are also evident. The fact that his father wasn’t in his life has become his motivation for going to school; his father being in prison and in poverty has, to some degree, affected Participant Five’s self-worth because he has missed a lot of class, he dresses poorly, and his friends tease him about it. Still, he utilizes the tools of inspiration and motivation that he has access to (e.g., his

coach, the E.T. mix tapes, etc.) to keep him from getting lost in the negative effects of his environment and make an effort to learn.

Participant Six

Here, similar to the other participants, we see a mixture of intrinsic and extrinsic motivation on the choices made by Participant Six, a 15-year-old, bi-racial male from Lansing, MI. He currently attends MLK High school as a sophomore. He lives with his mother and is an only child. He seemed to be very curious and outspoken at our first meeting.

Goal Creation. When asked to complete the “Academic and Personal Goals Survey,” he immediately stopped what he was doing and focused on completing the worksheet. He was extremely excited to be involved and the peculiar focus he displayed at such a young age was impressive. “Anomalous” seems to be the best term to describe Participant Six. He was the most focused sophomore I have ever encountered. When asked about his short-term goals for the upcoming school year, he stated without hesitation:

My goal is to earn a 3.7 GPA by the end of the current school year and be the best shooting guard in our school’s division. My long-term goal is to be a marine biologist. In order to make that goal happen, I am going to have to maintain at least an A or an A+ average while in high school. I would probably need to study for at least four hours each night and that’s just my school work; that has nothing to do with basketball practice. I also need to minimize the time I spend socializing in class. This adjustment will allow me more time to focus on assignments to ensure they are completed by the deadlines. Lastly, I have committed to

eliminating the free time I spend on the cell phone and with his friends if I find that it hinders me from accomplishing this goal by the end of the school year.”

Participant Six seems to be extremely clear as to his future goals. More importantly, he clearly understands what it takes to accomplish them. In a journal entry he stated:

I plan to attend the University of Central Florida and major in marine biology. Central has a phenomenal program for marine biology, not to mention the weather is beautiful. But I guess anything beats Michigan weather. I would like the opportunity to work my way through college and gain experience in the field through an internship and I am also working hard for the chance to receive a basketball scholarship to help fund my education.

Participant Six went above and beyond the requirements and voluntarily shared his 10-year goals, which speaks volumes of his focus. I was in total amazement as I listened to a 15-year-old child speaking with the clarity and determination of a grown man. In one of his responses he stated:

My ten year goal is to graduate from the University of Central Florida with honors, in four years with a degree in Marine Biology. After college I plan to either enter the NBA or begin working toward developing my career in Marine Biology. I also hope to be married by graduation and in a position to begin raising children not long after. My ultimate goal is to build a successful career so that my family can experience a better life than I had as a child.

Barriers to Achievement. Currently, Participant Six has maintained a 3.5 GPA, but he is working extremely hard to obtain a 4.0. He has made it clear on several occasions that chaotic family dynamics and his desire to break the negative cycle is the

driving force behind his academic and future career goals. When asked, “What are the greatest challenges have you faced when trying to take steps towards your personal goals,” Participant Six stated:

“My biggest obstacle is lack of focus in the classroom. Looking at my grades, it is obvious that I take my education serious but I know that I am not giving my best effort. My lack of focus has nothing to do with talking during class or not completing my assignments. I drift quite a bit, it is hard for me stay focused when I do not understand the material or cannot connect with my teacher. I guess it started in the first grade. My first- grade teacher made me feel bad about my low reading level. That was my earliest obstacle in school and it was difficult overcoming her discouraging words. I have had a difficult time getting that experience out of my head. It has been hard to stay focused in a class that I find challenging.”

Based on Participant Six’s negative experience with his first-grade teacher, I was interested in exploring if any of his teachers served as a source of motivation or provide motivational resources. He replied:

“My ninth-grade health teacher has had a major influence on me as well as my varsity football coach, who never hesitates to pour inspiration into his players. He is always either telling us some story to inspire us or showing us one of E.T.s videos and connecting it to our lives.”

When I asked about his feelings towards school in general, Participant Six stated:

Doing well in school is my only way out of this city. My mom has a decent job but not the type of job with a future for her or me. She cannot afford to send me to

college so I plan on taking advantage of any opportunity that will make that transition less stressful. The way I see it, a quality education is the only way to ensure long-term success. So with that being said, I need to be aware of my academic strengths and weaknesses. I know I work best in a group, which allows me to compare my thought process with those in my group to gain better understanding of the class material. I also understand the importance of having both good time management and study skills. If I keep this in front of me, I know I can make my dreams come true.

Participant Six was asked what factors or individuals influence the way he experiences school. In his response he stated:

My friends play an important role in my school experience. I enjoy being able to connect with them both in the classroom and during after-school activities. I travel a lot with my friends on the basketball team and spend time with them outside of school. A few of my friends and I made a pact that we are going to college and getting out of this city.

Mentors. Participant Six was questioned about his extended family, and the influence they may have on his motivational and goal choices. In his response, he stated:

I can think of only two people in my family that were able to make their dreams a reality and were able to muster up enough internal motivation to accomplish their goal. One of my family members, my older cousin, actually finished high school and attended Michigan State University. My cousin has definitely been a positive influence and a sense of motivation. She not only went to college, she graduated and is now a teacher at my high school. I have another cousin, a male cousin who

inspired me because he placed so much emphasis on education. He worked so hard on his grades in high school. He actually was the first person in the family to get accepted into college and receive a full-ride academic scholarship.

Participant Six has been fortunate to have a few family members he could model himself after and use their examples as a sense of inspiration. He has utilized this as a unique opportunity to learn some specific goal setting strategies, gain some pre-college insight from his cousins, and use this to create a path toward making his goals a reality.

When asked how his parents have influenced his school experience, he responded:

My mother plays an important role in my school experience. My father is also concerned about my school success, but he and my mother are not married and I have never lived with him. Both of my parents have always said and done things to emphasize the importance of me doing well in school, but it makes it hard to learn as much from my father because of our limited time together. I personally enjoy being able to connect with them both about school and sports. However, my mom and I live alone and I think that makes it easy for us to bond. Both of my parents graduated from high school and received their diploma, but a high school diploma has not been enough for my mom to support us. I must say my family challenges have done nothing but motivate me big time. I will not be like my father; I will work hard to give my mother a good life. I will use the influence of my two successful older cousins to push me. Seeing my cousins reach their goals has inspired me to surpass them and be an inspiration for my family one day like they did for me.

Self-Awareness. Participant Six also feels heavily influenced by his own personal goals of becoming a marine biologist. He is determined to maintain good grades while in high school so that he can compete for scholarships during his senior year. He knows that the influence of his family members is going to help him make his dreams a reality.

When asked who was responsible for his academic success, he boldly stated:

I accept responsibility for my academic success. I realize my mother is somewhat responsible for my education, but she can only express her expectations and hope that I respect them. Not to be disrespectful, but at the end of the day, she or my father never went to college so they can only help me so much. I am going to have to take full responsible for my path and my education. If I am going to reach my ultimate goal of becoming a Marine Biologist, I must take advantage of every opportunity and always remain open to new information and guidance from those I trust.

Participant Six maintains his drive and motivation when he is at home by using several different techniques:

I receive a lot of guidance and support from my mother. My mother always has a home cooked meal and love waiting for me when I get home from football and basketball practice. When I have a bad game or a bad day, my mom always has a positive word for me. I guess because it's just her and me, she invests a lot into me. Besides my mom, I listen to Eric Thomas, E.T., on a regular basis. My coach, my teachers and my friends all listen to music on his apps and I watch a video every day before I go to school.

Summary of Analysis. In summary, Participant Six's goals appear to be created from a normative goal framing perspective because his motivation to graduate from high school is in many ways due to his father and mother finishing high school. To some extent, he is doing what he believes he "ought" to do based on the examples given to him by his family. Additionally, Participant Six also appears to be both extrinsically and intrinsically motivated. He appears to be engaging in the education process for the sake of education itself and not because of any significant impact from external influences. He knows what his goals are, he knows the process, and is even knowledgeable in what university specializes in the program he desires to pursue. However, there is a part of him that makes these goals for the sake of giving his mom a good life and not becoming what his father became for him.

Participant Seven

Here, while Participant Seven's goal framing perspective appears to be largely normative and extrinsically motivated, parts of her data hint at an innate need to achieve her personal goals. Participant Seven is a 16-year-old African American female. She is currently a sophomore at King High. She lives with her mother and her younger brother. She seemed to be very polite and observant of her surroundings when I first met her. From the beginning, it was apparent that she was not comfortable discussing her personal life. She seemed to be quite mature for her age and was always on task. Additionally, she made an effort to isolate herself from those who chose to waste time. She seemed excited about the opportunity to have me working in the classroom with her. I could tell immediately that Participant Seven had the motivation necessary to change her own life.

Consistent with Green's (1987) assertion that students who have little to no belief in their academic abilities or have yet to learn what they are truly passionate about are less likely to see the benefits of participating in goal framing activities, Participant Seven has a strong sense of what she wants to do and what is needed to get there. As such, she was more than willing to participate in the goal framing activity.

Goal Creation. When asked to complete the "Academic and Personal Goals Survey," she quickly found a comfortable space to work and begin completing the worksheet. In my initial meeting with her, I inquired of her short-term goals. In her response she stated:

My immediate goal is to maintain at least a B average or higher in all of my classes. I know that my goal will require that I spend time, a good amount of time, studying. I will need to study for at least one hour each night during the weekday and double that time on the weekends. I also will need to work on attending each class, focusing more once in class, being sure to pay attention and complete all my assignments on time.

In addition to identifying her short-term goals, Participant Seven was keenly aware of the adjustments she needed to make to secure her short-term goals:

First and foremost, I have to eliminate all the distractions. I spend too much of my free time on my computer and phone browsing through the Internet on sites like Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, instead of doing my schoolwork. The phone is another one of my big distractions. When I get home from school, I promise my intent is to do my homework, but I end up getting on the phone and before I know it, I have been on the phone for hours. If I do not find a way to eliminate the

distractions, I may find myself unable to accomplish this goal by the end of the school year.

When asked about her goals for the next ten years, Participant Seven replied saying:

My five-year goal starts with me graduating from high school and then I would like to go on to attend Michigan State University and major in Kinesiology. I would also like the opportunity to work my way through college so that I can take the financial pressure off of my mother. I hope I can get an academic scholarship to help fund my education but as of now, my GPA is very low.

Barriers to Achievement. Participant Seven was asked about the challenges she has faced when trying to take steps towards her personal goals. In her response, she implied that her biggest obstacle was the fact that she doesn't give 100% of her effort during instruction time. In a journal entry, she stated:

I believe that problems within the school would be easily resolved if administrators considered student input. I also feel that the homework load some teachers give are unrealistic when considering each student is responsible for six different classes. The heavy work load makes me feel like I wanted to give up at times. I feel that the lack of creativity teachers use when lesson planning makes it hard for students to absorb new learning techniques. I strongly believe that if they make the effort to engage the students in an activity it will increase their memory of the subject.

Participant Seven feels that her most challenging subject is mathematics. She remembers always having difficulty with this subject, even as a child. When asked about her feelings towards school, she stated:

I believe that school is very important. Both my mother and my uncle graduated from college. My mother is not rich or nothing but my brother and I do not want for anything. My uncle graduate from school and he is doing real well. My cousins live in the suburbs, so I know going to school is a big part of your future success. On the other hand, my father did not go to college and he is not doing that good for himself. I think one of the reasons my mother has not allowed my brother and I to have a relationship with him is because of his prison life. It just seems like the people who went to college in my family are doing better than the ones that did not.”

When asked about her teachers and her thoughts about their impact on how she feels about school, she stated:

The lack of effort put forth by the teachers in my school is obvious and it affects me and other students. If teachers made more of an effort to really connect with the students, then they will be drawn to the activities and be open to learning the material being presented. Even the school curriculum does not cater to the needs of the students like me, it is boring. Plus they do not teach anything we are going to need once we finish high school.

She continued,

The last time I actually felt pure excitement about school was the summer before my freshmen year. I was extremely excited about the new environment and opportunities to spread my wings. But to be honest, that excitement did not last very long. The only excitement I feel now about school stems from my involvement with the Upward Bound program and Eric Thomas. I love the

program and time I get to spend with my mentors from Upward Bound. They motivate me to continue coming to school because they are the only ones who constantly shower me with inspiration to keep pushing forward. My teachers are so worried about homework and taking tests that they act like we do not exist. I get so aggravated with the lack of consideration some of my teachers show towards my after school schedule. They act like they do not care about our life. They act like they do not know we have to manage six classes and still assign homework that is unreasonable for students.”

Participant Seven was asked which individuals influenced the way she experiences school. She replied:

My friends play an important role in my school experience. I enjoy being able to connect with them both in the classroom, during lunch time, and after school. But my personal goal of becoming an athletic sports trainer, which requires admission to a four-year university, is my biggest motivation. I’m failing half of my classes but I am determined to get my grades up and maintain good grades while in high school so that I can compete for scholarships when the time comes.

Participant Seven’s goal to get through a four-year university is extrinsically motivated and is created from a normative goal frame as both of her mentors are college graduates and she believes that she “ought” to be, as well.

Mentors. There seems to be several adults who have shaped participant seven’s goal creation. I inquired about the individuals that inspired her. She responded,

There are two people in my life specifically that I have witnessed make their dreams a reality, but only one of them had enough drive to see his entire dream

come true, my uncle. My mother went to college but she only managed to become an administrative assistant for a business. But my uncle, he started developing his career skills in high school. He enrolled in an engineering class offered through the local vocational school as a teenager so by the time he got to college he was already on his way to becoming an engineer. I even remember him being in the local newspaper at one point. My uncle is currently a successful engineer who repairs computers, televisions, and cars. He recently got promoted to a supervisory position. What I love the most though is my uncle still makes time to visit my mother, my brother, and I, and he always has some words of inspiration to share.

Self-Awareness. When asked, “Who is responsible for your academic success,” Participant Seven takes full responsibility for her academic success. She knows that if she does not take her education seriously and hold herself accountable then she will easily be left behind by her classmates. She knows that if she gets too far behind it may be impossible to catch up, so she must do everything in her power to stay alert and on task at all times.

Participant Seven seems to be motivated mainly by her personal goals and dreams. In a journal entry, she wrote:

My motivation to do well in school is one day being a graduate and seeing the world. I love my city but I have always dreamed of seeing more than just the Michigan. I guess I am just motivated by my future. I have high hopes of being financially stable in my thirties, which will provide me with the opportunity to relocate my mother and granny out of Michigan. I also find pieces of inspiration

on Twitter and Instagram from time to time. Eric Thomas' *Thank God It's Monday* web series is a constant source of motivation.

Participant Seven was asked how she finds motivation when she is away from school.

She stated:

My mom holds me accountable for my academic success. She is very involved in my life and sets the example for me by striving towards her own personal goals despite all of her responsibilities. My mother works a full time job, raises my brother and I, and still finds time to attend college part time working on her master's degree. My mother demands a lot of my brother and I, but she leads by example and that is one of the main reasons I feel it is necessary for me to put forth real effort in the classroom. My grandmother is also a strong, positive person in my life. She helps my mom quite a bit by caring for me and always being there to listen and encourage me. I want to be like my mom and grandma—African American women who made something of themselves—and eventually pave the way for someone else just like me.

Summary of Analysis. Participant Seven admits that her mom holds her accountable for her academic progress and, given her deep admiration for both her mom and grandmother, she is more inclined to set goals based on what she believes she should do. As to her motivators, pursuant to theories extended by the human ecological theory, Participant Seven appears to be more extrinsically motivated as she expresses that she gets excited about school when external factors (e.g., *Upward Bound*, Eric Thomas) are involved.

Participant Eight

Participant Eight demonstrates once again the combination of extrinsic and intrinsic motivation. However, in this case, Participant Eight appears to be more extrinsically motivated than anything else. He doesn't appear to have a deep commitment to learning in and of itself, but is able to perform when externally stimulated through motivational videos, music, and other stimuli. This is not to suggest that his personal goals do not motivate him, but his behavior and academic history suggest more that he functions primarily off of external influences.

Participant Eight is a 16-year-old African American male who currently attends King High as a sophomore. He lives with his mother and his four brothers. He seemed excited about the opportunity to have me working in the classroom with him. Over the course of the year, he proved to be a highly motivated student. He is an extremely happy-go-lucky kid and can be quite talkative and energetic at times. His personality can best be described as "jovial." He seemed to immediately form an attachment to the mentors and invited them to his basketball games on several occasions.

Goal Creation. Participant Eight was asked to complete the "Academic and Personal Goals Survey." He made an effort to thoroughly respond to each question and proved to be one of the most consistent students in the program. In my initial meeting with him, I inquired of his short-term goals. In his response he stated:

My immediate goal was to raise my grade point average and work on my behavior. I want to get a 4.0 this semester and work on talking less when the teacher is lecturing or give assignment instructions. I also know I need to spend more time working to accomplish my goal and to do this I will need to study for

at least two hours each night. I know it is going to be hard but I am willing to make every effort to make sure I get all of my assignments done by the deadline. I also need to make a commitment to spending my free time more effectively. I spend too much time on my cell phone and playing video games.

When I asked him about his long-term goals for the next five years, Participant Eight responded:

My five year goal is to graduate from high school and get accepted into the University of Southern California and major in pre-law studies. I have big plans of receiving a basketball scholarship to help fund my education. I hope to be able to work my way through college so that I can take the financial load off my mother. As a single parent, my mom is not in a position to pay for my brothers and me to go to college. I also want to maintain a good grade point average while in college and minimize any financial stress bad grades may cause.

Barriers to Achievement. Participant Eight was asked what challenges he faces when trying to take steps towards his personal goal. He almost leaped out of his chair as he answered:

Man, my biggest obstacle is I spend too much time socializing during class. And I also struggle a lot in my classes that I do not understand. You know, in the classes where the teachers do not make an effort to connect the lesson to real life stuff. It is hard to really remember the old information and the new stuff because it does not stick. I also feel like my not having access to certain things and opportunities hinders me from reaching my full potential. They expect me to know stuff I have never ever seen before, or have never been taught.

He proceeded to explain,

Educators who do not respect their students' learning styles or are able to teach in a way that engages them also add to this problem. Some of my teachers have no real interest in forming connections with their students and, as a result, I and other students find it difficult to stay motivated in their class. Or it is like they do not know how to teach in a way we can understand the stuff. I know they went to school to teach but something is wrong.

When asked about his feelings towards school, Participant Eight hinted that he feels that there is entirely too much stress associated with school. The last time he remembers actually enjoying school was when he began middle school. At that time, Participant Eight had always excelled in his mathematics classes and made every effort to tutor his peers who may not be as proficient in the subject. This has changed for him. He stated:

I do not feel like I am learning most of the time. I feel like I have been cramming a lot of stuff in my head in a short amount of time so I can pass a test. It is a lot to learn from all my classes. I do not know why we cannot work in groups. I feel that I work best in a group setting where I can brainstorm with my peers. I remember a time when I was in the sixth grade and the teacher stayed after for three months and helped me each day with my math lesson. That was the first time I actually saw myself as a strong student. I feel that sometimes interacting with other students and discussing problems out loud helps me understand things a bit easier. But for some reason, teachers do not do that in high school, you are on your own. I feel like I actually need it more now than I needed it in middle

school. That experience [in middle school] and act of kindness definitely helped me deal with other issues outside of school.

Mentors. Participant Eight was asked about the individuals who have influenced the way he has experienced school. With a smile on his face, he stated: My friends play an important role in my school experience. I enjoy being able to connect with them both in the classroom and during football practice. My football coaching staff also has a big influence in my life. We spend a lot of time eating together, traveling together. My coaches are like the fathers I never had. Eric Thomas is also a major influence. My football coach first introduced Eric Thomas' motivational videos. Eric's presence in his life has proven to be extremely beneficial. E.T. has given me a different perspective on life and athleticism. I also watch and get inspiration from watching videos posted by Adrian Peterson [a National Football Association player] on YouTube. Seeing African American men on YouTube make their dreams come true makes me feel like I can make my personal goal of making it to the NBA real. I am determined to maintain good grades while in high school so that I have a chance to improve my current circumstances.

Participant Eight was asked how or from whom he receives guidance and support from individuals within the school environment. Sports also serve as motivation for him. Teamwork skills and the strong work ethic implemented from sports helps him to be a better student and athlete. He added,

Both my basketball and football coach are huge source of encouragement and they both push me to reach my highest potential. Both of them pull me to the side

from time to time and hold me accountable. On some occasions, they stop by and talk to my teachers about my grades. My brother also holds me accountable and constantly reminds me of my dreams of attending the University of Southern California to play ball and get my degree in pre-law studies.

In a journal entry, when responding to a prompt about any members of his immediate or extended family he saw pursue a goal and obtain it, he stated:

My mother had a dream of graduating from high school with an academic scholarship to the nursing program of her choice, and later go on to work as a professional in the field. But during her college journey, she gave birth to my brother and was forced to juggle the responsibilities of being both a parent and a student. After seven years of hard work and dedication, she finally walked across the graduation podium at Michigan State University and received her degree in nursing. Seeing her graduate with her degree proved to me that anything is possible if you put all of your energy into accomplishing one goal. I am also amazed by the fact that she is currently working two jobs with the hope of being able to save enough money to send me off to college.

Self-Awareness. When asked, “Who is responsible for your academic success,”

Participant Eight responded:

I am. I accepted responsibility for my own academic success. Even though my mother loves me and is involved in my education, she cannot make me apply myself. My motivation is my brother. He came up just short of reaching his dream of playing college ball so I plan on finishing what he started. I get it now. I know

that my dream will only come true if I put all of my energy into making it come true.

Participant Eight is motivated mainly by his personal goals and dreams, consistent with Deci & Ryan's (2000) assertion of the self-determination theory. He would like the opportunity to provide a better life for his family. Being exposed to new environments is also a source of motivation for him. Attending field trips and connecting with mentors who have been through the same process keep him inspired during times when he might not get the encouragement he needs from his teachers or family.

Participant Eight seems to be self-motivated to learn. He enjoys being able to attend football games and is proud to be a member of the school's basketball team. He also enjoys spending time socializing with friends at after-school events or activities.

Participant Eight was also asked how or from whom he receives motivation and support within his home environment. He stated:

Like I shared earlier, my coach turned me on to E.T and his videos. There is not a morning that goes by that I do not watch one of his videos. I even have his book, so I read that from time to time. I also have his app and get daily messages from his Instagram and Twitter timeline. Outside of that, I watch the NFL network and my favorite players' videos from time to time for inspiration.

Summary of Analysis. Consistent with arguments presented by the Human Ecological Theory, Participant Eight's data demonstrate the effects of his environment on the goal choices he has made. He physically watched his mom go to school, work a job, take care of him, and graduate to become a nurse, all of which had an immediate impact on him. However, there was still a disconnect because his grades and behavior show that

he doesn't have a good connection between his current schooling situation and his desire to follow his mom's steps and go to college. A person who is extrinsic displays elevated levels of anxiety and lower engagement, whereas intrinsic goal framing results in better retention for a conceptual learning experience. He watched his mom's educational journey, and while she has had an influence on him because he saw her pursue her degree in her later years, it did not appear to produce intrinsic goal framing but more extrinsic goal framing, which does not induce a deep commitment towards learning.

Participant Nine

Participant Nine is a 15-year-old African American female who is currently a junior at King High. She lives with her mother. She seemed to be full of life and very opinionated. During our first encounter, participant nine led me to believe that she would be a very rambunctious student during the course of the mentoring program. At times it seemed as if she enjoyed trying to push the envelope by actively engaging in the interview process. Although she turned out to be a well-rounded student, it was difficult in the beginning to distinguish whether she was more interested in the program or socializing with her friends. However, I could tell after a couple of weeks that Participant Nine had the motivation necessary to make changes in behavior.

Goal Creation. All of the students were asked to complete an "Academic and Personal Goals Survey" and she made an effort to respond to each question. When asked to identify her short-term goals she stated:

My immediate goal is to maintain at least a B average and shoot for higher in all of my classes. I have been on the honor roll but I am aiming for the Dean's list this semester. I am also working on not missing class and controlling my

behavior. My grades have always been good, but sometimes I have challenges with missing class and my attitude. I get in trouble sometimes for not listening to my teachers and for talking back.

She proceeded to explain herself:

To reach my first goal I will probably need to study for at least two hours each night before I go to bed. My second goal, I just need to work on attending every class whether I feel like being bothered or not. I also need to work on focusing once I am in class. I would much prefer to just to get my work and leave class and do it on my own. As far as my attitude, when the teacher says something I do not like, I have to learn to keep my mouth shut and not talk back.

When asked if she had a vision for her future, Participant Nine stated:

In five years, I want to have graduated from high school and be attending Michigan State University with a major in finance. My mother works full-time but cannot afford to send me to college, so I hope to pay my own way through college by working as a banker during the summers before and after I graduate from high school. I also hope to do well enough on my SAT test and raise my grades enough to receive an academic scholarship to take care of my education.

Barriers to Achievement. When asked about the challenges she faced when trying to take steps towards her personal goals, she replied:

My biggest obstacle is me. I know I do not give 100% of my effort. I only give about 80% in class. I have missed a few classes already this semester and even when I go to class I do not always pay attention. I take my education seriously. I do all my homework but a lot of those teachers do not know how to teach—they

are so boring. I feel like I do better when I do not listen to them and just study the book on my own. Some of these teachers are so confusing and they get upset with me when I call them out. That's why I get kicked out. They call it insubordination but they just get mad because I tell them I do not know what they are talking about and ask them to explain themselves.

Considering Participant Nine's barriers to achievement, it stands to reason that though she is in many ways intrinsically motivated, a gap still exists, as she admits that her behavior is an obstacle for her and yet she continues to engage in this behavior even though it actually sabotages her goals.

Mentors. Participant Nine was asked which individuals influenced the way she experiences school. She replied stating:

My peers play an important role in my school experience. I keep to myself in school so I do not really socialize during school hours, but I do spend a lot of time talking to my friends once I get home. I also like attending basketball games with some of my friends. But to be honest, my peers also negatively impact my school experience. Most of these kids are so childish. I hate the attitudes I have to deal with in my classrooms. To make it worse, teachers act like they have absolutely no control of their class or they ignore all the name calling going back and forth. And worse, most of my teachers make no effort to stop the bullying. They act like they are scared of the students.

Participant Nine receives guidance and support from a number of individuals within her school environment. She stated:

My guidance counselor knew my older sister and she looks out for me like she did for my sister. She meets with me weekly to go over my process and make sure I stay on track. Her biggest thing is making sure I learn the proper way to conduct myself in class and learn how to manage my mouth. She is a truly a huge source of encouragement . . . The field trip to MSU was a source of exposure to new environments. I remember being able to converse with a student from Michigan State University that provided me with a different perspective of the world I live in. By accomplishing my short-term goal of maintaining at least a B average or higher in all of my classes, I will be on the right path to be exactly who I want to be.

Here, Participant Nine speaks to the influence of participating in the study. By her admission, it gave her exposure to a new environment and helped reshape her perspective on the significance of goal framing.

Participant Nine was asked if there were any individuals in her immediate or extended family that she can look to who had reached their long-term goals. She replied, Yes, my mother and my sister are the two people in my life who made their dreams a reality, but my sister is probably the most focused person I know. Hands down, the only person I know that made her entire dream come true is my big sister. She is my hero because she recently graduated from high school, got accepted to Michigan State University, and paid for it herself. Like I said, my mom has also been an influence. My mother's motivation and drive continues to inspire me. My mother has been both our mother and father. As a single parent, she has worked hard to provide for my sister and I while getting her degree from

MSU. My mom did not just talk about education; she has always modeled the importance of women being educated.

The data collected here is consistent with Lindenberg and Steg's (2007) normative goal frame perspective because the two people she looks up to the most are not only educated, but education was emphasized in the home, making the Participant Nine especially sensitive to what she “ought” to do.

Participant Nine was asked which family members influenced the way she experiences school. She replied:

My mother is the only one that cares about my education; my father does not care about my education. He hardly cares about me. My mother graduated from high school but never went to college. She got pregnant and did not go to college and said that her daughters would not make the same mistake. I do not have a real relationship with my father but I was told he also graduated from high school but not college.

Self-Awareness. When asked, “Who is responsible for your academic success,” Participant Nine stated:

I take full responsibility for my academic success. My mother and sister are definitely a big support but I want to be like my big sister. My mother was an inspiration for her, but she made it happen on her own. I do feel that I need to make it happen. I need to be responsible for my success. My sister gave me the blueprint so I am more than aware of what it takes to reach my goals.

Participant Nine shared what motivates her to learn:

Mainly, I'm motivated by my personal goals and dreams. My main motivation to learn is the opportunity to make enough money to buy my mother a house and the car of her dreams. I am also motivated to learn so I can have a family one-day and give my children what I never had. Of course I am motivated to learn so I can attend college on an academic scholarship. None of my dreams can happen without college. I promised myself that I would put forth all of my effort in every class I enroll in until graduation.

Here, it appears that Participant Nine's goals are created from both a gain and a hedonic framework, as taking care of her mom and being able to provide for her own family someday would both change her personal resources and improve the way she feels.

When Participant Nine was asked how or from whom she receives guidance and support from individuals within her home environment, she stated:

Mainly my sister and mother hold me accountable when it comes to my academic and career success. I watched my sister finish high school, go to college, and become a local bank teller at Michigan State Federal Credit Union. My sister constantly reminds me how important school is and how it was during college. Through hard work she was able to own two cars and a house. Even though my sister has her own family and life, she makes it her business to visit my mom and me to make sure I stay on track. I think it also has a lot to do with the fact our father abandoned us. She never wants me to feel I am missing out of anything, which is probably why she is such a strong motivating factor in my life. I also find pieces of inspiration on Twitter and Instagram from time to time. Eric

Thomas' *Thank God It's Monday* web series serves as a reliable source of motivation.

Summary of Analysis. In summary, Participant Nine is extrinsically motivated. Although she is motivated by her own goals and dreams, she creates her goals from both a gain and hedonic framework.

Participant Ten

The data for Participant Ten are consistent with that collected for several of the other participants. Here, Participant Ten has good grades and verbally expresses his understanding of the importance of the education process, yet his behavior and friends present themselves as distractions to his being able to effectively meet his goals. We also see, consistent with many other studies, the effect of parental expectations on the academic achievement and goals set by students.

Participant Ten is a 15-year-old bi-racial male from Lansing, MI. He currently attends King High as a sophomore and lives with his mother. From the very start, it was apparent that he would require extra attention and guidance, but he seemed excited about the opportunity to be exposed to a new type of environment. It was easy to recognize that Participant Ten was very bright and thoughtful.

Goal Creation. Participant Ten made an effort to respond to each question on the "Academic and Personal Goals Survey." When asked to identify his short-term goals he stated:

"My immediate goal is to earn a 4.0 by the end of the current school year. I want to prove that I can be a great athlete as well as a great student. A lot of people think athletes are dumb jocks and I want to prove I can be sweet on the court and

in the classroom. Plus, I want to go study medicine in college and I will need to have a pretty good grade point average in order to make that happen.

After discussing Participant Ten's short-term goals, I was not certain if he understood the enormity of being a student athlete and maintaining a 4.0. When queried about the kind of investment he thought he would have to exert in order to make his goal a reality, he stated:

I know it is a lot to ask for but I can do it. I know I would not be able to have much of a social life. I would have to practice hard and use all my extra time to study once I get home.

Participant Ten did not appear to have a realistic plan of action to execute his goals, but he was very passionate about them. Further into the discussion, I probed into Participant Ten's vision for his future. It was apparent by his immediate response that he had thought very deeply about his future prior to my asking. Before I could finish my sentence, Participant Ten emphatically shared with me:

My five-year-goal is to graduate from high school and immediately go to college. I would like to go on to attend a university with a strong medical program and major in sports medicine. I would like the opportunity to work my way through college and gain experience in the medical field through an internship. I would also like to work hard for the chance to receive a basketball scholarship to help pay for my education.

It was apparent while interviewing participant ten that as an underclassman, he is unusually focused and very determined. He is very ambitious about his goals. Beyond his

personal commitment to his academic journey, though, I was concerned about the type of distractions he might face.

Barriers to Achievement. When asked, “What challenges have you faced when trying to take steps towards your personal goals,” he paused slightly. However, I detected that his pause had less to do with him trying to make up a response and was more about deciding which one he wanted to begin with. He finally answered,

My biggest obstacle is my lack of focus in the classroom. In middle school, my teachers were more hands on, there was way more pressure. In high school, there is less activities, the teachers lecture way more. It is hard to sit there and listen to all that talking.

Despite participant ten’s struggle to remain focused at times, his current academic standing shows that he is one of the many students who takes his academics seriously. During a journal writing assignment he identified the reason for receiving less than satisfactory grades in the past was due to a lack of effort and motivation on his part:

I know I can be an A student, no question. In the past I just focused more of my attention on the sports part of my dream and not the school part. And to be honest, my peers were a big part of my distraction. I am not saying it like I am a victim or nothing, I am just saying I allowed my friends to influence me to make poor choices and that hindered my performance in the classroom. Another distraction has been me trying balance it all. I put a lot of my energy into sports and I know that has nothing to do with my grades. But if I can find a balance between the two, I know I can reach my goals.

Despite an overarching disconnect, Participant Ten clearly believes that there is a correlation, to some extent, between his future goals and school. In an earlier interview he shared, “I believe a quality education is the only way to ensure long term success.” Subsequently, I revisited the importance of school and thus inquired about his beliefs about school. Participant Ten was asked about his current thoughts about school and what school event or events he recall helped shape how he feels about school. He paused for a few moments, reflected deeply and in a somewhat emotional tone, he shared,

“I will never forget: one of my middle school teachers told me I would never be able to go into the medical field. My teacher said I needed to be more realistic. I should think about a major that was easier. I have to be honest; it has been hard dismissing that moment out of my head. There are times I feel like I can be whatever I want to be but sometimes I can hear that teacher’s words in the back of my head.”

Participant Ten appears to be intrinsically motivated but his response about the effects of the statements made by his teacher support Bronfenbrenner’s theory on the effects of the microsystem on a child’s development as, by his own admission, there are times when his middle school teacher’s words adversely affected him. Multiple studies support the belief that academic success of students can be attributed to positive, healthy relationships with teachers who motivate and demonstrate love and support (Green, 1987). It stands to reason that student success can conversely be hindered if teacher-student relationships are not positive and healthy.

Participant Ten is a strong student, academically and otherwise. He has made an effort to stay aware of his academic strengths and weaknesses. Although he knows how important school is, there are distractions that threaten him from reaching his full potential.

Mentors. After being questioned about what or who provides guidance and support to him, he mentioned a number of individuals within his school environment. Among those mentioned was his basketball coach. He began rocking his head back and forth slowly methodically, smiled, and said:

My junior varsity basketball coach has been a huge source of encouragement. Not only has he provided the players with words of encouragement, he also pushes me personally to reach my highest potential. He knows my plans to play ball professionally and go into the medical field so he makes me turn in a weekly progress report. He always says to the players, we are not competing against each other; we are competing against the best us.

However, Participant Ten has not internalized how to resolve this challenge as it relates to connecting to teachers with challenging teaching styles.

When asked, “Who has been the most influential person in your life and motivated you regarding your future goals,” participant ten chuckled, hit his chest with admiration, and stated:

The only person I know personally that made their dreams come true is my mother. She went to Michigan State University and got her bachelor’s degree. My mom has been more than an example and she is my “why.” Not only did she get her bachelor’s degree, she is currently working on her Master’s degree in Public Health. On everything I love, my mom is the reason I want the degree in the

medical field. For one, that's all my mom talks about 24/7 is her job and her patients and, ever since I was a shorty, my mom has been stressing the importance of getting an education for me as I was growing up. I also have an older cousin that has been an inspiration. He put in work when he was in high school and kept his grades up and was a star athlete. Eventually, he earned a full-ride combined sports and academic scholarship to the university of his choice. So I know first-hand I can make it happen because my mom and my cousin did it.

Self-Awareness. Participant Ten was asked, "Who is responsible for your academic success?" He responded immediately, accepting responsibility for his own academic success. He knows that his mother is somewhat responsible for his education, but she can only express her expectations and hope that he respects them. Participant Ten takes full responsible for the path of his education. He knows that in order to reach his ultimate goal of becoming an athletic trainer, he must take advantage of every opportunity and always remain open to new information and guidance from those he trusts.

I was interested in what aspects of learning Participant Ten was passionate about. I asked him, "What are the intrinsic or extrinsic factors that drive you to do well in school?" He replied:

I am mainly driven by my personal goals and dreams. Besides my dream of going to college, majoring in sports medicine, and playing in the NBA, I am driven by my opportunity to provide a better life for my mother. My mom does ok for herself but I dream of her retiring early. I want to put her in a position where she

never has to work again. Sports also serve as a motivation for me. I am motivated to do well for my teammates. I would hate to let my coach and teammates down.

Participant Ten shared on his “Academic and Personal Goals Survey” that his mother, cousin, and father are involved in his personal and academic development at home. Consistent with Eccles-Parson, Adler, and Kaczala (1982), we see the influence of parental expectations for their child’s achievement. He stated:

My mother not only stresses the importance of school, but every day I get home from school, she asks me how school was and if I have any homework. She works during the day, so she does not have time to visit the school frequently, but she has been to parent- teacher conferences and a few of my games. But overall, my mom is very supportive and she also helps me with my homework from time to time—when she is not too busy doing her own homework . . . Another thing, my mom is not strict when it comes to my schoolwork. She is not home as much as she would like to be because of school and work, so she tells me I have to be mature enough to do what I am supposed to do. That is probably the reason the majority of my energy is focused on sports and not my homework. I try to stay focused after basketball practice because I want so badly to go to college and get a degree in sports management, but it is so hard. This marking period, I got two bad grades and my mom put me on punishment. She explained to me that I had to be self-motivated and self-regulated. My punishment is always taking me away from the activities that caused me to be distracted from school in the first place like my cell phone, sports, and my video games.

Participant Ten continued,

My dad is involved in my life but not like my mom. My dad is mainly involved in my life when it comes to sports. He comes to some of my games and asked about my grades before or after the game but that is about it. I do not see him much during the week but I know he cares. My dad is just really busy with work but I know he loves me and he cares about me. I kinda wish he was just as involved as my mom but I am grateful for the time we do have together because a lot of my friends do not even know their fathers.

Participant Ten states that he feels the mentoring program provides him better educational opportunities. He acknowledges that Eric Thomas has become a deep inspiration who provides him with the motivation necessary to work towards bettering himself and making his academic and personal dreams come true.

Summary of Analysis. In summary, Participant Ten demonstrates aspects of the Human Ecological Theory. He has physically watched his mother go to school, work, take care of him, and graduate to become a nurse. While this experience evidently had an immediate impact on him, there was still a disconnect between his goals and behavior, which demonstrates that he does not have a good connection between school and his desire to follow his mom's steps and go to college. Extrinsic goal framing typically results in lower engagement, as the motivators are not innately inspired. Conversely, intrinsic goal framing generally results in better retention for a conceptual learning experience. Here, Participant Ten's mom has had an influence on him, but it still has not produced purely intrinsic goal framing; rather, there has been a greater influence on extrinsic goal framing, which does not always induce a deep commitment towards learning.

Participant Eleven

Participant Eleven's data closely resembles that of several of the other participants. While he demonstrates a keen understanding of the education process and its importance in meeting his goals, he, like several others, has not fully reconciled his behavior and school attendance with the goals he has created. He appears in many ways to be intrinsically motivated, but is easily distracted and falls prey to the influences of his environment, which suggests that, on a spectrum, he is not solely intrinsically motivated but engages, at least moderately, in learning for reasons outside of enjoyment of learning.

Participant Eleven is a 16-year-old African American male who is a sophomore at King High. He lives with his mother and three brothers. During our first conversation, he seemed excited about the opportunity to have me working in the classroom with him. He is a proud member of the high school basketball team. When I first began to observe him in the class, he struggled with behavior issues, but it seemed as if he was excited about having a black male present in his life. He was outspoken and proved himself to be a leader among his peers. It was apparent early on that he had the ability to motivate his peers to stay on track. He had a combination of external and internal motivation.

Goal Creation. Participant Eleven made an effort to thoroughly respond to each question on the "Academic and Personal Goals Survey," and proved to be one of the most consistent students in the program. When asked to identify his short-term goals, he stated:

My immediate goal is to receive a 3.6 GPA for the current semester. My grades are average right now but I know that I can do better. First off, I need to work on not talking while the teacher is teaching. I have a hard time with my homework

because I miss a lot of the homework instructions because I'm talking. If I would pay more attention to the teacher while she is teaching, I could figure out how to do the problem and get a better grade on my homework.

Participant Eleven seemed clear as to his immediate goal but I was not sure if he knew the time commitment necessary to raise his grade point average. Curious, I asked him if he had an opportunity to think about when and how often he would study. He replied:

I need to study every day, even on the weekends, if I am going to raise my grade point average from a 2.5 to a 3.6. I am figuring I would need to study for at least two hours every night, this way I do not forget anything I have learned throughout the week. Plus, I need to make every effort to get all of my assignments completed by the deadlines.

Participant Eleven also expressed his commitment to using his free time more effectively: "Instead of wasting time talking on phone, browsing through social media pages and playing videos games, I promise myself to use more of my free time wisely; doing my homework and getting ahead of the game."

Participant Eleven was clear in stating his immediate goals but even more clear about his long-term goals. When I asked him to specify his long-term goals, he rambled off the next 10-20 years of his life without hesitation. He stated:

I am going to graduate from high school in the next four years and then I am going to college. My plan is to attend a Historically Black College or University, hopefully I will get accepted to attend Alabama State University and major in something sports related. My mother cannot afford to send me to college, so I need to keep my grade point average high, and get a good SAT score so I can earn

a scholarship. I also hope to get a football or basketball scholarship so my mom does not have to take out any loans. I do not want to put any financial stress on her. After I graduate from Alabama State University with a four-year degree in sports management, I plan on playing in the NFL or NBA. I promised my mother that I would not leave college without a four-year degree. After my career in the NFL or NBA, I want to get my master's degree and go back to the NFL or NBA and be an athletic trainer.”

Barriers to Achievement. When asked, “What challenges have you faced when trying to take steps towards your personal goals”, Participant Eleven stated:

My biggest obstacle is my friends and myself. I have classes with my teammates and friends I have been in school with since I was in elementary school. It is so hard for us to stay focused—we spend so much time joking on each other and making fun of other students. I could do so much better if I were more focused.

Outside of immaturity, I sought to understand if there were any other obstacles that Participant Eleven could identify as potential obstacles to reaching his goals. He replied:

The teachers don't make an effort to help me like they did in middle school. The teachers usually go too fast. They act like they do not care if you get the information or not. They want to just be able to say they taught it.

When asked about his feelings towards school or if he recalls an event that shaped his school experience, Participant Eleven shook his head repeatedly, then stated:

I do not like high school, it is entirely too stressful. It is all about tests or studying for tests. We go over too much information in such a short amount of time. It seems like as soon as we are about to understand one lesson, we have moved on

to the next. I know I work best alone, in a quiet place, where I can focus and really work to understand each new topic. I also remember a time when I was in the eighth grade and the teacher allowed the kids to re-take tests if they stayed after and received tutoring. In high school, it seems the teachers frown on re-taking tests and extra help for students that didn't get the information the first time around. But it was those types of experiences and acts of kindness that definitely helped and that have made me like school.

Participant Eleven mentioned that he played both football and basketball. I was curious to know how his involvement in sports, despite some of his academic challenges, impacted his motivation and goal framing choices. He replied saying:

I am really proud to be a member of the school's football team and basketball team. I enjoy spending time socializing with friends at fun after school events or activities. I do not think I would have the motivation to get through some of the issues I face as a sophomore if I did not play sports. I do not want to miss the opportunity to play sports because of my grades, or miss any games because of my grades. I can even say that I have stopped talking and joking in class as much as I did in middle school because I know if I get kicked out of class, I might get benched by the coach.

His desire to keep his grades up so that he can avoid "getting benched" is consistent with the Self-Determination Theory's argument of extrinsic motivation; Participant Eleven isn't necessarily interested in school for the sake of school or learning, but achieves so that he can continue to do something that he desires. This further demonstrates a student making goal framing choices from a hedonic framework, as getting good grades to

remain on his sports team would make him feel better than he would feel if he got poor grades.

The first time Participant Eleven remembers actually enjoying school was when he began high school. He was excited to finally have the opportunity to try out for the varsity football team. Sports also serve as a means of excitement and motivation for him. The teamwork, specific athletic skills, and strong work ethic involved in the sport have transferred to the classroom for Participant Eleven. Sports have changed his perspective and aided him in becoming a better student.

Mentors. When asked, “which individuals influence the way you experience school,” Participant Eleven stated that his friends play an important role in his school experience. He enjoys being able to connect with them both in the classroom and during after school activities. His football coaching staff additionally influences him; indeed, it was a football coach who first introduced him to Eric Thomas’ motivational videos. Thomas’ presence in his life has also proven to be extremely beneficial. It has given him a different perspective on life and athleticism. He also gains inspiration from watching videos posted by Ray Louis on YouTube. Participant Eleven feels heavily influenced by his personal goal of making it to the National Football League, which requires admission to a four-year university. He is determined to maintain good grades while in high school so that he can compete for both athletic and academic scholarships during his senior year. Participant Eleven also feels that the opportunity to work with Eric Thomas one-on-one in the classroom has proven to be the best opportunity to connect with his real purpose in life. He receives guidance and support from a number of individual within his school environment. In a journal entry he stated:

My football coaches and my basketball coaches are huge sources of encouragement. Each one of them in their own way, pushes me to reach best in everything I do. Coach always [quotes] Martin Luther King, Jr., ‘If a man is called to be a street sweeper, he should sweep streets even as Michelangelo painted, or Beethoven composed music or Shakespeare wrote poetry. He should sweep streets so well that all the hosts of heaven and earth will pause to say, “Here lived a great street sweeper who did his job well.”’ I will remember that forever.

In an attempt to uncover who were some of the individuals who inspired Participant Eleven to choose his goals, he mentioned two family members, his cousin and uncle. He believed these individuals had what it took to make their dreams a reality, and had enough internal motivation to accomplish their goal. In a journal entry describing his brother as one of his major influences, he stated:

My brother always said he was going to graduate from high school with an academic scholarship and get accepted into the University of Michigan. Right after graduating from U of M, my brother took a job as a professional in the public health arena. I look up to my brother because, during his college journey, he was forced to juggle the responsibilities of being both a father and a student. After five years of hard work and dedication, my brother finally walked across the graduation podium at the University of Michigan and received his degree in public health. I also have an uncle who owns his own business. My uncle had the opportunity to graduate from Lansing Community College with an Associate’s degree in business.

Self-Awareness. Family plays a major role in shaping motivational and goal framing choices. As such, I asked Participant Eleven how his family environment has influenced the way he has experienced school. He paused for a few moments and took a deep breath before responding. It seemed as though the question struck a chord, because Participant Eleven became very emotional. He replied:

My mother and my younger brothers mean the world to me. I have watched my mother slave for pennies to take care of my brothers and me. She is currently working two jobs with the hope of being able to save enough money to send me off to college. So [not going to] college is not an option, I am trying to get an athletic and academic scholarship. I also plan on making it to the NFL or the NBA so I can take care of her. Even if I do not make it to the NFL or NBA, I am going to be a professional head coach. I just do not like to see my mother going through what she is going through because she did not go to college. Plus, I have to be like my older brother, he set the bar. He graduated from the University of Michigan, so I have to do the same thing so my brother feels like this is what men in our family do. I am also motivated to be a good example for my brothers because our father is absent. I have to be strong for them since he will not be.

I was interested in the activities Participant Eleven uses at home to keep himself focused and make positive motivational and goal framing choices. When I inquired, he stated:

My big brother is my number one supporter. He is more like a father than a brother most of the time. He goes to all my games, makes sure I am on top of all my homework, and he always has the most positive, uplifting words. My brother

even watches E.T.'s motivational videos and mix tapes with me sometimes. My brother actually turned me on to his app and I also read his book. His book was mad real and encouraging. His biological father was not in his life and he messed up in school as well, so I can really relate to his story, which is very inspiring. I even made my little brothers read it and watch the videos with me.

I could feel his mixed emotions. On one hand, I sensed the hurt he felt as a result of his father not being in his life, but on the other hand, I could tell how much he valued his brother's love and care.

Summary of Analysis. In summary, this participant exhibits classic normative goal setting attributes. Though his mother did not go to college, he feels the pressure from the example that his brother set in going to the University of Michigan and wants to pursue a similar path. There are also signs of hedonic goal framing as the goals he is setting will obviously aid how he feels about his current situation, as he admits to desiring to take care of his mom the way that she took care of him and his brothers.

Participant Twelve

Participant Twelve's data shows that he is extrinsically motivated and creates his goals from a hedonic framework. He, like many other students in this study, has a strong desire to play professional sports, and his goals are driven by his desire to remain in good standing with his team to increase his chances of being able to play professionally. Participant Twelve is a 16-year-old bi-racial male who is currently a sophomore at King High. He lives with his mother. During our first conversation, he provided me with insight on his emotional circumstances. His personality has always been calm and collected.

Goal Creation. When asked to complete the “Academic and Personal Goals Survey,” Participant Twelve made a genuine effort to respond to each question. He proved to be one of the students who only made it through the school year because of his involvement in the mentoring program. When asked to identify his short-term goals he stated:

My goal for the current school year is to make an effort to earn at least a 3.5 grade point average. I want to go to a Division One university and the only way I can make that happen is to keep my grades up. I am not saying I am too good for a Division Two program, I am just saying, the big recruits do not come to the Division Two or Junior Colleges. I have been playing AAU ball all my life and I am not doing it just to be doing it. The NBA is not an option.”

Participant Twelve was then asked, “How much time will you be required to spend working to accomplish this goal?” He responded,

I will need to study for at least two hours each night after basketball practice. I mean right after practice because if I do not study as soon as I get home, I am going to get caught up playing videos, talking to girls or playing basketball with the fellows in my neighborhood at the park. I am the procrastination king—it is easy for me to get distracted by other things and procrastination usually gets the best of me. I also have to be careful not to get caught up socializing in class.

In addition to laying out a concrete plan for his current semester, Participant Twelve had a clear and concise plan for his future. I was somewhat surprised by his plan, and listened attentively as he shared it with me. In his soft-spoken voice he stated:

In four years, my goal is that I will have graduated from high school and, if I have my choice, I would like to attend the University of Iowa and study Earth/Space Science. I know it is hard for people to believe but ever since I was a little boy I have been fascinated by astronomy and stuff like that. I also want to try to get a basketball scholarship to help fund my education. Once I get accepted into Iowa, I am going to try to find an internship in my major so I can learn as much as I can outside the class and make sure I network with my peers. I want to make as many connections as possible before I graduate.

Participant Twelve did not stop after articulating his five-year goal. He insisted that I hear out his entire plan for his life. He continued,

In ten years, my goal is that I will have graduated from Iowa with my four-year degree in Earth/Space Science. After college, I will be working toward my professional career as a basketball player in the National Basketball Association. I know how slim my chances are of actually making it to the league. This is why I am so determined to complete my degree no matter what obstacles I face. If I do not make it to the league, I will stay at Iowa and get my master's degree.

Barriers to Achievement. When asked, “what challenges have you faced when trying to take steps towards your personal goals, Participant Twelve replied:

Girls, girls and girls. I am going to keep it 100, girls are a major distraction and I have a hard time staying focus in class because that is all I think about. Focusing on my image has also been a distraction. I am one of the better basketball players on the team and I get a lot of attention because of it. I spend so much energy on looking the part, being the “it” that I do not always get my school work done.

Participant Twelve's focus seemed to be more on his athletic opportunities and less on school. Subsequently, I asked him what his feelings were towards school. He shook his head from side to side, blew his breath, and stated:

I feel as if school is my job. I know school is a must. I know it is an important step toward making it to a Division One school and reaching my ultimate goals, but I have to keep it 100—doing my homework and playing ball for the school and my AAU team can be overwhelming at times. I am going to be real—most of the time I do not understand what my teachers are saying. And, I also do not feel like teachers understand me. They are so busy giving out homework but do not seem to be aware of the problems their students face outside the classroom, which weighs heavily on most of us students.

Mentors. Curious to understand what motivational factors influence how Participant Twelve makes motivational and goal framing choices, I asked, “which individuals influence the way you experience school,” he responded:

My teachers have had a big influence on me. I had a few negative experiences in middle school. I have been taller than most of my peers because I started growing a lot in middle school. Of course most of my teachers suggested I play basketball for the team because I was so tall. Anyway, my teachers praised me all the time for what I did on the court but they treated me differently in the classroom. I did not say anything about it to my mother but I started to put more effort into basketball than I did in the classroom and the more I played ball the more confidence I gained on the court. It was the opposite with my school work. The

better I got in basketball the less confidence I had in the classroom and I started losing focus in class.

Participant Twelve is predominantly fueled by his goal of making it to the National Basketball Association, which requires admission to a Division One school. He knows that even though he does not like school, he must be determined to maintain good grades so that he can compete for scholarships during his senior year in high school. He is motivated by the videos of his coach and some of his teachers show Eric Thomas' YouTube videos from time to time. He feels like viewing Thomas' videos has been the best opportunity to connect with successful people who started out in similar circumstances yet somehow found a way to press through school and make their dreams come true. Outside of Participant Twelve's negative experiences with his middle school teachers, I was curious if there were any other positive pioneers who influenced his school experience. In a journal entry, he described his basketball coach who had dreams of graduating from high school with a scholarship to play basketball at a major university. He wrote,

Two people come to mind that I personally know who made their dreams a reality. My basketball coach went to school here and lived in the neighborhood. He actually graduated from here and got an athletic scholarship and later went on to work as a professional athlete in the National Basketball Association. Although he never played in the United States, he was still able to find a place on a professional team in another country. He told me he had a lot of obstacles to overcome like me but he kept pushing towards his dreams and didn't stop until he accomplished them. I also had a cousin who had dreams of being a professional

basketball player. During his junior year in high school he made some wise decisions as far as school. He got exposed to this academic and sports scholarships program by one of his coaches and he decided to get involved. He went through the program successfully and eventually was eligible for the scholarship. My cousin's hard work and dedication finally paid off when he was accepted into Florida State University with a full-ride athletic scholarship."

I was eager to know the role Participant Twelve's family played in his motivational and goal framing choices, so I asked, "Which family members influence the way you experience school?" He replied:

"My mother played an important role in my school experience. She always said things to stress the importance of me taking school serious. My mom not only talked about the importance of school, she led by example. My mom does not visit the school often but she does ask me about school on a regular basis and asks to see my grades. She even asked me about my games—she cannot come to most of my games but she always asks how I did and promises she will come to every game she can."

Because I was further interested in understanding the educational background of Participant Twelve and possible influences on his motivational and goal framing choices, I inquired about them. He stated:

Both my parents graduated from high school and received their diplomas, but my mom went on to work towards obtaining her Associate's degree from Lansing Community College. I am not sure if my father has done any college because I do not know my father and my mom does not talk about him. Other than my mom, I

am motivated by my three younger siblings and use them as inspiration to keep myself focused on my dreams. I am determined to maintain good grades so that I can compete for scholarships during my senior year, because without it, I will not be able to go to a Division One school.

Self-Awareness. Wanting to understand what personally fueled Participant Twelve in regards to his school experience, I inquired, and he openly shared:

I am motivated mainly by my personal goal of becoming a successful scientist. Sports also serve as genuine motivation for me. My siblings are also a source of motivation for me and inspire me to continue shooting for all my goals. I take pride in being the older brother and hope to be able to one day provide for my family with the life I feel they deserve.

Participant Twelve was further asked, “How do you maintain your drive and stay motivated when you are at home?” He responded:

I receive guidance and support from my mother. She holds me accountable when it comes to my school work. She cannot really help me with all my homework but she does make sure I get it done. My coach has also helped me because he introduced me to E.T.’s motivational videos, which I try to watch every day, especially whenever I am feeling unmotivated and frustrated because I do not understand the school work. I stop and watch a video and E.T. inspires me not to give up or give in but see myself successful despite the odds. It works every time, because as soon as I watch one of the videos, I feel like I can run through a brick wall. I love watching E.T.’s videos for inspiration.

Summary of Analysis. In short, Participant Twelve's motivators are extremely extrinsic. He sees school as a "must" to accomplish his goal of going to a Division One school. Though he does mention the need to do well academically, and clearly understands its importance, his comments and documents depict him as one who is determined to pursue his goal of becoming a professional athlete.

Participant Thirteen

Participant Thirteen experienced severe hardships at a very early stage in her life. The data reflect that though she understands the importance of education, she develops her goals from a normative goal framing perspective because she is doing what she believes she is supposed to do to honor her deceased mother and aunt, and to live up to the example of her brother, who is her nearest example of success. It doesn't appear from our observations that she is in a place emotionally where she can say that she enjoys learning purely for the sake of learning, but more that she aspires to achieve the goals she has set because she feels that she is alone in the world and has to rely on herself to make sure that she is taken care of. This is demonstrative of extrinsic motivation.

Participant Thirteen, a junior at King High, is a 16-year-old African American female who lives with her elderly aunt. During our first encounter she seemed to be a reserved but very intelligent young lady. Ever since she was a child, her full-time caregiver was an older aunt who recently passed away. She is very outgoing and heavily involved in the community. She participated in the summer sessions and made every effort to make herself available to the mentors. She lost her mother her freshmen year and also has a father who comes in and out of her life. I could tell after a couple of weeks that Participant Thirteen had the motivation necessary to make changes in her behavior.

Goal Creation. All of the students were asked to complete an “Academic and Personal Goals Survey.” She made an effort to respond honestly to each question. When asked to identify her short-term goals, she stated:

I have been through quite a bit over the past few months. My mother died and my great aunt, who practically raised me, died a few weeks after my mom. I do not have anyone or anything at this point. I need to do well in school so I can have some type of future for myself. I do not have any money, so I have to get a good score on my SAT test and keep my grades up so I can get into a good college.”

In light of Participant Thirteen’s overwhelming circumstances, I sought to understand if her goal was emotionally based or if she had thought through the process. I inquired about the time commitment she planned on investing by asking, “How much time will you have to invest in your schoolwork to accomplish this goal?” She replied,

I will need to study for at least two hours each night. If I spend 30 minutes per class every day, even on the weekends, that should be enough to get all As in my classes. I also know I need to work on attending each class and focusing my attention on every assignment. I get depressed quite a bit and some days I do not even feel like getting out of the bed and going to school. But I know I have to fight through my feelings. The other thing I need to do is stay focused once I am in class. Sometimes I drift off thinking about my mother and my aunt.

The survey inquired about Participant Thirteen’s long-term goals as well. The purpose of the question was to determine how well she had thought out her vision for her future. She was very clear as to her future academic plans:

My five-year goal includes me graduating from high school, with honors and getting a full ride scholarship. My dream would be to attend Spellman College, an all-girls school in Atlanta and I would love to major in pre-medical studies. I want to be a doctor so I can discover a cure for cancer. Maybe I can help other people so they do not have to lose a loved one like I did.

Barriers to Achievement. With a clear understanding of the unique challenges Participant Thirteen has faced, I asked her to speak about the obstacles she has had to face and how they were affecting her. When I asked her, “What challenges have you faced when trying to reach your personal goals for this school year,” she responded:

My focus. My biggest challenge has been staying focused. It has been difficult to give 100% effort during class time or when it comes to doing my homework. I know I should take school serious, but after my mother died, I went through a period where I withdrew from school, and everything else for that matter. Then, when my aunt died, I felt like all the energy, all the life was sucked out of me. I did not have a desire to go to school anymore but I know my aunt would not want me to drop out of school. She would have wanted me to finish school and go on to college.

Despite the death of her loved ones, I was curious to know if there was anything she still enjoyed about school. When I inquired, she stated:

“Yes, I enjoy attending both the basketball and football games. I never was a big sports person before my mom and aunt died, but I enjoy sports now because it is a way to get away from it all. When I am at the games with my friends, I do not have to think about my mom and aunt the way I do when I am alone. I also enjoy

my history and science classes and being able to socialize with my friends before and after school. Even though it is hard to get up and get dressed for school, once I do come, I'm really am glad I came."

In order to accomplish both her short- and long-term goals in the appropriate time frame, I asked Participant Thirteen what were some of the activities or what people helped shape her motivational and goal framing decisions. She responded: "My teachers are extremely supportive and hold me accountable for my progress in school. Everyone in the school knows about my mom and aunt passing, so they show me a lot of love." She also acknowledges her peers as a huge source of encouragement:

My friends know how close my aunt and I were so they are always doing nice stuff for me to keep me inspired during school hours, like having their mother bake special treats just for me. I also get a lot of motivation and encouragement from Eric Thomas' videos. My teachers show his videos before class and I promise, every time I hear one of his videos I cry, because I think about my aunt and mom, but at the same time, I feel so much stronger. I feel like I can accomplish anything I want to.

Mentors. Participant Thirteen was asked if there were any people in her life who modeled success for her. I wanted to know if there were individuals in her life who set a goal for themselves and set out to accomplish that dream. In a journal entry, she wrote:

I really look up to my brother and admire him because he always wanted to do something big and different. He never wanted to follow the path of others. He always had dreams of being famous and working with famous people. And today, he is a co-producer on the *Steve Harvey Morning Show*. I want to be like my

brother, I don't want to just have a dream—I want to make my dream a reality. I was also motivated by my great aunt's motivation and drive to continue working hard to provide me with everything I needed to be successful. Despite my aunt's age, she never made any excuses. She worked until the day she died to make sure I had a chance to graduate high school and go to college like the kids who had their mother and father in their lives. She saw to it that I had all the necessities: food, clothes, and transportation. My aunt was a strong woman and a positive example of a strong black woman.

Participant Thirteen was asked, “which family members influence the way you experience school?” She responded:

Well, neither of my parents play a role in my school experience. My father has been in and out of my life ever since I can remember. When times got hard for my mother and she needed help taking care of me, he refused to help. And my mom made a decision that put me in a bad place, so my great aunt raised me, for the most part. I know my mother graduated from high school and so did my aunt, but I am not sure about my father. My great aunt has always said and done things to emphasize the importance of education. She always talks about back in the day, like during the Civil Rights times and how black people fought to go to school and how this generation is fortunate to go to school. She says I need to take advantage of the opportunity. Because of that, I feel strong about my dream of being a medical doctor one day. I am determined to maintain good grades and become a doctor so I can make my mother and aunt proud of me.

Self-Awareness. I inquired of Participant Thirteen, while in the midst of all her challenges, what her personal drive was to finish school and go to college. In a journal entry, she sheds light on the fact that her only real motivation to learn is the opportunity to one day make enough money to buy herself a house and own the car of her dreams. She stated:

My main motivation is to reach my personal goals and dreams. The two people I could count on are no longer there for me. If I am going to make it, you know, and ever have my own room again, I am going to have to do it myself. I can't count on my father. So I am motivated by the fact that I have an opportunity to attend a college on an academic scholarship if I put forth 100% effort in every class.

Participant Thirteen was asked how she reduced the distractions and challenges she faced away from school since she no longer had the support of her mom and aunt. She replied:

Believe it or not, I find pieces of inspiration on Twitter and Instagram from time to time. There are a lot of positive quotes and videos people post daily that I find inspirational. I also find Eric Thomas' *Thank God it's Monday* web series to be very encouraging and a great sense of constant motivation.

Summary of Analysis. This participant has clearly been through a lot. Her goal framing is extrinsic in a different way. She's aware that she doesn't have the traditional support system of other students her age and faces having to take care of herself, thus her awareness that her academic success or lack thereof likely will affect her ability to survive.

Participant Fourteen

The data collected from Participant Fourteen demonstrate a student who has set goals from all three goal framing perspectives: gain goal framing, normative goal framing, and normative goal framing. Participant Fourteen is a 16-year-old African American male. He currently attends King High as a junior. He lives with his parents and seven other siblings. He is a very outspoken student with great potential. During our first conversation, he seemed excited about the opportunity to have me working in the classroom with him. I could tell that Participant Fourteen would require a little more guidance than the rest of the students to develop the internal motivation necessary to improve his circumstances.

Goal Creation. Participant Fourteen made an effort to honestly respond to each question on the “Academic and Personal Goals Survey.” When asked to identify his short-term goals, he stated: “My immediate goal is to graduate from high school with a cumulative grade point average of at least a 3.2 and play football hopefully for a Big 10 university.” When Participant Fourteen was asked how much time he would be required to spend working to accomplish this goal, he stated:

I probably need to spend a whole lot more time studying. I rarely do my homework so I would have to say, it’s not a certain time period, but as long as it takes to get my work done. On everything I love, I need to start doing my homework.

I pressed Participant Fourteen a little harder and asked, “If you were to put a time frame on it, how much time do you think you would need to put aside to maintain a 3.2 grade point average?” He responded,

If I had to guess, I would say I needed to study for at least two hours each night. I have another short-term goal as well: I would like to change the people I hang around. Most of my friends have dropped out of school or have been in trouble with the law. I am not trying to end up a high school dropout or in jail. But it's hard to let them go even though I know they could end up getting me in serious trouble.

Here, Participant Fourteen's goal of changing the people he hangs around with is made from a normative and hedonic goal framing perspective. He desires to remove himself from this environment because it is what he "should do," while removing the negative elements from his life would eliminate or decrease the possibility of him getting into trouble, a motivation that is more hedonic in nature.

While completing the personal goal survey, Participant Fourteen shared with me that in 5 years, he would have graduated from high school and be in his junior year in college. He stated:

My dream would be to graduate with pretty good grades and play football for The Ohio State University Buckeyes and major in Criminal Justice. I am not looking for any handouts, so I would love to either get a scholarship or work my way through school. My parents have seven children and they are barely able to put food in our mouths, let alone put my brother and me through college.

Barriers to Achievement. When I asked Participant Fourteen what challenges he faced when trying to take steps towards his personal goal, he shared:

I come from a family that does not have a lot of money. My parents have seven children and my father is the only one who works. He is a truck driver and he

does not make the type of money he needs to take care of seven kids comfortably. Both my brother and I go to the same school and we both play sports. My father cannot afford to buy our sports equipment, or anything else for that matter. My other distraction to reaching my goal is my learning disability—I have dyslexia. Since I was diagnosed in elementary school with dyslexia, my mother has worked hard to get me the help I need to try to overcome it. I read at my grade level now, but I still mix words around sometimes. I learn best in a quiet small group environment, but in high school they do not offer a lot of chances for small group learning. But it's the way I learn. I like small classrooms, not too many people because I get distracted.”

Participant Fourteen and a group of the friends he mentioned as distractions to him reaching his goals were expelled from school during the middle of the school year for possession with the intent to distribute narcotics on school property. He was fortunate in that it was his first offense and a number of teachers advocated on his behalf. Based on his teachers' testimony of his character, Participant Fourteen was allowed to attend night classes at the district's alternative adult education program and permitted to return to King High upon the successful completion of his community service hours and recommendation from the adult education personnel at his night school. He successfully completed the adult education program and community service hours and was permitted to return to his regularly schedule classes the following school year. At that time, I was able resume our study and interview sessions with Participant Fourteen.

In an effort to understand how he was able to transform himself and get back on track with his goals. In an attempt to better understand how he became involved in the

drug case, I asked him what was his “why?”—his reasoning behind his actions. He replied,

I needed the money. I was depressed when I began selling the drugs. I was tired of not being able to participate in some sports activities and other events. Not only was I depressed, I was embarrassed. I was one of the better players on the team, me and my brother, and it hurt us that we could not play sometimes because we didn’t have the proper equipment. But I know I was wrong and there was no excuse for what I did. My brother goes to the same school and is in the same predicament and he never sold drugs. I acknowledge I made a mistake and I let my parents down. I promise you, selling drugs is out of my character.”

It is clear here, that Participant Fourteen was operating from a gain goal frame when he began selling drugs as selling, for him, put him in the position to change his resources. I then proceeded to ask further questions. I asked, “If selling drugs is out of your character, what made you do it?” He stated:

I chose to sell drugs versus working because dealing drugs seemed to be an easy way to become successful. Again, it’s not an excuse but between school, playing ball, and helping to take care of my siblings, there is not a lot of time left to get a job. I saw my boys coming to school with new clothes, fresh shoes, and reliable transportation. They kept saying, you broke, plus your family can’t take care of you, just give it a try. You won’t get caught. Look how long we been doing it, and we never got caught. Like I said, I know it was wrong, but I was caught between a rock and a hard place. I didn’t do it for shoes and stuff, I did it take care of some basic needs.

When asked about his feelings towards school, Participant Fourteen shared in a real remorseful manner. He stated:

This whole incident has changed the way I see school. I could have been in jail for a really long time. One incident could have messed up all my dreams and separated me from my family. Having to attend night school, summer school, and do community service has motivated me to be more than a statistic. My dream of making it to the NFL is realer than ever and I know I need school to make that happen.

When Participant Fourteen was asked how he finds motivation in school since being expelled, he stated:

I have developed a relationship with my guidance counselor who has been working with me to stay focused and keep me on track. Several of my teachers have also supported me by helping me with my dyslexia and preparing for my SAT and also applying for scholarships. The school has also enrolled me in a mentoring program to give me some extra support. I can truly say this situation has made me realize who really has my best interest at heart.

Mentors. Participant Fourteen acknowledges that his football coach is a huge source of encouragement and pushes him to reach his highest potential. He stated:

My football coach didn't have to let me work my way back on the team. But he let me practice during summer tryouts and win my way back to a starting position. I will admit, having to work during the season to win my position back was hard, but it taught me a huge lesson.

Additionally, Participant Fourteen's response to the *Academic and Personal Goals* Survey implied that he personally knows two family members who were able to make their dreams a reality: his uncle and his cousin. In a journal entry, he talks about his uncle:

My uncle had dreams of graduating from high school with a scholarship to play football at a major university, and later go on to work as a professional athlete in the National Football League. During my uncle's junior year in high school he made some foolish decisions concerning, I guess like me. He began to involve himself in illegal activity and eventually ended up getting arrested and spending some time behind bars. I never put the two together until just now, but I guess I did the same thing my uncle did.

It was easy to see the shock and terror on his face as he realized he was modeling his life after his uncle. On the contrary, Participant Fourteen also has a cousin who played sports and worked hard academically while in high school. His cousin had the opportunity to receive a full-ride athletic scholarship to his top choice college and is working hard towards a free degree and an opportunity to be a professional athlete. He stated:

My uncle never hid his mistakes from any of us, not even his own children. So my cousin had an advantage because he knew his father blew his chances of going to college and playing ball. And boy, did he take advantage of the lesson. He ended up getting an academic scholarship and playing ball in college. I guess, looking back at it, I have the unique chance to learn from my uncle's mistakes and also take the path already paved by my cousin.

When Participant Fourteen was asked if his parents were actively involved in his school experience, he stated that his mom is the more active of the two. It did not seem that either of his parents were extremely active, but he did say his mother was somewhat involved. It seemed as though the only time she visited the school was at the request of a teacher or for his sporting events. It was obvious that Participant Fourteen was extremely embarrassed by the fact his mother was only slightly involved and that his father had little to no involvement at all. In fact, whenever the subject came up, he defended his father and mentioned the only reason his father was not involved in his was strictly due to his job. In a journal entry he stated:

My father is a truck driver and his job has him on the road a lot. Even when he is home, he's sleeping because he has been on the road so much. Plus, my dad never graduated from high school, so you can kinda tell he does not feel very comfortable when it comes to school stuff.

Participant Fourteen seemed bothered by the fact his father was a truck driver and how little time his father invested in his life in general. This might explain why he placed so much emphasis on his teachers being responsible for his academic development and also why he was as academically focused as he was. Participant Fourteen's living conditions might also be a contributing factor to his academic achievement; he shared with me that he has seven siblings—six brothers and one sister—all living in a small apartment.

Self-Awareness. Participant fourteen mentioned how difficult it was to stay focused and motivated about school at home. He spoke about being distracted at times because he missed his father so much and found his mind wandering off and on as he wished his dad was home. In addition to longing for his father's presence, he attributed

his academic struggles to living in an overcrowded house. Participant Fourteen was asked how he stays motivated when at home and how he keeps himself from repeating the mistakes of the past. He stated:

Of course my parents and siblings hold me accountable, especially since my trouble at school. My family is way more supportive, or at least more vocal, since I was expelled from school. My girlfriend though, hands down, has been mad supportive. She has been so positive, especially when my mom emotionally cut me off because she was so embarrassed. I also believe that Eric Thomas is responsible for my academic success. My teachers and coaches tried to get me to read his book before I was expelled but I wasn't interested. But I read it and reread it during my break and I watched the videos daily. I feel it has helped me through my struggles.

Summary of Analysis. In summary, this participant demonstrates gain goal framing because he believed that, because his family could not afford to help him buy the equipment he needed to play sports, he took the responsibility on himself to provide for himself and his siblings by selling drugs. His teachers and family were surprised by these actions as they were out of character for him, but he desired to make the money so bad that he made decisions that were “unlike him” in order to meet his goals.

Subsequent Findings

In observing the participants, the majority of the students demonstrate a combination of goal-dependent framing. Aspects of hedonic goal framing, gain goal framing, and normative goal framing have been observed in almost all of the participants. For instance, the desire to move out of the home and provide for their parents can

improve the way the participants feel about themselves and their circumstances, enable a gain in resources, and can be viewed in many cases, as the right thing to do. Also, these goal-dependent framing forms can be influenced by a person's environment, a phenomenon conveyed in many of the participant's accounts of their home life and how the things they experience in their home that ultimately affects the goals they've set for themselves.

Goals are both intrinsically and extrinsically motivated, depending on the circumstances. No one student was motivated purely intrinsically, even though some were more intrinsically motivated than others. Further, we see that though many students admitted to knowing the value of education and understood what they needed to do in order to do well in school, their behaviors, grades, and attendance records did not reflect that they truly made the connection between what needed to be done in school to help them achieve their goals.

Professional Athlete Goals

Moreover, this study reveals that several students were either actively participating in an athletic program (namely AAU basketball) or expressed a desire to participate in these programs. Becoming a professional athlete was a common goal expressed among the male participants of this study. Their parents, teachers, and the collegiate communities they lived in often reinforced this. While achieving professional status is an admirable goal, when presented without the parallel encouragement of obtaining an education, it frequently presented itself as a distraction more than a motivation to engage in the learning process. This is to say that many students erroneously believed that they don't need to engage in school because of their goals to become professional athletes.

Social Media

Though social media has its negative connotations, when used effectively, it can generate positive results. As mentioned earlier, today's youth are highly engaged with social media; Facebook, Twitter, and YouTube are household names. Students look to these platforms to learn just as much as they seek to discover who and what to admire. Social media enables them to learn the latest fashion or latest song, but they can find sources of inspiration and encouragement. Over 90% of the participants of this study reported using a form of social media on a daily basis and that same 90% also reported watching my YouTube series, *Thank God it's Monday (TGIM)*, for inspiration and motivation to help them refocus or reengage in their academic endeavors. Many of these students reported feeling a sense of urgency to complete the task at hand or to stay committed to the goals that they had set for that day. Additionally, these same students, in keeping from the momentum established by the TGIMs, were eager to read my autobiography, *The Secret to Success*, where they learned more about the effective pursuit of goals. Hence, one motivational tool led to multiple other sources of motivation and inspiration that worked to help engage students in the learning process. Thus, social media, when used as a tool to motivate students, can effectively engage them in the learning process.

Cross-Analysis

Interviews and observations conducted in this study have focused on two research questions:

(1) How do one's home and school practices influence one's individual goal framing and motivation choices?

(2) How do students' goal framing and motivational choices in school compare to their goal framing and motivational choices in their home environment?

This section addresses these questions as well as related emergent themes that appeared across multiple students' cases.

Home and School Environment and Practices and Individual Goal Framing and Motivation

When we think about our youth as it relates to social media and the Internet, we often think of the negative effects it has on them. However, during these interviews, the majority of the participants talked about how they also use the Internet in positive ways. It is crucial to understand the vessels students use to gather information. Some of the mistakes being made by these school districts, through my observations, relate to their attempt to limit access to Internet sites in order to get the students to focus exclusively on traditional learning styles. For example, many schools block many different sites on the Internet including the popular site YouTube.

The problem with blocking these sites is that we are not attempting to educate our youth through these means and teach them that there are constructive ways in which they can use these sites to their benefit. For example, YouTube can be used as a 21st-century encyclopedia. If one types the name of any historical figure in YouTube, one will find hundreds of documentaries, short films, and interviews related that person and their life work. If we continue to ban these sites and treat them as taboo, we are failing to teach the kids a constructive way to learn through a medium they are already familiar with.

There have been countless occasions teachers have reached out to me regarding placing my videos somewhere other than YouTube so they can be shared with their

students. The problem is that YouTube is the fastest, easiest way to share information via video, so completely blocking the site as an option for learning is counter-productive.

Social Media at Home. Students reported surfing the Internet browsing several social mediums during their leisure time. YouTube was reported as the most frequent used medium with 14 out of the 14 students recording watching one or more videos per day. All of the students mentioned subscribing to etthehiphoppreacher's motivational page and viewing at least one video a day. Specifically, several students mentioned watching his "When You Want to Succeed as Bad as You Want to Breathe" video multiple times a day. Students also mentioned using motivation YouTube clips from popular NBA and NFL players such as Russell Westbrook, (Oklahoma Thunder guard) Adrian Peterson (Minnesota Viking running back) and other famous persons. In addition, several students reported following their favorite celebrities on their Twitter and Instagram pages. Several reported browsing through their favorite Twitter or Instagram pages daily, and sometimes even multiple times a day for inspiration quotes and sayings, songs, pictures, luxury living, cars, or video clips. Students reported the reason for following their favorite celebrity is deeper than merely curiosity. They do it with the intent of one day replicating that ideal. By observing the daily steps of their role models, they can acquire the knowledge needed to one day transform both the lives of their family members and their own.

Although all students reported using YouTube on a daily basis, some students mentioned using YouTube especially as a means of goal framing. For example, Steven mentioned how he watches video clips of his favorite NFL football player in order to study his moves and attempt to pattern himself after him. He explained, "I watch a lot of

National Football League games and shows. Watching football keeps me focused on my future goals and I get motivated when I see African American men doing what I want to do one day.” Additionally, Participant One reported watching Eric Thomas’ videos as a means of understanding and applying the mental principles one must acquire to make their dreams become a reality. He stated, “I also watch E.T.’s YouTube channel. E.T. gets my mind right because he keeps it real about the type of mindset you have to have to make your dreams come true.” Another student, John expressed how he uses YouTube as a means of goal framing outside of school. He explains,

Sometimes I get distracted or don’t feel like studying, so I turn on one of E.T.’s videos and I feel like I can accomplish anything. They remind that my dream of being an engineer is possible as long as follow the principles in the videos.

Overall, YouTube was the most common social networking medium used; all 14 students reported that they use it.

Immediate Family

Assistance. Based on information ascertained through the interview process, many students described the harsh contrast in influence and support attained in school versus the influence and support attained in their home life. Several students reported having positive reinforcement while at school and ultimately feeling very motivated to achieve while they are actually in school, but the motivation often wears off when they are forced to deal with the harsh realities of home life.

Student 1 reported that his mother works two jobs and often doesn’t arrive home until after 10pm. Upon arriving home, the student is charged with the responsibility of helping to raise his six younger brothers and sisters. Tasks include helping them with

homework, getting dinner ready and making sure everyone is clean and in the bed by a certain time. The student stated, “by the time I do all that, I really don’t even want to do any studying or reading, I just want to watch some TV and go to bed.” When asked to further describe what he and his mother’s relationship was like when she was at the home and whether she encourages him in his studies, he stated that “She usually just takes care of my youngest siblings because they can’t really do anything for themselves.”

He also maintained that he and his father have a positive relationship and that his father does in fact live in the home when he’s not on the road driving trucks. When asked if his father encourages him academically or asks about the status of his grades, the student responded by saying “No, not really.”

Student 2 also reported feeling motivated while in the school setting. She often credited her teachers and coaches for pushing her and helping her realize the importance of education. However, like student 1, she reported a lack of support in the home as a hindrance to her academic performance: “When my mom and great aunt died, I really didn’t have anyone who would ask me about school anymore.” She also discussed the actions of others in her home life as hurting her academic motivation: “When I come home is just like, nobody’s doing anything. They just kind of sit around and watch TV. It’s hard to keep motivated around them.”

Student 3 was unique in that he had great family support athletically, but almost none academically. Student 3 is thought to be one of the best basketball players in the state and has recently garnered the attention of many top schools in the country interested in recruiting him. The student is aware of the need to do well in school, but only for the purpose of being eligible to play basketball. He stated that, “I know I need to pass all my

classes or I will have to sit out this season.” When asked about family support, he reported that his family was very involved athletically, stating, “They come to all my games and cheer for me and that feels good, but they never really ask me about class or nothing like that.”

Support. Students reported a mix of immediate family members assisting them in staying focused on their goals. The majority of students reported their mothers as the major influence in assisting them in the goal framing process. In fact, 12 out of 14 students reported their mothers as their primary supporter. Another group of students reported an older sibling acting as a major support in assisting them to stay focused on their goals beyond high school. Finally, a small number of students reported their fathers were present in their lives and helpful in assisting them in their goal framing formation beyond high school. A large number of students reported being raised in single parent home reared by their mother, leading to major challenge regarding support. Many participants’ mothers have to work long hours and multiple jobs to make ends meet and are limited in how much time they can invest in their children’s future goals and limited in terms of the types of resources available. Marcus explained, “Mom has always worked days so she is home when my siblings and I get home from school. Even though she cannot be of much help, she holds us accountable and is always trying to find someone to tutor us.” Another student, Victoria, shared the same sentiments as it relates to having a supportive mother who finds the time to support her children in their goal creation despite the challenges associated with being a single parent. She shared,

My mom holds me accountable for my academic success. She is very involved in my life and sets the example for me by striving towards her own personal goals

despite all of her responsibilities. My mother works a full time job, raises my brother and me, and still finds time to attend college part time working on her master's degree. My mother demands a lot of my brother and I, but she leads by example and that is one of the main reasons I feel it is necessary for me to put forth real effort in the classroom.

One student, Participant Eight, explains how physically witnessing her mother pursue her goal for 7 years provided her with a blueprint for goal creation. She shared how watching her mother manage her time, complete her class assignments, organize her tasks, and provide for her family simultaneously was, in a meaningful way, her mom's way of supporting her goals.

After seven years of hard work and dedication she finally walked across the graduation podium at Michigan State University and received her degree in nursing. Seeing her graduate with her degree proved to me that anything is possible if you put all of your energy into accomplishing one goal. I am also amazed by the fact that she is currently working two jobs with the hope of being able to save enough money to send me off to college.

Extended Family. Over 80% of the students reported growing up in a single-parent home reared by their mother; a little over 60% of them reported that their mothers were not married to their biological father. Alarming, over 80% of these students reported little to no contact with their fathers. That is to say, the fathers of the students in this study were not involved in the student's school experience and or their lives. Subsequently, most of the students shared that their extended family members played an important role in helping their families cope with the challenges they face and assisting

them in where they lack the necessary resources. Specifically, students shared how extended family members have assisted their mothers in reinforcing and maintaining many of the family values and beliefs about school and life. For example, James Lauder mentioned how his uncle plays the role of his father in many regards and has been the academic and professional role model his father should have been. He shared,

I also have an uncle who owns his own business. My brother and I have been going to his office for years and he is constantly telling us what it takes to be successful. My uncle also graduated from Lansing Community College with an Associate's degree in business. My entire family went to the graduation. I look up to my uncle and hope to be as successful as him one day.

Riley Johnson has also been the beneficiary of his extended family. His cousin, specifically, has served as a model for goal creation. Riley admired his cousin and the decisions he made that led him to going to college and playing D1 basketball. In fact, his cousin had the greatest influence on him as it relates to future goals. He shared,

I also had a cousin who had dreams of being a professional basketball player. During his junior year in high school, he made some wise decisions as far as school. He got exposed to academic and sports scholarships program by one of his coaches and he decided to get involved. He went through the program successfully and eventually was eligible for the scholarship. My cousin's hard work and dedication finally paid off when he was accepted into Florida State University with a full ride athletic scholarship. My cousin is showing me the ropes. He is always explaining to me the importance of school. What classes I need to take, what college I should attend and to think about what decisions I need

to make today in order to have a fighting chance to make my dreams happen in the future.

Another student, Trevor Washington, divulged the fact his family challenges impacted his beliefs about his future goals. He was transparent with regards to contact with his father. He expressed his distain toward his father due to his absenteeism and how it will drive him to obtain his goals and dreams. Specifically, his father's absenteeism inspired him to support his mother financially and otherwise. Further, in the absence of his father, Trevor Washington revealed how he has drawn support and guidance from his cousins. He shared,

I must say my family challenges have done nothing but motivate me big time. I will not be like my father; I will work hard to give my mother a good life. I will use the influence of my two successful older cousins to push me. Seeing my cousins reach their goals has inspired me to surpass them and be an inspiration for my family one day, just like they did for me.

After-School Programs

A number of students reported participating in after-school programs (e.g., Upward Bound, school sports, etc). Students explained that these programs are often the only way for them to access resources that are not available to them from their parents or school, such as technology, financial resources, and even transportation needs. Many students stated that these types of programs offer an effective and affordable way for them to overcome some of the obstacles that would impede them from realizing their goals. For example, Laura Risper spoke about how advantageous being a part of the school's Upward Bound college preparatory program. She expressed the academic

metamorphosis she experienced since participating in the program as well as how observing and working with the college students from the program has empowered her to fully embrace and engage in her goals. She shared,

The school's mentoring program motivates me to learn. I really look up to the young college students that volunteer their time. The program provides me with an opportunity to see people like myself in college and what I can become if I stay motivated. Before being a part of the program I know I did not put forth about 100% of my energy into my schoolwork.

Another student, Marcus Thompson interjected that his relationship with his basketball coach was much deeper than coach-player. In fact, in his mind, his coach was part of his family, more like a father figure than just a coach. He shared that his coach filled the void of his absentee dad. His coach has served as a mentor, academic counselor and to some extent, even a provider. According to Marcus Thompson, on more than one occasion his coach made certain his basic needs were taken care of. Marcus Thompson shared,

Our coach is more than just a coach—he is like a father and mentor. Every day after school we have practice, and the first thing coach does is ask us about our day in school and makes sure we have something to eat. I can honestly say there have been times where the meal during practice was my first and last meal of the day. Coach also sees to it that we do our homework and he offers us help if we need it. Without fail, Coach shows us one of E.T.'s motivational videos every practice and that's enough to motivate anybody.

Roger Clemons had a slightly different outlook regarding after-school programs. While most students utilized after-school programs with regards to their long-term goals. Roger Clemons used his after-school program opportunities to accomplish his immediate goals and to address some of the immediate academic challenges he experienced:

I'm going to make a real effort in the next 30 days to get all my school assignments completed. I know what I have to do to it: I'm going to attend after-school tutoring. If I go to tutoring, I can get all of my homework completed and turn it in by class time the next day. I don't deal with all the distractions in the after-school program. Plus, I can get help in the areas I struggle with. It's not like my mother and grandmother is able to help me.

Music and Entertainment as a Means of Motivation

A number of students reported using music as a form of therapy. They explained that listening to certain music energizes them and sets the mood they need to study. Others reported that music helps improve their attention span, which allows them to grasp, retain, and recall information with less effort during quizzes and exams. Subsequently, they reported these improvements allow them to alleviate the distractions that eventually hinder them from reaching their goals. In short, music is used as a type of therapeutic relationship that assists the students in managing stress, expressing their feelings, enhancing memory, and improving their communication skills. For example, Steven Smith shared how instrumental music and other forms of entertainment have helped him pursue his future goals. Additionally, Steven Smith mentioned specifically, how certain entertainment genres (e.g., biographies, documentaries, etc.) have increased

his motivational and passion. He shared that these forms of entertainment have provided him with a blueprint to success in his desired field. He shared,

I use a number of different things to keep myself motivated. Not sure the order or which one I use the most but I like movies, music, books, and YouTube videos. I love movies that are based on true stories, like *The Pursuit of Happyness*. It's inspiring to see someone overcome all those challenges and still succeed. I listen to all kinds of music. It just depends on my mood and what I feel at the time. I have a lot of music on my iPhone, such as Hip-Hop, R&B, even a little classical, believe it or not. I watch a lot of National Football League games and shows. Watching and reading magazines about football keeps me focused on my future goals and I get motivated when I see African American men doing what I want to do one day.

Another student, Darius Hoover, shared a similar experience as to the student mentioned in the previous section, but he expanded his use of entertainment to include the transformation of his academic preparation and execution. He explained how the lyrics of J' Cole (Jermaine Lamarr Cole), one of the more conscious hip-hop artists of his generation, revolutionized his educational experience. Darius Hoover also expressed how the artist's lyrics helped him understand the gravity of a college education and helped him make the connection between school and his lifelong goals. He explains,

What drew me to J' Cole is the fact that he is one of the few hip-hop artists that went to college and graduated. Plus he went to college on an academic scholarship, not to play ball. Not only did he graduate from St. John's University, he graduated with honors, magna cum laude. I think the fact that he majored in

communications and got a minor in business is sick. He actually studies how to communicate and learned how to run a business. J' is one of the few rappers that teach the youth that school is cool. I didn't get seriously motivated to learn until I start listening to Cole drop those bars in his song, *Too Deep for the Intro*'s lyrics:

if this too deep for the intro I'll find another use/
but just in case its perfect let me introduce/
it's Cole, I had a dream and so I made a move/
a ill ass n-gga who just so happened to stay in **school**/
still rap for hustlers and muthaf-ckers that hated **school**/
said that's for busters that heard my sh-t and I made it cool/
It's safe to say that I'm gifted as if I'm Christmas shopping/
I got gangsta n-ggas lining up in that **admissions office**.

Absentee Fathers

Negatives. Based on the reporting of a number of students, there appears to be a direct correlation between absentee fathers and negative student outcomes. Specifically, negative outcomes for students in this study range from disruptive classroom behavior to low academic expectations to illegal activities.

John Taylor was very transparent about his father's interaction with his siblings and himself. He was very candid about how his father's occupation and work schedule adversely affected the type of relationship that existed between them, the limited support his father was able to provide for him emotionally and academically. He opened up to me and shared,

Growing up without the presence of my father really affected me. Obviously I love my dad but he rarely spends time with me because he is constantly on the road. My father drives a freight truck and is hardly ever home. Most of his runs are out of the state so I don't see much of him. Even when he is home, he's sleeping because he has been on the road so much. Plus my dad never graduated

from high school so you can kinda tell he does not feel very comfortable when it comes to school stuff. Not to mention, I am competing with my other six siblings for his time and attention.

Additionally, Student 5 reported that not having the presence or support of his father has significantly impacted his school experience. He shared that his father has been incarcerated since he was a toddler and that he was never afforded the opportunity to bond with his father. His father's absence has not only affected his academic situation but is one of the main causes he and his siblings live in abject poverty. Living without electricity and water consistently has not only been emotionally damaging but has impacted his level of academic concentration. He expressed rather emotionally,

My father has been in jail most of my life and my mother has not been able to provide for us. We have lived without water and electricity on a regular basis. I have to finish high school and go to college on a basketball scholarship. It's the first step toward accomplishing my ultimate goals . . . I have to admit I lose focus at times and find myself acting out in class. I joke a lot and I know it's wrong but I do it because laughing makes the pain go away, if only for a few minutes. Not being able to see my dad and living without the basic necessities is enough to make anyone go crazy. But I do know this, if I do not get a grip on it all, the consequences won't be worth it. As hard as it is, I have to keep my grades up, do well in basketball and stay out of trouble because my mother needs me bad.

Positives. In contrast to the previous section, a number of students reported that the absence of their fathers served as a means of motivation and inspiration to perform well academically. Specially, students attributed the desire to set academic goals and

goals beyond school such as escaping poverty and caring for their siblings to their fathers abandoning them.

For example, student 3, like the students in the previous section, acknowledged the fact that his father has been consistently absent. He further explained that he could identify him as his biological father but has never had any real interaction with him. However, despite the fact that he doesn't have a personal relationship with his father, he still holds him in high esteem. He despised his mother, despite the fact she raised him and provided for him. However, his superficial understanding of what a father embodies allows him to glamorize his father. The fact his father was a college graduate and held a prestigious position for a big firm was a means of empowerment. He shared,

I don't really know my father. I have never spent any time with him either. I know who he is and I know he lives in the same city, but he has never been a part of my siblings or my life. Even though I have never really spent any time with him, my grandmother told me he is currently an insurance agent for a big insurance company and he is currently attending Michigan State University pursuing a business degree. I want to be like my dad and have a real career. I don't want to be like my mother. She can barely take care of us.

Another student, Steven Smith, had a similar account as it relates to his father. He mentioned being abandoned by his father at birth and never experiencing a father-son connection. In spite of his circumstances, student two is determined to use his setbacks as fuel to inspire his academic goals and future aspirations to provide for his mother and siblings. He shared,

I do not know my father's level of education or him. I have not had the opportunity to meet my father as of yet. But it's ok, actually I'm going to use the pain of my father abandoning me and my mother to create a new meaning for school and life in general. It's actually one of the reasons I feel the need to reach my potential. I am not going to leave her like he did, I want to be able to provide a better life for my mother and help my siblings.

Teachers' Impact on Motivation

During their interviews, several students spoke about their frustrations with their teachers being unable to connect the curriculum in relevant manner. Several students complained about teaching styles being a large factor as to why they are unmotivated to understand and complete assignments. One student said, "I like it better when teachers don't just go by the book and make it more personal. Sometimes when I know teachers are just going to be boring and teach the same stuff, I skip class with my friends." When prompted to answer the question of whether a more relatable style of teaching would benefit their ability to grow as a student, John Taylor stated, "If the teacher is interesting the kid is going to want to go to class and learn. If the teacher is boring a kid is going to probably be bored and not feel like doing nothing."

In addition to students' beliefs that the information being provided was "boring," several students who were interviewed also felt like their teacher did not fully explain the assignments prior to being given homework or exams. Roger Clemons stated,

I mean, I want to go to college but the teachers give us all this homework and never really explain anything. Plus, they don't give us enough time to do the work and turn it in. Like I said, I want to go to college but I will not be able to if these

teachers keep giving me these low grades.

There was also a common theme of students feeling as if their teachers were unable to deliver the information in more than one style. Roger Clemons considered himself more of a visual learner but described being frustrated that several of his teachers teach straight out of the book and provided no real life examples,

I have a difficult time understanding some of the information. It's the way the teachers teach. It's like they only have one way to teach and if you cannot understand that one way, it's too bad for you. And to make things worse, the lack of sympathy I receive from some of my teachers is very discouraging.

The speed in which the information was being delivered was an issue for certain students. Some participants felt as if the information was coming so rapidly, concepts did not have adequate time to sink in. Thomas Wright stated,

I struggle a lot in my classes that I do not understand. You know, in the classes where the teachers do not make an effort to connect the lesson to real life stuff. It is hard to really remember the old information and the new stuff because it does not stick. I also feel like my not having access to the certain things and opportunities hinders me from reaching my full potential. They expect me to know stuff I have never even seen before, or have never been taught.

Thomas Wright also felt, like John Taylor, as if his teachers did not consider their students' learning styles before teaching—rather than engaging the student, they just “taught at” them. He continued,

Educators who do not respect their students' learning style or are able to teach in a way that engages them also add to this problem. Some of my teachers have no

real interest in forming connections with their students and as a result, I and other students find it difficult to stay motivated in their class. Or, it is like they do not know how to teach in a way we can understand the stuff. I know they went to school to teach, but something is wrong.

Influence of Coaches

Students reported *en masse* that coaches were a consistent influence in their daily lives, both on and off the playing surface. The common theme amongst the participants was the fact that coaches modeled the behaviors they were asking their students to display. The fact that many of the coaches had similar upbringings, came from similar economic backgrounds, and attended the same schools played a large role in the students' overall willingness to listen and learn from their coaches. Also, the fact that coaches care about the students' well-being inspired the students to want to push themselves on the field as well as academically.

For example, Steven Smith stated,

He made it!!! Coach D grew up in the same neighborhood as me and went to the same school as me and he made it to the NBA. He is the only person from the block that made his dreams come true. Plus, he came back to the city to coach us. He did not have to come back to this city, he could have moved anywhere in the world.

Perhaps even more important than the typical coach–player relationship was that many students saw their coaches a big brother or father figure. Since most of these students grew up in a home without their father, positive male influence is not only needed by the students, it is desired. When Steven Smith was asked if

he saw his coach as a father figure, he stated,

More than you can imagine. See, like me, a lot of dudes on the team do not know their father or their father is barely in their life. So we all trying to use basketball, like Coach D did to make it out of the hood and give our mothers a better life.

Similarly, Marcus Thompson stated,

Our coach is more than just a coach—he is like a father and mentor. Every day after school we have practice and the first thing coach does is ask us about our day in school and makes sure we have something to eat. I can honestly say there have been times where the meal during practice was my first and last meal of the day. Coach also sees to it that we do our homework and he offers us help if we need it. Without fail, coach shows us one of E.T.'s motivational videos every practice and that's enough to motivate anybody. The greatest thing, though, is that coach played in the NBA, so he knows what it takes to get in college, through college, and into the league. Playing ball also helps me stay off the streets. By the time I get home from practice and am done doing my homework, I am exhausted.

When Thomas Wright was asked about his coach and the role he played in his life of the playing surface, the student praised the fact that his coaches cared more about him as a young man than an athlete, and often go above the call of duty to make sure he is aware of that fact:

My football coaching staff also has a big influenced in my life. We spend a lot of time eating together, traveling together. My coaches are like the fathers I never had. Both my basketball and football coach are huge source of encouragement and they both push me to reach my highest potential. Both of them pull me to the

side from time to time and hold me accountable. On some occasions, they stop by and talk to my teachers about my grades.

When asked how knowing that his coaches cared so much about his overall well being affected his academic performance, James Lauder stated, “My football coaches and my basketball coaches are huge sources of encouragement. Each one of them in their own way pushes me to reach best in everything I do.”

In School Peer-to-Peer Impact

Students reported the significant effects their peer group has had on their academic achievement. A large number of students recognized that their peers have had an impact on their achievement, their school behavior, and their overall beliefs and values about learning. The common theme among students were how their values and beliefs about school was impacted by the people with whom they associate; through daily interaction over the course of the school year how certain behaviors became acceptable and fostered. For example, student 14 divulged how his personal values were challenged by his peer group, which ultimately led to his expulsion from school and brief incarceration for a drug charge. Further, he shared how he allowed his peer group to shatter his reputation and potentially derail his short-term and long-term goals. He shared his personal disbelief in his own behavior and the disappointment his family members and teachers experienced as a result of his actions. He explained, “I could have been in jail for a really long time. One incident could have messed up all my dreams . . . I really let my parents down and all the teachers that believe in me and support me.”

Another student, student 5. spoke about the dichotomy of setting high academic goals for himself versus intentionally sabotaging his academic success to impress his peer

group. He referenced competing values; on one hand, striving to make the honor roll in order to position himself for his long-term goal of attending college, while, on the other hand, forfeiting his long-term goals for the more pressing immediate goal of being affirmed by his peer group. He explained in detail:

I am too focused on what my boys think about me. It's hard to explain how it works. Nobody is forcing me to talk in class or waste time after school doing stupid stuff but I do feel the pressure. I am afraid my peers might not accept me and I think about that more than I do the honor roll. I focus too much on my image. If you do not have a pair of Jay's and not any pair, but the new releases, you are a nobody. And who wants to be a nobody, we all want to be in the "in" crowd. This is a problem because I can honestly say I spend more time and energy on being "swagged" out than I do on getting on the honor roll. It's also hard when you are the only one in your group trying to get on the honor roll.

Goal Framing and Motivational Choices at School Versus the Home Environment

After School

Students who chose not to be involved in after-school programs usually were less able to hold themselves accountable for their own success as those who chose to be involved in after-school activities. Additionally, students who chose not to be involved in after-school programs were generally less able to seek support from teachers than those that are involved in after school programs. Additionally, students who chose not to participate in extracurricular programming were more likely to suffer from a lack of academic awareness, academic motivation, personal responsibility, and positive social interactions with their peers. By participating in these types of programs, students are

able to build positive relationships with authority figures, build a positive image of self-worth, and feel a sense of connectedness to the extended community beyond the classroom.

Teachers and Parents

When comparing student interactions with both their parents and educators, it is easy to see why these relationships are so interdependent. Teachers spend a major part of their time either restructuring or enforcing things internalized from the student's home environment. Consequently, students who chose to involve their parents in their goal framing activities and who seek motivational support from their parents report having healthier relationship with their teachers. As a result of this, many students with healthy parental involvement expressed feeling a stronger sense of security as it related to sharing their goals and seeking help from their teachers than those students who were not in a supportive relationship with their parents. The findings in this study suggest that student-teacher relationships are directly correlated to the effectiveness of the relationships among the students and their parents and siblings maintained within their own household. Students who are able to engage in positive discussions and activities in their home environment seem to be more receptive to receiving guidance and inspiration from other adults in the community, especially their teachers and coaches. This collaboration allows the student to internalize the importance of education from a variety of different perspectives.

Expressing Feelings

A number of students used goal framing as a means of self-expression that they believed to be greatly beneficial both inside and outside of the school environment. However, many students feel that the current curriculum stifles their creativity and individuality. Additionally, the lack of funding for arts programs contributes to fewer opportunities of student expression. It has been well documented that the arts help with creative thinking, originality, elaboration, and flexibility. These programs also help to improve expressive skills, social tolerance, self-confidence and persistence. Students in this study argued that they are not given enough opportunities within the school environment to openly explore the possibility of who they are as individuals. Most writing activities are not structured to allow the student's creativity and innovation to shine through.

Social Media. Students use social media as a means of goal framing and motivation. Social media provides them with an outlet to explore their goals through the lives of their role models. The students mentioned that they use social media outlets both inside and outside of their school environment. Although students have dual access, there are more restrictions and time limitations in regards to their access to social media during school hours. Certain social media sites are restricted, along with the use of cell phones, which are only permitted to be used during the students' lunch period. Most students reported using social media platforms more after school hours and at home. Overall, the majority of students used their social media platforms in the same way: to create and promote their own personal image, while consequently being influenced by individuals they admire and receive inspiration from. Social media gives students the confidence to

be themselves because it is an easy way to connect with people from similar backgrounds who think and act as they do.

Music and Entertainment as a Means of Motivation. Students reported listening to music frequently because it gave them inspiration regarding their future goals and helped them either change or set their mood. A large number of them also shared that the only difference in the choices they make in terms of music is the type of access they have. Some teachers allow them to listen to music as long as it does not distract them from their work, while others do not permit it under any circumstance. However, in the rare cases they are allowed to play their music, they use it to set the mood for a test or quiz. Others mentioned using music as a means to eliminate distractions. As long as they are playing music, their classmates usually will not try to engage them in a conversation. The reports of usage while at home and school was very similar with the exception of the volume, dancing, and playing it in the shower. All the students shared that they play their music much louder at home and that they sing as loudly as they can, which releases stress and lightens their mood. Others mentioned dancing and how invigorated they feel when they dance. A few students said they sing in the shower while they pretend to be the next Beyoncé or whoever their favorite singer is at the time. Regardless, students agree that no matter what form of music they listen to, whether it's R&B, Hip-Hop, or pop, they benefit from the music.

Chapter 5: SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

I tell the story to you now, but in each telling the story itself changes a little, changes direction, and that in turn changes you and me. So be very careful not only in how you repeat it but in how you remember it.

-Vera Nazarian

The intention of this qualitative study was to explore the factors that influence the goal framing and motivational choices of students during school hours and in their home environment. Both within-case and cross-case analyses were conducted using student interviews, class observations, and writing samples. Students took part in an initial in-depth interview and followed up with informal interviews over the course of the four-month study. Those students who enrolled in the mentoring program were observed multiple times throughout the semester, and samples of the students work were collected during the program. The student participants were classified as either “borderline,” “failing” or “experiencing some behavior challenges in one or more classes.” As data were collected, it was discovered that students were able to articulate goals but often did not make the connection between the goals they created for themselves and academic process; many students reported wanting to become a professional athlete but didn’t connect the importance of education with this goal. Most students acknowledged social media was a heavy influence in their life as a source of motivation and inspiration, particularly the YouTube series *Thank God it’s Monday*. I believe that this, along with the other data collected, demonstrates the significance of motivation as an influence on engagement and the effects of goal framing on aiding students in connecting with the education process. This chapter will summarize and discuss in depth the results of the

study, identify implications primarily for educators, and explore opportunities for future research.

Goal Framing and Motivation

Question 1

What type of individual goal framing decisions and motivation practices are students doing during school and in their home environment?

Students' rationales for engaging in the goal framing and motivational practices they selected during school and at home are generally comparable. Although students self-selection were influenced by a myriad of factors—poverty, absentee fathers, career goals, family history, teachers' expectations, school environment, community activities, and peer pressure—the primary purpose of goal framing was associated with self-improvement and a desire for greater motivation. This is congruent with Schunk's (1991) findings that revealed goal formation might improve goal commitment. A study conducted with students with learning disabilities proved students who are permitted to determine their own performance goals and those who had goals delegated to them demonstrated higher levels of motivation than students with no goals. Further evidence showed that students who selected goals themselves led to the greatest self-efficacy and aptitude. These findings were consistent with Locke and Latham's (1990) theory of goal setting and task performance that purports goal setting is a critical aspect of cognitive development due to its influence on one's motivation. This influence can be detected with students who either determine and goal or assigned a goals by a teacher. There is a probability that they will encounter an initial sense of self-efficacy for achieving the goal.

Additionally, they are more likely to decide to commit to the task, which is imperative, as performance is influenced.

Question 2

How do students' goal framing decisions and motivational choices in school compare to their goal framing and motivational choices in their home environment?

After-School Programs. The results of this study showed that students who attended after-school programs gained support in the fulfillment of their immediate school goals and their future goals. Students in this study not only gained support with achieving their goals but also were willing to put forth more effort toward reaching their goals. As one student said, “Before being a part of the program, I know I did not put forth 100% of my energy into my schoolwork. But since I have been in the program, the college students have inspired me to go all in.” This statement is consistent with evidence associated with quality after-school programs in which students display substantial increases in their self-perceptions and connection to school, constructive social behaviors, grades and levels of academic achievement, and a considerable decrease in behavioral challenges (Weissberg & Pachan 2010). Additionally, A Policy Studies Associates, Inc.’s three-year evaluation of the Beacon Community Centers in New York—an initiative to provide middle school students with after-school academic enrichment—reported that, in regard to academic preparedness and attitudes toward school, 95% of the participants reported that they tried harder in school, did well in school (91%), and paid attention in class (93%). Close to 9 in 10 students shared that they were always prepared for class (88%). Asking participants about their academic aspirations, the 2010 report on the Beacon Centers found that nearly all students wanted to graduate from high school (98%)

and more than 8 in 10 wanted to graduate from college (83%). Additionally, students participating in the afterschool program had strong school attendance rates. The average school attendance rate was 94% for participants in the 5th–7th grade and 93% for participants in the 8th grade.

Students who are not involved in after-school programs, on the other hand, usually are not able to hold themselves accountable for their own success. Children who are not exposed to beneficial extra-curricular programming are likely to suffer from a lack of academic awareness, personal responsibility, and positive social interactions with their peers. By participating in these types of programs, students are able to build a positive sense of self-worth and feel a sense of connectedness to the extended community beyond the classroom.

Adult Influences. Parents and other family members contributed directly and indirectly to the goal framing practices of students. Adults served as role models by prior or current engagement in goal framing practices themselves, and they provided experiences and resources to support students in their activities. Additionally, they communicated their values and beliefs about education to students both formally and informally. This finding is consistent with a large body of research studies on parents' values (e.g., Jodl, Michael, Malanchuk, Eccles, & Sameroff, 2001). Parental influence further serves as the foundation for which students shape their self-confidence, and career goals. Parents act as role models, vanguards of values and beliefs, ambassadors of knowledge, resources and opportunities. Jodl et al. (2001) also found that parents and family members shape early adolescents' emerging vision of their future thinking about

college, potential majors, and career. In short, parents and family members play a momentous role in helping adolescents discover who they are and who they wish to be.

When comparing student interactions with both their parents and educators, it is easy to see why the relationships are so interdependent. Teachers spend a major part of their time either restructuring or enforcing things internalized from the student's home environment.

Teachers as Role Models. In addition, teachers play a critical role in the trajectory of students' goal choices and motivational practices. Teachers' expectations and beliefs about students affect students' confidence with regards to goal formation and their school experience. Teachers who support students in the learning environment can positively impact their social and academic outcomes, which are pivotal for the long-term trajectory of academic outcomes and eventually their career choices (Gallagher, 2014). Students who have a positive relationship with their teachers and are encouraged academically and socially by their teachers can discover the classroom and school environment both academically and socially, and are better prepared to handle school challenges and work on social-emotional development (Gallagher, 2014). A study by Murray and Malmgren (2005) showed that one primary factor can protect against the negative outcomes often linked to low-income schooling: a positive and supportive relationship with adults, but specifically with teachers. Students from underserved communities in strong teacher-student relationships have shown to be able to experience greater academic outcomes and adjust better socially and emotionally than their peers who do not have a positive relationship with a teacher.

Research allows one to assume that student-teacher relationships are directly correlated to the effectiveness of the child-parent and sibling relationships students maintain within their own household. For instance, many participants who hailed from single parent homes and had strained relationships with their guardians also demonstrated strained relationships with their teachers. Students who are able to engage in positive discussions and activities in their home environment seem to be more receptive to receiving guidance and inspiration from other adults in the community, especially their teachers and coaches. This collaboration allows the student to internalize the importance of education from a variety of different perspectives.

Visualize a Goal. Students use goal framing as a means of visualizing their ideal selves and their goals for the future. Goal framing allows them to envision how they wish their life to be. Additionally, goal framing provides students with a blueprint, a detailed plan of action to work toward their immediate and future goals. Darius Hoover detailed in his “What’s your Why” journal his exact future. He chronicled the life he wanted to have, the academic and career options, and even his back-up plan. He shared,

In ten years, my goal is that I will have graduated from Iowa with my four year degree in Earth/Space Science. After college I will be working toward my professional career as a basketball player in the National Basketball Association. I know how slim my chances are in actually making it to the league. This is why I am so determined to complete my degree no matter what obstacles I face. If I do not make it to the league, I will stay at Iowa and get my master’s degree.

This is consistent with the findings of Vasquez and Buehler (2007) which purported that imagining future success can, at times, improve people’s motivation to attain them.

Further, the authors hypothesized that people feel more motivated to succeed on a future task when they can visualize its successful completion from a third-person rather than a first-person perspective. From a first-person perspective, individuals view the experience from the identical visual standpoint that they would if it were actually taking place; through the process of visualization, they are viewing their surroundings through their own lens. On the contrary, a third-person perspective includes the individual viewing the experience from an observer's viewpoint; through the visualization process, they are able to see themselves as well as their surroundings.

Students who envision themselves as successful not only believe they will perform better, but often do out-perform those who see themselves as failures.

Express their Feelings. The results of this study suggested that students use goal framing and motivation as a means to express their feelings and deal with the numerous challenges they encounter from day-to-day. Writing out their goals and finding sources of motivation gives students an outlet for thinking through, articulating, and addressing their challenges. Two students in particular who used goal framing and found sources of motivation during their leisure time used the process to deal with their problems and express their emotions. Student one shared, "The writing out of my goals has helped me express my feelings. I used writing them out as a way to vent after I have an argument with my sister. Another student shared,

I keep a diary of all my goals and the things that have happened throughout my day. It helped me sort through my thoughts after the sudden passing of my mother. I also receive motivation from some of the famous celebrities I follow on

Twitter. I love Jennifer Hudson and Yolanda Adams. Following them always brings positivity into my life whenever I may need it.

These findings are consistent with studies that have explored how journaling is used in clinical studies to promote self-introspection, reflection, and changes in clients' perception, behavior, and cognition (Fritson, 2008). Results from this study also suggested students use journaling as a means of clearly identifying some of their negative behaviors and identifying constructive coping mechanisms and then developing the ability to apply those mechanisms into their lives (e.g., improving attitudes, managing depression, and dealing with peers who demonstrate destructive behaviors).

Self-expression through writing is greatly beneficial inside and outside of the school environment. However, many students feel that the current curriculum stifles their creativity and individuality. The lack of funding for arts programs also contributes to the disregard for the school's curriculum. Students are not met with enough opportunities within the school environment to openly explore the possibility of who they are as an individual. Most writing activities are not structured to allow the students' creativity and innovation to shine through. Social media, however, allows students to create and promote their own personal image while enabling them to be influenced by individuals they admire and receive inspiration from. Social media gives students the confidence to be themselves because it is so easy to find people who think and act as they do.

Reaching Future Goals. This study revealed that a large number of students were not intrinsically motivated to learn. Most of the students made an effort to be successful in school because of the link between their success in school and their career goals: they complete their assignments in order to earn good grades, which they perceive

as necessary for college admission, sports eligibility, and future employment. In short, their interest in school is not associated with learning for learning's sake; rather, it is associated with its usefulness to their personal goals. These findings support the work of Long, Monoi, Harper, Knoblauch, and Murph (2007) which indicated that interest alone can serve as a means to energize the learner. Interest not only sparks the learner but serves as the bedrock of the needs or desires of the learner in a way that can positively influence the cognitive, affective, and volitional components of individual learners.

Lack of Motivation. When students are able to make a connection between their education and their personal goals, they are more engaged in their educational experience. Conversely, students are less likely to be motivated to learn and persist through school when they are unable to make that connection. This is consistent with Cherif, Movahedzadeh, Adams, and Dunning's (2013) findings that indicated a lack of motivation impacts the level of effort students expend toward their success. The study examined characteristics contributing to academic interference of college students. The characteristics included the following subcategories: Lack of motivation; Don't care attitude, or negative attitude; Lack of engagement; Lack of interest, direction, or focus; Don't want to be in college; and Lack of passion. Some faculty respondents indicated that failing students displayed little understanding of how their education relates to their lives. These students do not know what they want in life and have no clear goals as to where they are going. If someone has no idea where they are going, it will likely be extremely difficult to get there.

Social Capital (Academic Engagement). Student level of academic engagement is impacted by the values and beliefs of those with whom they have relationships. In spite

of the fact that students in this study reported their academic success was based solely on their own personal beliefs and efforts, other studies' findings have suggested otherwise. Conversely, a study on social capital (Goddard, 2003) suggests that students do not act independently but are a part of a much larger constituency. Further, student success is largely dependent on their social capital. Students have access to specific resources as a result of their social capital that can either aid or limit their academic experience. For example, students in this study revealed how their social relationships influence their beliefs and interest in school. A number of students reported being discouraged to pursue college or having some anxiety as it related to going to college and as a result of their parents' low academic achievement. It is of note that some students disclosed their parents' academic failure has created distain and distrust for the educational system. Additionally, some of the students have embraced their parent's values and beliefs as their own. Consequently, their academic goals and the effort they exert toward their academic success are directly correlated with their supportive group's norms.

Peer-to-Peer Challenges. This study revealed peer pressure has become a major aspect of students' school experience. During school hours, peer pressure affects students' output and even impacts their general outlook on what is important and what is not. The need to conform to mainstream values and beliefs and do what the majority of their peer group deems sacred has forced a number of students to do things or take up activities, which we wouldn't otherwise. One student noted that conforming to the values and beliefs of his peer group caused him to get expelled from school and briefly incarcerated: "My friends said, you broke, plus your family can't take care of you, just give it a try. You won't get caught. Look how long we been doing it and we never got

caught.” This is consistent with findings from Phelan, Davidson, and Yu (1998) that suggested peer pressure is prevalent and impacts students on multiple levels. The first level consists of students adapting completely to mainstream academic and social values and beliefs during school hours. Simultaneously, these students deny their personal values and beliefs and the values and beliefs of their family in order to adapt to the school setting and their peers. Further, Phelan, Davidson, and Yu (1998) asserted, “Here is where the cultural and social conflicts between home and school can become a nightmare of contrasting demands that confuse or lead to rejection of one’s own self.”

Extracurricular and Competing Activities. The results of this study revealed that a number of students who participate in extracurricular activities balance busy lives with school, sports, work, and home responsibilities. Student involvement in extracurricular activities affords students with immediate social benefits, which is consistent with Hirschi’s social control theory that McNeal (1995) expounded. He contended that individuals are naturally inclined to commit deviant acts and that the strength of one’s social bonds to various traditional institutions mediates this tendency; that is, those with stronger social ties are less likely to commit and sustain deviant behavior. Involvement is one of the four social bonds responsible for redirecting negative behavior. In fact, McNeal (1995) contends that involvement is the most salient aspect of the student’s social bond to the school. In short, students reported their involvement in extracurricular activities actually creates a healthier balance all of their activities, helps them to become more responsible, and enables them to incorporate specific skills. For example, if a student plans to major in business, leading a student business group in high school demonstrates skill and interest in the area. Other students reported their

involvement in extracurricular activities allows them to spend more constructive time together with their peers, establish new bonds, and develop those relationships and social networks, making school easier to navigate.

Theoretical Development and Practical Implications

Teachers. This study's findings provided insight into student motivation and values, and demonstrates that, through goal framing, students can become intrinsically motivated. The data revealed two important variants that impact student performance: academics and engagement. There is a direct correlation between student engagement and academic performance. I believe that understanding this relationship will help teachers understand the needs of their students in a way that can more readily be accommodated. If students are not motivated, they are less likely to be engaged in classroom instruction and in turn, less likely to perform well academically. Engaged students come to class, ask questions, turn in their homework, pay attention in class, and demonstrate that they are invested in the learning process.

Students who are highly motivated and engaged and intellectually astute are more likely to excel academically than those students who are unmotivated and intellectually challenged. Every student can benefit from being highly motivated, because motivation aids in engagement. Thus, I created the following assessment tool as a guide to understanding the correlation between engagement and academic performance:

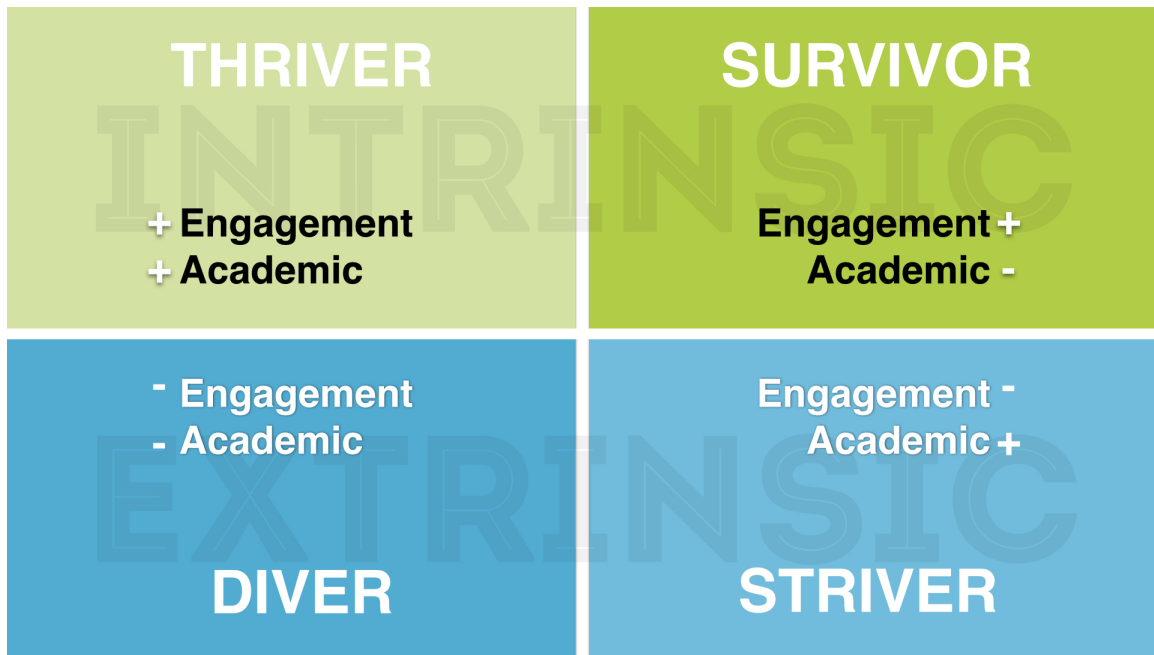


Figure 2: Motivation Quadrant

This assessment is important because it can help teachers identify what these students need and develop a curriculum to cater to the needs of these students. Now teachers can identify where students are and be able to cater to their academic needs immediately instead of after the fact. This tool could help teachers with equity, not equality, because not all students can be treated the same way, which is the cornerstone philosophy of diversifying instruction. This is also pivotal to classroom management, because student engagement aids in reducing behavioral problems in the classroom. Students can be separated into the following categories: Thrivers (highly engaged with high intellectual capacity), Strivers (unengaged with high intellectual capacity), Survivors (highly engaged with low intellectual capacity), and Divers (unengaged and low intellectual capacity).

In my Advantage Program, a retention program dedicated to providing academic resources and support to minority college students, I had a student whose GPA was 3.2

when we first met. She obviously already had a measure of engagement, but when she became an active part of our program, taking on a leadership role in which she counseled other students and guided them to the resources they needed to perform well academically, she in turn, became even more motivated, and thereby more engaged in her own studies, and raised her GPA to a 3.9. Sometimes high achieving students become average or below-average students because they aren't challenged and teachers fail to see that they need to be motivated to remain engaged. Several participants (Participants 2, 4, 6, and 13) of this study fell in this category—they displayed good capacity for being able to achieve academically and some measure of engagement, but needed more stimulation to help them maintain or exceed their present academic standing. One of the ways that we have discovered that these students can be constantly engaged is through peer-to-peer instruction, mentoring students, helping teachers with the curriculum, and goal framing activities. Keeping them constantly engaged will lead to the academic progress educators and parents desire to see. We call these students thrivers.

A survivor is a student who has the potential to do well but is not engaged. This group has not made the connection about why school is important. They have goals, but they don't necessarily see how going to school is going to benefit them. The survivor is the average student. In the normative framework, students in this category often do what they feel they ought to do, tending to operate from *somewhat external* motivational cues (See Fig. 6).

These students are often motivated and reasonably engaged in the learning process, but are not able to fully understand the academic requirements. For instance, a student in the survivor category may display an overall enthusiasm for school, as in the

cases of Participant One and Participant Twelve, but has not been able to excel academically (in most or sometimes a few of his/her classes).

Teachers sometimes misdiagnose these students and think that these students are the same as the divers, but this is not the case. These students are highly engaged, have good goals, but need tutoring and extra help.. Having this assessment tool as a guide would indicate to teachers that their focus for students in this category should include a heavy emphasis on academic development (e.g., tutorial sessions, extra practice, etc.) and not as much motivation based instruction or encouragement.

Strivers, on the other hand, are academically strong but not as engaged (see Fig. 5). Students in this category are usually more extrinsically motivated than anything else. In the classroom, these students strike teachers as the ones who have the “potential to do well in school but just isn’t applying him or herself.” For instance, there was a student in my program who, while in high school, was very content with making Cs, but all of his teachers knew he was capable of so much more. When he learned that he had an opportunity to attend MSU, something he really wanted, he began to earn As and Bs his last year and a half in high school so that he could raise his GPA to get into MSU. Students in the striver category usually fail to see the significance to school and how it relates to their life. In the case described above, the student never understood why he had to get up and go to school every day and what that had to do with his career. Because he could not make the connection, he despised getting up for school, he would celebrate half days, vacation days, Summer breaks, field trips, and substitute teachers. However, he was excited about sports. His engagement heightened when it came to athletic activities. A teacher witnessing this situation would need to use goal framing tools that he considers

relevant to get him engaged in school. We saw this in the cases of Participants 7, 8, and 9. The right motivational cues can work to engage or reengage students, thereby helping them to connect their goals with the education process.

Divers are students who are both unengaged and have demonstrated little to no evidence of successful academic performance. Teachers may find it extremely difficult to motivate these students to pay attention in class, do their homework, or participate in class discussions. This group is where goal framing has proven to be very beneficial. Participants 3, 5, 10, and 11 and students like them are often viewed as the most challenging group because disengagement often leads to behavior problems, thus making classroom management a more difficult task. However, this study has demonstrated that goal framing allows these students to create or focus on their goals and understand how their performance in school affects their ability to achieve those goals. Thus, though teachers may not be successful at external motivational cues to foster engagement from this group, teachers may, through goal framing, be able to get students to become internally motivated and increase engagement in the classroom.

I believe that if teachers utilize this tool to separate students into these categories and provide unique instruction based on their needs, we may see an overall improvement in classroom performance. This framework could enable teachers to understand their students and in turn, relate to their students in a much more efficient and effective way. Once teachers are able to relate to their students, they can speak their language, which will help them to become relevant to their students. More importantly, teachers will become more credible, which will then make students more willing to let their guards down. As students pull their guards down, teachers will more likely be in a position to

connect with them so that they can effectively assist students in their academic development.

Future Research

Future research should explore the competing values framework and teacher strategies that may be most effective for each student category. Additionally, more follow up needs to be conducted to find out what motivates teachers. What are the best practices for a teacher to help a student? What type of teacher could make this happen? If there was an assessment tool for teachers to discover what type of motivation they have, it would help them to then determine what they need to help these students. After all, there are two types of people in the classrooms: the students and the teachers.

APPENDICES

Appendix A: Interview Questions

Interview questions related to intrinsic motivational factors

1. How do you experience school?
 - a. What is your point of view and what do you think about school?
 - b. Why do you think about school this way?
 - c. If we could turn it around what would it take?
2. Was there ever a time you were excited about school? When? Why were you excited?
3. Was there an event that took place that made you liking or dislike school? When did you start enjoying school and if you every stopped, when did you stop liking school?
4. What do you see or feel is the purpose of school?
5. Are you willingly attending school or doing it because it's the norm?
6. What are some of your major influences? And why?
7. What effort would you say you put into school? Are you engaged? Why

Questions related to extrinsic motivational factors

1. Tell me about your home life. What level of education did your parents/grandparents and/or siblings achieve? How does that affect your decision and/or point of view on school?
2. In your point of view is Everett's atmosphere/environment helping or harming your success? List three pro and cons of Everett.
3. Where do you come from? Background info! Who do you live with? How many siblings do you have?

4. How involved are your parents with your education? Do they visit the school periodically? Do they check up on your grades? Why/why not? If not would it make a difference if they did?
5. Who would you say is responsible for your education?
6. Do you feel like you accomplish a great deal by attending school? Why if not?
7. Do you feel like you are a stakeholder in the learning process or your teacher makes the majority of the decision regarding the learning process?
8. What is your reason or what motivates you to learn?
9. Have you ever skipped? Why? With whom?

Appendix B: Recruitment Script

Recruitment Script for Participants

My name is Eric Thomas, and I am a doctoral student in the college of education at Michigan State University. I am here to tell you about a research study being conducted at Everett High School this semester to see if you might be interested in participating.

The purpose of this study is to learn more about your school experience. Specifically, what do you enjoy about school and what aspects are you not comfortable with. I would like you to share which teachers, subjects, and school activities you enjoy and what challenges do you face that make school difficult. The overall goal is gain a better understanding is get a clearer understanding of what motivates and gets students engaged in school and what are the aspects of school that complicates the learning experience. In short, I would like to use what I learn from you to help administrators, teachers and stakeholders in general make school more engaging and relevant for you and students in similar educational settings.

This study will involve interviewing you at your school for approximately an hour about your school experience and then observe you in one or more of your classes. I'm looking to find students who enjoying learning but may find the traditional learning format "de-motivates" them. I'm going to ask you to share your school experience through a number of forms comfortable to you, which includes journaling, rapping, poetry or verbal examples that will thoroughly capture your feelings and experience.

If this is something you think you might be interested in participating in, you can email me at the contact info found on the consent form. You can also contact your

guidance counselor and inform me. By having your parents and yourself (if you are under 18 years of age) sign the consent form, you are agreeing to participate in the project.

Thank You!!!

Appendix C: Informed Consent Form

INFORMED CONSENT FORM

You/your child is being asked to participate in a research study project conducted through Michigan State University. You/your child has been selected to participate because you/your child is a student in a public school who has demonstrated a history of being disengaged in the academic process and/or extracurricular activities. From this study, the researcher hopes to gain insight and perspective about each participant's unique experiences in the academic process and how intrinsic and extrinsic motivation affects their engagement and academic progress.

Participation will include up to eight 30 minute audiotaped interviews. The interviews will include a series of open-ended questions regarding how you/your child academic experience is affected by intrinsic and extrinsic motivational cues.

If you are under 18, you must obtain your parent's permission prior to participation in this study. You will be given a copy of this form to keep.

The following are further details about your/your child's participation in this study:

1. The purpose of this study is to investigate the effect of motivation as a tool for connecting and engaging you/your child in the education process.
2. You/your child were selected based off of teacher's observation of you/your child's academic progress, in class engagement, and extracurricular participation.
3. You/your child will be asked questions concerning their environment, background, experiences in and out of school, experiences with students and teachers, and future interests (depending on the subject). You/your child will be exposed to several inspirational/motivational messages, incentives, and other motivational stimuli during the course of the study and their responses and subsequent behaviors will be recorded by way of one to one interviews, general observation and the collection of documentation.
4. There are no known risks in participating in this study. Time commitment is minimal and would not exceed 60min per week during the course of the study.
5. You/your child will learn the effect of motivation in the education system and how it can be used to effectively reshape the culture of education and the surrounding communities.
6. Confidentiality. This study will involve a series of interviews and recorded observations. For your privacy, any data or information collected will only be shared by conductors of this study and will become anonymous at the end of the study. Information gathered is for research purposes only and identities will not be shared at the end of the study. Files will be created for each participant and marked confidential and each participant will be given an arbitrary ID# to preserve confidentiality.
7. No compensation will be given for participation in this study.

8. Participation is voluntary, you may choose not to participate at all, or you may refuse to participate in certain procedures or answer certain questions or discontinue your participation at any time without consequence (e.g. will not affect treatment you will receive, will not affect your grade or evaluation, etc.). Your confidentiality will be protected to the maximum extent allowable by law.
9. If you have concerns or questions about this study, such as scientific issues, how to do any part of it, or to report an injury, please contact the researcher(s) Dr. Christopher Dunbar, 404 Erickson Hall, Michigan State University, 620 Farm Lane, East Lansing MI., dunbarc@msu.edu , 517-353-6393. Or Eric Thomas at ericdthomas1@gmail.com , 517-974-3330.
- If you have questions or concerns about your role and rights as a research participant, would like to obtain information or offer input or would like to register a complaint about this study, you may contact anonymously if you wish, the Michigan State University's Human Research Protection Program at 517-355-2180, Fax 517-432-4503, or Email irb@msu.edu or regular mail at Michigan State University, 207 Olds Hall, 408 West Circle Drive, East Lansing, MI 48824.

THANK YOU FOR YOUR CONSIDERATION.

ERIC THOMAS

I have been given information about this research study and its risks and benefits and have had the opportunity to read the above information, ask questions, have my questions answered and give my

son/daughter _____, permission to voluntarily participate in this research study.

Parent Signature

Date

Student (Participant) Signature

Date

I agree to allow audiotaping of the interview for the purposes of this study.

_____ Yes

_____ No

Parent Signature

Date

Student (Participant) Signature

Date

Appendix D: Goals and Clarification Chart

Goals for You

Achieving your goals isn't done overnight but with hard work and dedication, they are obtainable. Goals can be both long term and short term and can require several levels of commitment if you want to be successful.

Choose A Goal

My Good Excuse Goal is: _____
_____. My 30 Day Do It is to: _____
_____. It will require approximately _____
hours of me over the next 30 days.

Clarify Your What

1. This aligns with my beliefs/principles that: _____
_____.
2. I'm integrating my passions into this by: _____
_____.
3. I'm addressing the/my problem of/with: _____
_____.
4. My success affects the following people: _____
_____.
5. My goal positions me to be the best: _____
_____ that I can be.
6. Pioneers who I've seen do this before include: _____
_____.
7. I picture myself _____
_____ as I achieve this goal.
8. Success makes it possible for me to: _____
_____.

Set It In Motion

PLAN TO CELEBRATE

My celebration is on: ____/____ at ____am/pm at _____.

SET IN MOTION

I will set it in motion by: _____
_____.

EFFORT SCALE

I believe that I have devoted ____% of my effort to completing my goals.

ATTITUDE SCALE

I believe my attitude is positive and productive ____% of the time.

TIP THE BALANCE

If I don't complete my 30 Day Do It, I commit to: _____
_____ for the group.

DO WHATEVER IT TAKES

I will do whatever it takes to uphold my word.

My signature: _____

Appendix E: Personality Worksheet

My Personality Worksheet

What do I like about who I am?

What am I good at; skills and talents?

What positive characteristics do I have?

What do I have achieved in my life; accomplishments?

What are the successes in my life?

What are some challenges I have overcome?

What do others say they like about me?

What are some attributes I like in others that I also have in common with?

If someone shared my identical characteristics, what would I admire in them?

How might someone who cared about me describe me?

What do I think my friends like best about me?

What compliments would I make myself?

Remember to include everything no matter how small, insignificant, modest or unimportant you think it is.

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