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ABSTRACT

ACHIEVEMENT BARRIERS PERCEIVED AND OVERCOME
BY SUCCESSFUL HIGH-SCHOOL STUDENTS
PARTICIPATING IN UPWARD BOUND
PROGRAMS IN INDIANA

by

Alyssia Janet Parris-Coates

Chair: Shirley Freed

ABSTRACT OF GRADUATE STUDENT RESEARCH

Dissertation

Andrews University

School of Education

Title: ACHIEVEMENT BARRIERS PERCEIVED AND OVERCOME BY
SUCCESSFUL HIGH-SCHOOL STUDENTS PARTICIPATING IN
UPWARD BOUND PROGRAMS IN INDIANA

Name of researcher: Alyssia Janet Parris-Coates

Name and degree of faculty chair: Shirley Freed, Ph.D.

Date of completion: March 2010

Purpose

The purpose of this study was to examine how academically successful Upward Bound students overcome the barriers to high-school graduation. While Upward Bound students come from disadvantaged backgrounds, similar to those of many students who fail to graduate from high school, 90% of them graduate.

Method

The research design for this study was Padilla's Student Success Model (SSM). Student Success Model (SSM) is a qualitative technique to portray successful student methods by capturing the perceived reality of the particular students being studied.

Results

In response to the first research question—What do students and staff perceive to be the barriers to successful completion of high school?—the primary barriers identified by the Upward Bound students and staff from all three programs were lack of motivation, peer pressure, and family responsibilities. In response to the second research question—What do the student and staff identify as the knowledge and actions for overcoming the barriers that successful students encounter?—the primary knowledge the students and staff identified were a sense of self and high standards; the primary actions they identified were initiative and priorities.

Conclusion

Upward Bound students and staff agree that successful students are able to overcome barriers they encounter because they have a strong sense of self and high standards. They combat the barriers they encounter using their ability to take initiative and to prioritize their educational responsibilities. These characteristics and abilities depicted in this study are influenced by the social and cultural capital the students acquire through their participation in Upward Bound's programs and use of the services provided by the staff. In addition, acquirement of those two forms of capital also builds within the Upward Bound students the ability to be resilient against the various barriers they encounter during their high-school years.

Andrews University

School of Education

ACHIEVEMENT BARRIERS PERCEIVED AND OVERCOME
BY SUCCESSFUL HIGH-SCHOOL STUDENTS
PARTICIPATING IN UPWARD BOUND
PROGRAMS IN INDIANA

A Dissertation

Presented in Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree
Doctor of Philosophy

by

Alyssia Janet Parris-Coates

March 2010

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Background to the Problem

In the United States there are currently 900 to 1,000 high schools that graduate only about half of their students, and a further 2,000 schools have slightly more success but still have an unacceptable graduation rate of 60% (Balfanz & Legters, 2004). Fifty years after *Brown vs. Board of Education* declared racially segregated schools to be “inherently unequal,” beginning a process of reform that integrated schools, racial and social inequality still remain rampant in the U.S. (Brown v. Board of Education, 1954). Ninety percent of the high schools with the worst graduation and promotion records in the northern industrial states have a majority of minority students enrolled (Balfanz & Legters, 2004). Nearly half of U.S. African-American high-school students, almost 40% of Latino students, and nearly 11% of White students attend high schools in which graduation is not the norm, and many of them come from disadvantaged socioeconomic backgrounds (Orfield & Chungmei, 2004). According to Thornburgh (2006),

1 out of 3 public high school students won't graduate around the nation. For Latinos and African-Americans the rate approaches an alarming 50%. Students from the lowest income quarter are more than six times as likely to drop out of high school as students from the highest. (p. 11)

The state of Indiana has a 52% dropout rate, placing it in the 46th percentile for graduation rates in the nation (The Annie E. Casey Foundation, 2006). Of that 52%, a

large proportion of the students are both low-income and first in their family to have the opportunity to go to college. While high schools in Indiana are having difficulty graduating these students, the federal Upward Bound program (UB), which works specifically with low-income and disadvantaged students with the aim of closing the achievement gap between middle-class White students and low-income minority students, is successfully graduating high-school students across the country at a rate of 94% (Koehn-Pike, 2006). Furthermore, the graduation rates of the Upward Bound programs in Indiana are similar to the national rate (“What Is TRIO,” 2005).

The Problem

Research provides evidence that there are various barriers such as socioeconomic status, family, backgrounds, parent involvement, student-teacher relationships, and school experiences that hinder students from successfully navigating high school from 9th grade through 12th grade (Rumberger, 1983; Slavin, Karweit, & Madden, 1989; Wehlage, Rutter, Smith, Lesko, & Fernandez, 1989). Failing students lack the social ties, knowledge, and understanding of the norms that are evident in the prominent culture (Bourdieu & Passeron, 1977; Coleman, 1987).

Upward Bound specifically serves students who are low-income and backgrounds without a family history of college education. They face the same barriers that other similar students face, yet they consistently overcome them to graduate from high school. What is not known is how these students overcome the barriers to high-school graduation.

Purpose of Study

The purpose of this study was to examine how academically successful Upward Bound students overcome the barriers to high-school graduation. While these students come from disadvantaged backgrounds, similar to those of many students who fail to graduate from high school, 90% of Upward Bound students do graduate.

Research Questions

This study specifically addressed the following research questions:

1. What do UB students perceive to be the barriers to successful completion of high school?
2. How do UB students overcome these perceived barriers? Specifically, what does a successful UB student know and do to overcome each barrier?

The answers to these questions can assist students and educational representatives alike in understanding how to effectively address the barriers to high-school success and enhance the success for all students, especially those students being left behind.

Conceptual Framework

This study examined how successful students overcome the barriers to high-school graduation. It explored the impact of barriers to success through the lens of social and cultural capital (Bourdieu & Passeron, 1973; Coleman, 1987). Students who come from disadvantaged, low-income, minority family backgrounds do not achieve at the same rate as White middle-class students. Social and cultural capital theories provide a framework to help understand why these students struggle to achieve.

Significance of Study

According to Padilla (1999), students can best identify their reasons for success and failure. Therefore, it makes sense to study successful disadvantaged students for insight into the barriers to success that they perceive, as well as methods for overcoming these. These insights can be useful in approaching educational methods to best help similarly disadvantaged students. Most research on student success focuses on the negative aspects of the issue and rarely seeks to explore whether successful students perceive barriers and how they overcome the barriers. Whereas Barker (2005) used Padilla's (1998) Student Success Model and focused on successful students within one local high school, this study also used Padilla's model but focused on student success in three Upward Bound programs. The students who participate in Upward Bound are students who are among those most often labeled as "least likely to succeed," but they *are* succeeding. While the program's high rate of student success is well known, the students' insights regarding how they achieve success are unknown. Upward Bound can help the educational community understand how they are able to overcome the challenges to success.

Basic Assumptions

This study assumes that students have both the insight and strategies for overcoming the barriers they face during high school. This seems to be a reasonable assumption given that the successful students studied came from low-income and minority backgrounds and were most likely at risk to dropout, yet they had their own insights into their struggles and the ability to overcome them.

Delimitations

This study was delimited to the context of three UB programs in the state of Indiana and to the staff and administrators who work directly with the students.

Limitations

Full disclosure of student and staff perceptions may have been hindered by an individual's reluctance to fully reveal feelings and beliefs; however, due to the high degree of triangulation, I assume that all the data collected from the participants are truthful. Due to limitations of accessibility and time constraints, the viewpoints of other groups, such as parents or high-school administrators, were excluded from this study.

Definitions

Black box: The lack of knowledge about the experiences that occur among students during their schooling—what a researcher does not know and wants to find out.

Contingent analysis: When the categories of taxonomy are related to a particular category of barriers.

Cover terms: The words at the top of each column in the unfolding matrix (i.e., *barriers, knowledge, actions, change, and problems*).

Cultural capital: The knowledge, experience, and/or connections one has had through the course of one's life that enable one to succeed more so than someone from a less-experienced background. It is the knowledge of the skills and familiarity with cultural codes that enable an individual to interpret the various cultural codes of the dominant culture.

Dialogical sampling: Group interviews that consist of small groups of participants, usually 5 to 10 subjects.

Emic: Relating to the organization and interpretation of data that makes use of the categories of the people being studied.

Exemplars: The data responses under each of the cover terms.

External barriers: The barriers that exist outside the schools that school authorities do not have control over.

First-generation: Students whose parents have not completed a baccalaureate degree.

Habitus: A set of acquired pattern of thoughts, behavior, and taste. These patterns are a result of internalization of culture or objective social structures through the experience of an individual or group.

Internal barriers: The barriers that exist within the schools that school authorities have control over.

Locus of control: The ability to have a positive outlook and bounce back from traumatic events.

Non-contingent analysis: When the categories of the taxonomy are not related to a particular category of barriers.

Resiliency: The characteristic that explains why some people are able to overcome adversity and succeed and others stumble and fail in the midst of obstacles.

Social capital: Consists of the norms, social networks, and relationships between adults and children that are of great value as a child grows up and develops. The

relationships one acquires and the benefits gained by the mutual relationship that provides each of its members with collectivity-owned capital.

Symbolic power: The perception of power due to membership or affiliation with organizations, groups, or institutions.

Taxonomies: Categorizing the responses from each of the cover terms.

TRIO: This is made of seven programs, including Upward Bound, that serve first-generation and low-income participants (Educational Talent Search, McNair Scholars, Student Support Services, Educational Community Center, Veterans Upward Bound, and Math and Science Upward Bound).

Unfolding matrix: The research instrument used to gather the qualitative data.

Upward Bound program: Is a federally funded pre-college program for first-generation and low-income high-school students; it helps them successfully graduate from high school and enroll into a post-secondary institution.

General Methodology

The research design for this study was Padilla's (1999) Student Success Model (SSM). Student Success Model (SSM) is a qualitative technique to portray successful student methods capturing the reality as perceived by the particular students being studied. SSM uses expert thinking systems as a foundation; the student is seen as the expert at being a student and is the best candidate to provide relevant data concerning the issue being studied.

One of the concepts of SSM is the black box approach. The black box represents what researchers do not know about the students. Researchers are aware of students'

basic information—when they begin high school and when they finish—but do not know what the students are experiencing in between. This is the knowledge I hoped to obtain.

Summary

Every year, a high percentage of students across the country, disproportionately poor and minority, fail to graduate from high school, thereby missing the opportunity to go on to college. Upward Bound programs, created specifically to work with at-risk students, are graduating low-income, first-generation, and minority students at a rate of 90%. These students can provide valuable information about the barriers they face in graduating from high school; this information can be of use to educators attempting to help students finish high school.

Chapter 2 examines barriers to student success, social and cultural capital, student success theories, and the Upward Bound program. Chapter 3 describes the research design based on Padilla's (1998) Student Success Model. Chapter 4 provides the voices of the students. Chapter 5 is a summary and discussion of the findings.

CHAPTER 2

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

In order to identify what factors help or hinder students in successfully completing high school, this chapter focuses on four main topics. First, it reviews the literature on barriers to student success through the lens of dropout theories. Second, it addresses the role of social and cultural capital theories in student success. Then it focuses on student success looking at the resiliency theory and Padilla's student success model. Finally, it looks at a college preparatory program that produces successful students.

Barriers to Student Success

The barriers to student success are seen through the lens of dropout literature theories and social and cultural capital. Numerous studies on dropout theories have identified low socioeconomic status (SES), family background, ethnicity, the school, students' lack of motivation or aspirations, relationships with teachers and friends, truancy, and negative influences such as drugs, gangs, and teenage pregnancy (Rumberger, 1995) as barriers to success in high school. Family background, ethnicity and gender, family structure or processes, negative school experiences, and low socioeconomic status are strong predictors of school dropouts (Bachman, Green, & Wirtanen, 1971; Cairns, Cairns, & Neckerman, 1989; Eckstrom, Goertz, Pollack, &

Rock, 1986; Elliott & Voss, 1974; Ensminger & Slusarcick, 1992; Fagan & Pabon, 1990; Rumberger, 1983; Wehlage & Rutter, 1986).

Social and cultural capital theories demonstrate the factors missing in the lives of underprivileged students and how a lack of these factors makes achievement more difficult for these students than for those from White middle-class backgrounds. Some of these students, though, do manage to overcome barriers to success, graduating from high school and going on to attend college. The literature identifies a number of factors influencing student success.

Family Background

Students who drop out of high school tend to come from various disadvantaged family backgrounds. These include single-parent families, families with mothers as head of household, and a family structure that lacks stability. Numerous studies have shown that children who grow up in single-parent families are less likely to complete high school or to attend college than children who grow up with both parents (Amato, 1988; Coleman, 1988; Corcoran, Gordon, Laren, & Solon, 1992; Krein & Beller, 1988; McLanahan, 1985; McLanahan, Astone, & Marks, 1991; Mueller & Cooper, 1986).

One of the reasons children from single-parent families are less likely to finish high school is the typically precarious economic situations of their families. Mother-only families are more likely than other families to be poor (Grafinkel & McLanahan, 1986), and their poverty is more extreme than that of other groups (Bane & Ellwood, 1983). Even among single-parent families living above the poverty line, income insecurity is commonplace (Duncan & Hoffman, 1985). Previous studies of the intergenerational effects of family disruption indicate that income differences account for 50% of the

differences in high-school graduation among children from intact and non-intact families (McLanahan, 1985; McLanahan & Bumpass, 1988; McLanahan et al., 1991; Sandefur, McLanahan, & Wojtkiewicz, 1989).

Families' low socioeconomic status is the barrier that rises to the forefront. According to Mortenson (2000), at every level of education the family income backgrounds of young people influence how likely they are to complete the level they are at and move on to the next level of education. He further noted that, nationally, students from families with incomes below the poverty level have a 66% rate of not completing a high-school degree. Cahalan and Curtin (2004) also found a strong relationship between income and high-school graduation. For those families who earned below \$29,000 annually, there was a 22% dropout rate. Students whose families earned \$75,000 or higher there was only a 3% dropout rate.

Numerous studies have shown that low socioeconomic status (SES) has a considerable influence on educational attainment as well as on dropout behavior. Research has shown that the measurement of students with low SES status, including parental education or family income, exhibit higher dropout rates than do students from higher SES (Bachman et al., 1971; Ekstrom et al., 1986; Rumberger, 1983). The rationale behind this finding is that parents with high SES are more likely than parents with low SES to be involved with their children's education. This involvement is indicated by parental participation with teachers and schools, with such involvement improving academic performance (Fehrman, Keith, & Reimers, 1987; Lareau, 1987; Stevenson & Baker, 1987). In addition, parents with higher SES are often able to provide for their children's education, and they also can afford for their children an array of

services and goods, parental actions, and social connections that potentially are a great asset for their children. Many children from low SES backgrounds lack access to those same resources and experiences, thus putting them at risk for developmental problems (Brooks-Gunn & Duncan, 1997). Staresina (2004) indicates that low SES has shown to bear the strongest relationship to students' tendency to dropout. This finding is similar to Rumberger's (1983) study, which also stated that dropouts are more likely to be from families of low SES status. Children of low SES families are often children of young, single, unemployed mothers, who have experienced high levels of family stress, and are more likely to drop out of school than other students.

Parents with low SES are less likely to take the appropriate steps to prepare their children for educational success. Typically these parents work long hours to compensate for low earning and do not take, or do not have, the time to read to their children or teach them the fundamentals (Alexander, Entwisle, & Dauber, 2003). Parents of successful children tend to improve their children's academic achievement by spending more time in pursuit of activities that aid in their cognitive development or the formation of human capital (Leibowitz, 1977).

Furthermore, research also supports the idea that the presence of study aids and other literary materials in the home decreases the likelihood of a student dropping out of school (Ekstrom et al., 1986; Rumberger, 1983). Low SES families are less likely to purchase reading and learning materials for their children, less likely to take their children to educational and cultural events, and less likely to regulate the amount of TV their children watch (Bradley & Corwyn, 2001). In addition, low SES single-parent

households provide less parental involvement with schoolwork and less supervision outside the home (Astone & McLanahan, 1991).

The home experiences of dropouts often lead to a negative school experience with a tendency toward a history of poor grades, grade retention, poor motivation or academic aspirations, truancy, school problem behaviors, poor relationships with other students and teachers, and less involvement in extracurricular activities (Bachman et al., 1971; Cairns et al., 1989; Ekstrom et al., 1986; Elliott & Voss, 1974; Fagan & Pabon, 1990; Rumberger, 1983; Wehlage & Rutter, 1986). Dropouts use drugs more often and they have more deviant or potential dropout friends (Cairns et al., 1989; Ekstrom et al., 1986; Elliott & Voss, 1974; Fagan & Pabon, 1990; Rumberger, 1983).

Unfortunately, this behavior is most common among males and minority students. According to Rumberger (1987), dropouts are more often boys than girls and tend to be ethnic minorities. Research on the individual causes of high-school dropouts shows that socioeconomic context and race/ethnicity are among the most important predictors of subsequent dropout (Alexander, Ackland, & Griffin, 1976; Ekstrom et al., 1986; Rumberger, 1983). According to the National Center for Educational Statistics (Young, 2003), about 17% of young Black men drop out of school compared to 13.5% of young Black females. Students from racial and ethnic minority groups in the United States face persistent and profound barriers to educational opportunity due to structural inequalities in access of knowledge and resources (Darling-Hammond, 1997). Although schools should be equal for all students, minority students often attend schools that routinely provide dramatically different learning opportunities based on their social status. Such

students attend schools in poor neighborhoods where the majority of the students attending the schools are from minority backgrounds.

Race and Ethnicity as Significant Barriers

Minority students are most at risk of not graduating in 2008, according to recent data released by the Education Week and the Editorial Projects in Education Research Center (2008). Only 58% of Hispanic, 55% of African-American, and 51% of American-Indian students will be successful of the 1.23 million high-school students compared to 92.2% of White students. According to the Director of Editorial Projects in Education Research Center, “Another way to think about the 1.23 million struggling students is to think of the number as one student lost from the high school-to college pipeline every 13 seconds” (Lloyd, 2008, p. 29).

Some of the reasons for low graduation rates are poorly funded school systems and community issues such as single-parent families and low socioeconomic status. Retention is a leading factor causing students to leave school early (Viadero, 2008). Students who repeat grades are often discouraged academically, and a quick solution to the problem is to remove themselves from a frustrating situation. Many state leaders are beginning to see a direct link between low graduation rates and economic and social ills (Cook, Bush, & Bush, 2008). These students who leave high school are unable to get good paying jobs and often have a lot of time on their hands, leading to inappropriate behavior such as gangs or drugs.

The data depicting the low graduation rates among minority high-school students describe the current achievement gap. *Achievement gap* refers to the differences in scores on state or national achievement tests between various student demographic groups, and

it is the reason many students do not graduate from high school (Anderson, Medrich, & Fowler, 2007), particularly minority students. Historically, the achievement gap focused on differences in achievement test scores between White and African-American students on national tests, such as the SAT. In the last 6 years, No Child Left Behind has shifted the focus of the achievement gap down to the school level and asks how well racial and ethnic sub-groups in a given school are performing relative to their White peers.

African-American students are underrepresented among the top scorers on standardized tests. Although it is not clear why the gap is wider at the upper end of the achievement scale, some experts believe that it has something to do with African-American students being taught in predominantly Black schools, which is similar to the finding in James Coleman's 1965 report addressing the disparities between Whites and Blacks in the school system. Other reasons stated were test scores being lower on average, less experienced teachers in predominantly Black schools, and high achieving peers being harder to find (Viadero, 2008).

The High School Transcript Study (Shettle et al., 2007) indicates that the GPAs for Mexican-American and African-American students also lagged behind their White and Asian counterparts, and, according to the National Educational Longitudinal Study (Bradby, 1992), the top quintile of Latino students scored lower than White and Asian-American students. The high achieving Latino students are far more likely to have parents with less than a bachelor's degree and are more than likely to come from single-family households.

Carpenter, Ramirez, and Severn's (2006) study measured the achievement gap examining dropout behavior among Black, White, and Hispanic students with an

emphasis on gaps within groups and not just between Whites and minorities. The findings indicated that the dropout rates among Black and Hispanic students were nearly identical, whereas the dropout rate for White students was nearly half of the Black and Hispanic student rates. The study also noted that students in private schools tend to drop out less than students in public schools, and those in single-parent homes drop out more often than students with two parents/guardians in the home. The dropout rates for students who have been held back are high, and it is consistent for Black, Hispanic, and White. Regardless of race, students who have been left back or who have siblings who dropped out are more likely to drop out themselves.

The achievement gap that exists today has been a problem for at least 5 decades, and to fully understand this problem it is necessary to reflect on America's racial history, particularly as it relates to education. Although lack of achievement is also a problem for members of various other minority groups including Hispanics, American-Indians, and sometimes Asians, specifically those from low-income family backgrounds, the historical foundation of the inequities that exist among minorities today began with the practice of slavery and the racism that continued to exist after it was abolished.

A Historical Perspective

The 1865 Emancipation Proclamation (National Archives & Record Administration, 2006) officially abolished and prohibited slavery in the United States, but it did not provide equal rights or citizenship. It was in 1868, with the passing of the Fourteenth Amendment, that Blacks were given citizenship, and the ability to vote came in 1870 with the passing of Fifteenth Amendment. Before this time, Blacks were prohibited to learn to read or write or be educated in any way. Even after the passing of

the above laws, many Whites did not abide by the laws of the land, and for many years Blacks were continually treated unequally by their White counterparts. The passing of *Plessy vs. Ferguson* (1896) solidified the unfair treatment of Blacks by Whites, and the law proclaimed that Blacks were second-class citizens. Although Blacks were able to participate in similar activities, such as attending school, they were not equal, and, as such, Black schooling lacked the same quality normally seen in White schools. In 1954, *Brown vs. Board of Education* overturned the long-standing “separate” but equal statute, but it took many years for the law to take effect. Similar to the passing of President Abraham’s Emancipation Proclamation (National Archives & Record Administration, 2006), people’s attitude or behavior toward Blacks did not change and with little enforcement of the law unequal treatment of Blacks continued to prevail. This resulted in continued segregation of Black schools, which received unequal educational services compared to their White peers (Anderson, 1998; Bell, 2004; Fleming, 1981; Fordham & Ogbu, 1986; Klarman, 2003; LeMorte, 1999; Ogbu, 2004).

The Civil Rights Movement succeeded in guaranteeing equality before the law for all men and dismantling racist structures, which included the right to vote for all citizens and an equitable education for all children. Lyndon B. Johnson furthered the opportunities for the poor by designing the “Great Society,” which was legislation that included civil rights laws, Medicaid/Medicare, and the “War on Poverty.” Many Black people benefited from the aforementioned programs due to their low socioeconomic status during those times. The “War on Poverty” was Johnson’s response to the difficult economic opportunities associated with the national poverty rate. This legislation led to the passing of the Economic Opportunity Act of 1964, which included several programs

to promote health, education, and general welfare of the poor. One of the initiatives that came out of the 1964 Act was the federally funded TRIO Programs, which began with the Upward Bound program. The goal of the TRIO Programs was to provide access to education for all children who lacked the opportunity (Fordham & Ogbu, 1986; Gholson-Driver, 2001; Klarman, 2003; McClellan, 1999; Ogbu, 2004).

During the time Upward Bound was birthed, President Johnson commissioned James Coleman and several other scholars to write a report on educational equality in the U.S. The report was one of the largest studies in history, with a sample of 150,000 students in the sample. This report has fueled school debates that still continue today regarding the disparities between Black and White students and students of color who come from low-socioeconomic backgrounds. The research suggested that socially disadvantaged Black students profited from schooling in racially-mixed schools, which was the catalyst for the implementation of desegregation busing system. In 1975, Coleman reported the failure of his 1966 recommendation that lower-class Black students would benefit from attending higher-class mixed schools due to “White Flight” (Coleman et al., 1966). Many working class and middle-class families moved away from the suburbs or urban neighborhoods that were becoming racially desegregated to White suburbs and exurbs. The behavior was a strong indication of how White society felt about having Black students attend their schools. Some schools closed because they refused to adhere to the ruling of *Brown vs. the Board of Education*. Although this law was passed in 1954, it was not until 1971 that desegregation busing was made mandatory. This may also explain why in Coleman et al.’s 1966 report regarding funding for White and Black schools it was found to be nearly the same funding. Many Southern states vastly raised

their spending on Black schools in hopes of avoiding compliance with the *Brown vs. Board of Education* decision.

Although the courts and the government have passed laws and acts to correct policies that had been disadvantageous to minorities and students from poor families, history shows that there has not been sufficient accountability to ensure that the policies are enforced. Failure to ensure that schools are funded equally, that qualified teachers are available, that school facilities are in good shape, and that school supplies and materials are available and in good shape is a major factor in addressing the achievement gap that exist between Whites and minorities from low-income backgrounds. According to Darling-Hammond's (2007) study of educational outcomes, including high-school completion, the outcomes for students of color are much more a function of their unequal access to key educational resources, including skilled teachers and quality curricula (p. 320). These compounded inequalities explain much of the achievement gap (p. 321).

The Current Situation

Unfortunately, the same inequities are being echoed about President Bush's No Child Left Behind Act. This act was intended to raise educational achievement and close the racial/ethnic achievement gap for the Annual Yearly Performance (AYP). Its strategies include focusing schools' attention on raising test scores, mandating better qualified teachers, and providing educational choice. The rhetoric of the act sounds very good; however, the application of the act has caused high performing schools to be identified as failing schools because it requires 100% of students to make significant improvement in order to meet the act's Annual Yearly Performance, which is unrealistic. Already, one-third of public schools have been targeted as having failed to meet AYP,

and studies suggest that at least 80% of schools in most states will have failed to achieve the AYP by 2014 (Hursh, 2007) Consequently, this has caused schools to lower their standards in order to meet the Act's AYP. Most importantly, the disparities among the poor and minority students due to the Act's one-size-fits-all mandate have caused the neediest students to be in low-funded schools with unqualified teachers and with low expectations. What is worse, whereas the Act requires schools to meet state standards, no one is holding the state and federal governments accountable for providing the funding sources to meet the achievement goals that were intended to close the racial/ethnic achievement gap.

The wealthiest public schools spend at least 10 times more than the poorest schools, which range from over \$30,000 per pupil to only \$3,000. Within states, the spending ratio between high- and low-spending schools is typically at least 2 or 3 to 1.

Documented in federal statistics and a large number of lawsuits, schools serving large numbers of low-income and minority students and students of color have larger class sizes, fewer teachers and counselors, fewer and lower-quality academic courses, extracurricular activities, books, materials, supplies, computers, libraries and special services. (Darling-Hammond, 2004, p. 2)

If the neediest students are attending schools that are unable to provide the necessary resources for learning, it is almost impossible to expect them to be successful.

Acting White

Even when minorities and/or low-income students attend schools that are considered better schools, they find themselves in an environment that appears to be unwelcoming. John Ogbu's (2004) scholarly work addresses coping strategies Blacks used throughout history as well as today to deal with the "burden of acting White." As mentioned earlier in this chapter, Blacks were viewed by Whites as second-class citizens

and, before emancipation, Black slaves were punished for learning to read or write, and punishment was extended to all, not just the one who committed the offense. According to Ogbu (2004), this collective punishment was important in the creation of Black collective identity. These experiences in slavery caused Black-Americans to develop this sense of collective identity, which meant a sense of belonging and the collective experience of oppression and exploitation that embodied their collective racial identity. The racial identity formed during slavery has continued to influence Black perceptions of and responses to White treatment to this day.

Although many Whites may no longer believe that Blacks are inferior to Whites, that perception still remains at large. According to a poll conducted in *Newsweek* magazine in 1978, about 25% of Whites still believed that Blacks had less intelligence than Whites, and about 15% thought that Blacks were inferior to White people (Ogbu, 2003). The 1994 publication of the *Bell Curve*, by Herrnstein and Murray, is a reminder that Whites' belief in the inferiority of Blacks still exists even in the White "scientific" circles. The Gene Media Forum in 2002, which argues that Blacks' low performance on standardized exams is genetic, is an indication that the Black culture is stigmatized. Although this perception is inaccurate, the effects of it on Black students are far reaching.

Black students see the academic world as a White world. It is one in which they do not belong or feel accepted. Excellence for a Black student oftentimes means being White, and that kind of excellence is negative (Weis, 1985). For some Black youth, accepting school values is equivalent to giving up self-respect (Labov, 1972). Other students learn and follow the standard practices for success by White Americans in their

institutions without giving up their racial identity and ways of behaving or talking (Haynes, 1985; Sowell, 1974).

Since Black students are products of Black history, and because the influence of racial inequality is still prevalent today, they too face the dilemma of being part of a system in which they respond to required attitudes and behaviors labeled “White.” Not only do they have the pressure of learning to acclimate to the White behaviors, they also experience pressure from other Black students that discourages them from adopting White attitudes and behaviors (Ogbu & Simons, 1998).

Yet it is not only Blacks who have this perception or feel the pressure of “acting White.” A study conducted by Jamie Lew (2006) compares how both high- and low-achieving Asian-American students negotiate their racial and ethnic identities in two different social and economic contexts in urban schools. The high-achieving middle-class students attending a magnet school attended predominantly by middle-class White and Asian students were more likely to associate and identify their bicultural background as both Korean and American, whereas low-achieving Korean-American high-school dropouts attending a community-based GED program that consisted of predominantly poor and working class minorities were more likely to identify themselves as minorities. The Korean high-school dropouts were careful not to associate themselves with the wealthy and studious Koreans and other Asian-Americans.

For the middle-class Koreans, identifying with their Asian culture is important because they realize that based on race they are not American. To combat being labeled a minority, they have made academic achievement a priority. Their academic achievement has identified them as a “model minority,” and it allows them to assimilate

in the middle and upper class in spite of their race. These students are likely to associate with peers of similar socioeconomic status, education background, and academic expectations. Even the Korean-American students whose families were of low socioeconomic backgrounds are more likely to be exposed to and associate with other students of higher socioeconomic backgrounds.

The low-achieving Korean-American dropouts struggled financially at home and faced limited support in school. Their urban school, mostly populated by poor minorities, was fraught with violence and high-school dropout rates. These students rarely came into contact with wealthy Asian-Americans or Whites. Rather, most of their peers were working-class and poor Asians, Blacks, and Hispanics. The Korean high-school dropouts distinguished themselves from more educated or studious Koreans because they aligned themselves with Whiteness because of the way they spoke, dressed, and succeeded in school. These Asian dropouts aligned their shared experiences of racism and low socioeconomic status with their low-income Blacks, Hispanic, and Asian minority peers (Lew, 2004, 2006). One student explained that her low social and economic status represented a kind of collective minority experience that distinguished her from wealthier and privileged Whites and Asians (Lew, 2006). This student's perception supports Ogbu's (2004) definition of collective identity, which refers to people's sense of who they are or belonging because of their collective experiences.

The ill practices of slavery as related to education not only affect Blacks, but other minorities as well, especially those from low socioeconomic backgrounds. Although *Brown vs. Board of Education* was supposed to level the playing field, the issues raised in a Nation at Risk (National Commission in Excellence, 1983) as well as in

the present No Child Left Behind Act (U.S. Department of Education, 2006) continue to exist today and are a good indication that the disparities that exist between Whites and minorities are a primary reason for the achievement gap that has affected the dropout rate across the nation. Students' families' socioeconomic status is a similarity among students of all ethnicities that are dropping out across the nation. Students from poor families who live in poor neighborhoods attend low-achieving and low-funded schools with teachers who are often times inexperienced. The schools are unable to provide the students with educational materials and technology and the school building has poor facilities. Students who are failing academically across all racial lines can relate to each other's issues, problems, and experiences because they lack the social and cultural capital that would afford them the opportunities and relationships necessary for academic success that are most often available to students from families with a higher socioeconomic status (Bourdieu, 1987). Students without access to the educational resources and support are most likely the students who are falling behind academically and dropping out of high school.

Social and Cultural Capital

In the late 1980s two major strands of thought on social capital were developed by Pierre Bourdieu (1986), in "The Forms of Capital," and James Coleman (1988) in the *American Journal of Sociology*. Bourdieu's conceptualization of social capital is grounded in theories of social reproduction and symbolic power and Coleman's theoretical framework consists of norms and social control. Bourdieu and Passeron (1973) first used the term *cultural capital* in "Cultural Reproduction and Social Reproduction" to address the differences in educational outcomes of families whose

children were of the dominant culture and those who were not. In 1986, in “Forms of Capital,” Bourdieu distinguishes cultural capital from social and economic capital.

The major difference between social and cultural capital is that although both are acquired through social relations, social capital emphasizes the importance of networks through membership in groups or institutions and cultural capital focuses on the non-financial assets of educational, social, and intellectual knowledge a child acquires growing up in an elite family. Whereas social capital is attained through group socialization, cultural knowledge is acquired by the individual in the relationship. The rest of this section will discuss the differences in Bourdieu’s and Coleman’s definitions of social capital and Bourdieu’s definition of cultural capital.

Social Capital

Bourdieu’s (1986) and Coleman’s (1988) definitions of social capital are similar in that they both emphasize the functional value of social relations as a resource to agents. Bourdieu defines social capital as the aggregate of the actual or potential resources linked to possessions of a durable network of essentially institutionalized relationships of mutual acquaintance and recognition. This group membership provides members with the backing of the collectively owned capital. Relations within the group may exist as material or symbolic (Bourdieu, 1986).

Similarly, Coleman (1988) defines social capital as connections or the importance of social networks. It is inherent in the structure of relationships between and among actors. It is defined by its function. It is not a single entity, but a variety of different entities, with two elements in common: They all consist of some aspect of social structures, and they facilitate certain actions of actors—whether persons or corporate

actors—within the structure (Coleman, 1988). Both Coleman and Bourdieu have an instrumentalist view of social capital as a resource, inherent in social relationships, which can be used by individuals and institutional agents to various ends. They also see social capital as interacting with and transactable for other forms of capital (Bourdieu, 1986; Coleman, 1988).

The key differences between Coleman's and Bourdieu's concept of social capital is based on their philosophical perspectives. Bourdieu emphasizes access to institutional resources, an approach that is more egocentric and focuses on the access to status, power, and credentials gained from the investment in the relationships (Wall, Ferrazzi, & Schryer, 1998). Actors compete for capital within fields of activity, and our complex society is made up of a number of fields, each with their own specific logic (Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992). These fields are made up of various relationships in which positions are defined by the distribution of capital in different forms across the actors whether individual or institutional in that field. The actors who have more capital are more dominant over those who have less; others may have equal but different compositions of capital at their disposal, which puts them in a different relationship to other actors in the field itself. The capital that one actor has is historically determined through existing relationships according to the "rules of the game," the value of the different forms of capital, and the ability to convert the capital from one type to another (Bourdieu, 1986).

Coleman's view is more sociocentric and emphasizes the norms one comes to develop and understand through the relationships (Adam & Roncevic, 2003; Cusack, 1999; McClenaghan, 2000). Coleman is concerned primarily with the family and

neighborhood. For him, the presence of effective norms and sanctions within the immediate family is what is most important for educational success (Coleman, 1988).

Coleman's view of social capital emphasizes the importance of network closure which means that parents are friends with the parents of their children's friends. His theory identifies three key aspects of social capital: obligations and expectations, which depend on the trustworthiness of the social environment, the communication flow capability of the social structure, and the presence of norms accompanied by sanctions (Coleman, 1988).

For Coleman (1988) social capital is not just a property of the elite, but to some degree it compensates for the lack of other forms of capital. For Bourdieu (1986) social capital is hierarchically structured and like other forms of capital is held disproportionately by the dominant class. However, both Bourdieu (1986) and Coleman (1988) reject the idea that educational attainment and achievement is a product solely of an individual's natural talents. They both believe social capital plays a significant role in one's success; however, for Bourdieu social capital is a less important aspect of his theory of social structure than cultural capital. Yet some scholars, like Gould (2001), state that cultural capital is a form of social capital since when community participants engage in cultural exchange they develop social ties and thus contribute to the community's social capital. This concept is supported in Coleman's (1988) study of students in Catholic schools.

Coleman (1988) shows the significance of social capital as it pertains to institutional and support ties through the example of the success of students in Catholic schools. In his study on public and private schools he demonstrated that there was higher

achievement in mathematics and verbal skills for students in Catholic schools than students with comparable backgrounds in public schools. This was particularly true for students from disadvantaged backgrounds: Blacks, Hispanics, and children of parents with low educational levels. When he compared the dropout rate in public schools for Grades 10 to 12 it was 14.3%, in other private schools, 11.9%, and in Catholic schools, 3.4%. The conclusion drawn is that Catholicism does not account for the low dropout rate. It is the relationship between the religious community that surrounds a religious school and the students in the school that makes students less likely to drop out of school. These relationships and networks create a high level of social capital that promotes retention and, ultimately, academic achievement (Coleman, 1988).

The opposites of community—alienation and social isolation—are, according to the Coleman (1988) study, a major cause of suicide. Thus, we can associate dropping out of high school as a near neighborhood suicide, caused by isolation due to the absence of a functional connection to others. Interestingly, the dropout rates of children of single-parent families in public schools and other private schools rose to more than one and a half times that of children from two-parent families; however, there was no increase in dropout rates for children from single-parent families in Catholic schools. These results indicate how significant social capital is to a family and the impact it has on families who can attain it through their relationships in the schools. Social capital is a resource that can help develop young people into successful, productive citizens. Children with social capital understand the norms and standards regarding what young people should do in and out of school. When necessary, children whose family educational attainment is low can turn to adults other than their parents to find support. In a variety of ways, these

relations constitute social capital that aids schools in their task, and, in addition, both support and constrain youth in the process of growing up (Coleman, 1988).

In the study of school inequality, the analysis of social networks reveals how success within the educational system for working class and minority youths is dependent on the formation of genuinely supportive relationships with institutional agents (Stanton-Salazar & Dornbusch, 1995).

Researchers argue that supportive ties with the institutional agents represent a necessary condition for engagement and advancement in the educational system. For working class and minority youths, however, these supportive ties are found mainly outside the family in school settings and community organizations. To complicate matters, initiating such ties outside the family has been found to be no easy task (Nadler, Fisher, & DePaulo, 1983).

Kerckhoff and Campbell (1977) and Kerckhoff (1976) suggest that the effect of family origin, which is the family's socioeconomic status, is mediated much more by people's access to information about the educational system and by their overall perceptions of discrimination. They maintained that conventional status attainment models misrepresent the mobility process not only for some ethnic minorities, but also for low SES Whites who find themselves similarly dependent on the educational system resources that are not attainable elsewhere. When lack of access to institutional funds of knowledge is combined with perceptions of discrimination, self-elimination is a likely result. A good deal of the more recent sociological treatment of school failure continues to cast the process of self-elimination in terms of systematic institutional exclusion (Fine, 1991; Lamont & Lareau, 1988; Lareau, 1989).

However, in spite of institutional exclusionary practices influencing school success, school engagement is fostered in different ways by different ethnic groups. Whereas for Whites, support from institutional agents enhances educational attainment and thereby fosters ambition, for Blacks and other minorities higher grades are associated with institutional promotion only when grades symbolize outward conformity to the cultural standards imposed by the schools. Ogbu (1991) refers to this as “acting White.” Thus, for working-class and low-income Blacks and other minorities, parental and community attempts to instill conformity, optimism, and trust among children and youth may be more problematic. Gottlieb’s (1975) study describing the behavior among adolescents that is very scarce is of particular significance because it strongly suggests that supportive contact with mainstream institutional agents is highly dependent on the degree of overlap in subcultural values and norms. Like Fine (1991), Gottlieb (1975) showed that teachers, coaches, guidance staff, and secretaries were less responsive to marginal, non-conforming students and often acted to discourage them from seeking their support.

Yet from a social network perspective, ties to institutional agents are necessary in order for students, especially those who are minority and low-income, to obtain social capital. Institutional agents’ provision of social capital is the knowledge-based resources that assist students with guidance for college admissions and/or job advancement. Working-class youths tend to have vastly less social capital than do middle-class youths because of the lack of parental involvement (Stanton-Salazar & Dornbusch, 1995). On the other hand, they also lack the ability to acquire the knowledge and experience that enables them to interpret the cultural codes of the dominant culture.

Cultural Capital

Cultural capital is a sociological concept that gained widespread popularity after it was first articulated by Pierre Bourdieu. Bourdieu and Jean-Claude Passeron first used the term in *Cultural Reproduction and Social Reproduction* (1973). It has since been elaborated and developed in terms of other types of capital in *The Forms of Capital* (Bourdieu, 1986). Cultural capital acts as a social relation within a system of exchange that includes the accumulated cultural knowledge that confers power and status. It is the knowledge that enables an individual to interpret various cultural codes of the dominant class.

In Bourdieu and Passeron's (1973) study, they suggested that the culture of the dominant class is transmitted and rewarded by the educational system. According to Bourdieu, to acquire cultural capital a student must have the ability to receive and internalize this capital. Although schools expect students to have this ability, it is not provided for the students by the schools. Rather the attainment of cultural capital and later access to academic rewards depend on the cultural capital passed from one generation to the next. Differences in cultural capital are reinforced by the educational system that favors these styles, leaving members of the lower class with little hope of achieving social mobility.

Cultural capital exists in three forms: embodied, objectified, and institutionalized. Embodied cultural capital is a person's personality and behavioral tendencies, which are made up of their personal knowledge base and skills set. They are the learned elements, attitudes, and behaviors of the dominant group and can be increased by investing time in self-improvement and learning. One benefits from material cultural capital only if one

has the capacity to use it. Objectified cultural capital has a number of properties that are defined only in the relationship with cultural capital in its embodied state. Bourdieu (1986) says that cultural capital goods can be obtained and appropriated both materially and symbolically and are believed to be cultural capital. To possess material goods, a person needs only economic capital. However, to understand how to use it appropriately, the person must have embodied cultural capital either in proxy or person. A person must have the capacity to appreciate and use material capital. Institutionalized cultural capital is most understood as academic credentials or qualifications. This is mainly understood in relation to the labor market. It allows easier conversion of cultural capital by guaranteeing a certain monetary value for a certain institutional level of achievement (Bourdieu & Passeron, 1977).

Another important aspect of Bourdieu's theoretical model is the concept of habitus. *Habitus* is a person's internalized dispositions for thinking and behaving, which influence the actions the person takes. It is created by one's place in the social structure; by internalizing the social structure and one's place in it, one comes to determine what is possible for one's life and develops practices and aspirations accordingly (Bourdieu, 1997). For example, students who participate in pre-college programs acquire habitus during the summer residential experience. The experience of living on the college campus for consecutive summers exposes them to the lifestyle of a college student and prepares them to be successful in that environment. The opportunity to take classes with college professors teaches them the rules of the game and prepares them to negotiate their relationships with fellow peers and their professors.

Habitus, or one's view of the world and one's place in it, is an important consideration in trying to understand how students navigate their way through the educational system. It is necessary to consider one's resources (capital) and the orientation one has toward using those resources (habitus) to implement the model of practice in the educational field in the way Bourdieu intended. One comes to determine what is possible and what is not possible for one's life and develops aspirations and practices accordingly. This internalization takes place during childhood and is a primarily unconscious process.

Bourdieu (1986) argued that the reproduction of social structure results from the habitus of individuals. Considering the class position someone is born into, people develop ideas about their individual potential. Those in the working class may tend to believe that they will remain in the working class. These beliefs are externalized into actions that lead to the reproduction of the class structure. One's actions or practices are the result of one's habitus and capital within a field.

Cultural reproduction is the transmission of existing cultural values and norms from generation to generation. It is the mechanism by which continuity of cultural experience is sustained across time. Cultural reproduction often results in social reproduction, which is the process of transferring aspects of society, such as class, from generation to generation. Bourdieu believed that the educational system was used solely to reproduce the culture of the dominant class in order for the dominant class to continue to hold on and release power. His main focus was the structural reproductions of disadvantages and inequalities that are caused by cultural reproduction. According to

Bourdieu, inequalities are recycled through the education system and other social institutions.

According to Bourdieu and Passeron (1977), success in school is not simply learning skills and passing tests. Schools required many nonacademic and social skills, behaviors, and appropriate responses, which came from wealthy homes. The school curriculum and procedures expected that these behaviors and responses would have been learned outside the schoolhouse. However, these social skills, behaviors, and responses were those of the dominant culture. Students from wealthy families learned them at home. Encoded into these “attitudes” and responses learned at home were the dominant culture’s values, responses, and behaviors. Thus, students who come from working-class families are less likely to possess the social skills, behaviors, and responses necessary to be successful academically and socially within the school.

DiMaggio’s (1982) and DiMaggio and Mohr’s (1985) works differ from Bourdieu’s work. For Bourdieu, cultural capital is a social reproduction established through educational systems that legitimize the social class structure, whereas DiMaggio and Mohr (1985) define it as cultural mobility. According to DiMaggio (1982), cultural capital is a resource that any social class can use to its advantage. He indicates that we should think of cultural capital as a cultural resource that one uses to ease communication and display the taste necessary to gain entry into a new status group. An individual has to learn how to adapt to the norms of those in the particular social group by impressing the gatekeepers and constructing social networks that signal their cultural belonging in order to advance their status (DiMaggio & Mohr, 1985).

Kalmijin and Kraaykamp (1996) had similar results to DiMaggio's when they investigated racial inequality in education and differences in cultural capital between White and African-American students in the United States. Cultural capital was defined as the degree to which parents socialize their children into high-status culture, defined as the arts, literature, and music. Their findings indicated that cultural capital helps the students to be better prepared to master academic material, develop a greater taste for learning abstract and intellectual concepts, and be favored directly by teachers over children who have less cultural capital. Socialization into high status culture in their study appeared to have a strong effect on educational attainment.

Teachman's (1987) definition of cultural capital as operationalized "educational resources" is also similar to DiMaggio's. Teachman's cultural capital includes resources in the home such a specific place to study, reference books, daily newspaper, a dictionary, or a set of encyclopedias. Teachman's study found that educational resources play a significant role in educational attainment, and it was a positive attainment for both men and women. Yet, according to the findings, educational resources are less important for determining educational outcomes for African-Americans.

Aschaffenburg and Maas (1997) had a different interpretation of cultural capital than did Teachman (1987). In their study they examined the relationships between cultural capital and educational attainment across time. The study used both the cultural reproduction theory from Bourdieu and the cultural mobility theory from DiMaggio to understand how cultural capital affects the likelihood of making educational transitions. These transitions were defined as beginning high school, finishing high school, beginning college, and completing college. The results indicated that participation in the cultural

classes was most prevalent between ages 12 and 17. The study found that cultural participation for students positively affected educational success throughout their entire educational career, even when acquired later in life. Thus, it is important for educational institutions to create an environment where cultural participation is inclusive for all students.

Parental Involvement, a Form of Cultural and Social Capital

The concept of social reproduction helps us understand how schools help replicate social inequalities. Bourdieu's (1979) major insight on educational inequality is that students with more valuable social and cultural capital are far better in school than their peers with less social and cultural capital. Social reproduction has proven to be useful in gaining a better understanding of how race and class influence the transmission of educational inequality. Differences in parents' social class and students' attitudes or behaviors toward schools have shown that these class differences affect children's progress in school (Brantlinger, 1993).

According to McNeal (1999a, 1999b, 2001), parental involvement is a form of social capital. It is a dyadic relationship between the parent, the child, or another parent (McNeal, 1999a). These relationships are based on networks of kinship trust and degree of resources. Similar to Bourdieu and Passeron (1977), Coleman (1987), and Lareau (1987), McNeal (1999a, 1999b, 2001) defines parental involvement as parent-child discussions, parental involvement in teachers' organizations, and direct involvement with the school.

Lareau and Horvat (1999) state that the value of capital depends heavily on the social setting and that there is an important difference between the possession and

activation of capital resources. People who have social and cultural capital may choose to activate capital or not, and they may also vary in the skill with which they activate it. This indicates that reproduction of capital is uneven and is continually negotiated by those who possess the capital and resources. An example of the behavior between Black middle-class and lower-class parents and how they activated and negotiated their capital and the differences in their outcomes is demonstrated.

A low-income family whose child was having academic problems suspected their child was being treated unfairly due to race. The parents visited the teacher and their communication style consisted of anger and criticism, also expressing their concern about the lack of African-American culture in the school. Their principal and teacher perceived their response as unacceptable and destructive. Hence, the low-income family did not have a good relationship with their child's teacher and, to avoid further confrontation, gave their daughter a higher grade than she deserved. A middle-income family who also suspected children of color were treated unfairly had a different approach. They did not express their concerns to the teacher, but became very visible in the school, asking the teachers about their daughter and paying close attention to their daughter's homework. In addition, the parents made a request to have their daughter tested for the academically talented program; she passed and was exposed to more rigorous curriculum. The teacher was never aware of the parents' concerns about racial inequality because of the manner in which they chose to handle the situation.

The middle-class family's actions created a moment of social inclusion in which parent-teacher contact facilitated their child's inclusion in high-status educational programs and her continuing success in school. The low-income parents' actions created

a moment of exclusion for their daughter, because although the teacher increased her grade to avoid confrontation, she remained in classes below her grade level. The low-income parents did not seek to intervene in the school process to address their concerns about racial inequality.

Understanding how to successfully navigate the educational process is very challenging and even more so for students whose families lack the educational attainment and social networks to create strong ties within the schools. The roles of the institution, teacher, parents, and student are very important as to whether or not a student will be successful.

According to Coleman (1988), parental involvement in the parent-teacher organization is a key development in adolescent development because of shared information that an extended parent network allows. It is also viewed as a source of extended social control to curb inappropriate behaviors such as truancy and dropping out. Monitoring of the child is another important characteristic of parental involvement and it affects adolescent behavior and development. The assumption is that parents closely monitor their children's behavior and the outward expression of concern translates into a greater investment by the child in improved educational performance and reduced problematic behavior (Coleman, 1987, 1988).

The parents of children from working-class families are more likely to have lower educational attainment and are less likely to spend time talking to their children about their school work because much of their time is possibly spent at work. In addition, working-class parents' work schedules may hinder them from attending teacher conferences in support of their child's educational progress. Furthermore, parents may

also lack the confidence to develop relationships with the teachers due to their low educational attainment. Thus, working-class parents are unable to teach their children the norms and behaviors associated with social capital that would help them to be successful in school as they interact with their teachers and counselors. This lack of parent involvement that is a necessary source of social capital may explain behavioral outcomes such as dropout behavior or truancy. In addition, children who lack parental involvement tend to come from minority and low socioeconomic backgrounds (McNeal, 1999a, 2001).

However, the studies show that it is very important for minority and disadvantaged students to develop social and cultural capital in order to further their achievement. Students with more social and cultural capital are better able to communicate with teachers, thus increasing their chances to benefit from their relationship (Smith-Maddox, 1999; Teachman, 1987; Valdes, 1996; Wimberly, 2000). Student teacher interactions reinforce the social norms of the school and society (Bourdieu, 1986; DeMarrais & LeCompte, 1999). Access to such information and resources assists and increases their chances to further their educational careers and be successful.

Summary of Social and Cultural Capital

Both Coleman's (1988) and Bourdieu's (1986) views on social capital are similar, but the differences between the two are that Coleman emphasizes the importance of the collective relationships that is gained through the relationship, while Bourdieu emphasizes the power the individual attains through the relationship. So whereas Coleman (1988) highlights the relational importance of social capital between a child and adult and the benefits gained from the relationship, Bourdieu (1986) focuses on influence

of power that is attained through the relationship that makes opportunities for children of the dominant class readily available as opposed to children from the working class.

As stated earlier, Bourdieu (1986) views social capital as a less important aspect of his theory because children from working-class families lack the knowledge and experiences that are needed to be successful, especially in an educational system that expects all children to attend school with certain required knowledge. By providing children with the opportunity to attain social and cultural capital through educational programs such as Upward Bound, they learn the social skills and cultural codes that allow them to compete academically with their peers.

Studying barriers to student success through the lens of social and cultural capital is significant because it identifies the barriers that allow some children to be successful while others are not. More importantly, it shows how students who are not from the dominant families and nevertheless acquire the skills of social and cultural capital are then able to overcome barriers in spite of the obstacles they encounter in school or in their environment. Thus, by students acquiring these forms of capital they become more capable to overcome the barriers that oftentimes prevent them from being successful.

Student Success

Student success models reflect a new approach to understanding factors that impact students' ability to graduate from high school. Instead of focusing on reasons for student failure as described in dropout literature, or social and cultural factors missing in the lives of underprivileged students, student success models explore why students succeed. The model takes a more positive approach to the study of student success and

focuses on the strengths instead of the weaknesses of the student. The following section focuses on the resiliency theory and non-theory-based student success research.

Resiliency Theory

Students at risk of failure often face a complexity of problems caused by poverty, health issues, and other social conditions that have made it difficult for them to succeed in school. Yet there is a human phenomenon that allows people to bounce back after experiencing negative or traumatic events. According to Henderson and Milstein (2003), there are a growing number of studies in the fields of psychiatry, psychology, and sociology challenging the notion that stress and risk inevitably doom people to develop psychopathologies or perpetuate cycles of poverty, abuse, or educational failure. Humans cannot only deal with life's adversities; they overcome them and become stronger because of the experience (Grotberg, 2003; Masten, 1994).

Resiliency theory provides a new perspective on how children bounce back from stress, trauma, and risk in their lives (Henderson & Milstein, 2003, pp. 1-2). This paradigm shift is an approach that proposes that educators move away from focusing on what is at risk and move toward a resiliency model of understanding (Wolin & Wolin, 1997).

Research on resiliency has been broadly conducted in the areas of developmental psychopathology, psychology, sociology, and anthropology. Conceptual and empirical work on resiliency has recently gained similar recognition as a framework for examining why some students are successful in school, while other students from the same socially and economically disadvantaged backgrounds and communities are not.

There are three major categories that describe the phenomenon of resiliency in the psychological literature (Masten, Best, & Garmezy, 1990): individual differences in recovery from trauma, people from high-risk groups (poverty, family background, or abuse) who obtain better outcomes than would typically be expected of these individuals, and individuals who have the ability to adapt despite stressful experiences. The psychological research on resiliency provides compelling evidence that many factors may help students at risk of failure become resilient despite adversity. The studies also show that resilient individuals interpret stressful life experiences and trauma differently.

Definitions of Resiliency

Wolin and Wolin (1993) explained that the term *resilient* was adopted in lieu of earlier terms used to describe the phenomenon (such as invulnerable, invincible, and hardy) because of its recognition of the struggle involved in the process of becoming resilient. The term generally refers to factors and processes that limit negative behaviors associated with stress and result in adaptive outcomes even in the presence of adversity.

Garmezy and Masten (1991) define resilience as a “process of, or capacity, or the outcome of successful adaptation despite challenging and threatening circumstances” (p. 459).

One widely used definition of educational resilience is “heightened likelihood of success in schools and other life accomplishments despite adversities brought on by early traits, conditions, and experiences” (Wang, Heartel, & Walbery, 1994, p. 64). While success is an educational variable that researchers often investigate and measure (e.g., cognitive, affective, and behavioral outcomes), adversity is a phenomenon that educators do not operationally define and study. For instance, attending an at-risk school

environment could be considered an adverse condition (Waxman, 1992), but poverty, drug abuse, coming from a single-parent household, or having siblings who dropped out of school are also risk factors that have similar weight. Determining whether a student is educationally resilient is dependent upon the number of risk factors and the magnitude of those risk factors. Whereas one student may abide in a home and be responsible for taking care of their siblings, another student may have daily interactions with an abusive father and alcoholic mother; their responses are determined by the impact of the environmental stress and their reaction to it.

Characteristics of Resilient Students

Student resilience is a characteristic that explains why some students are able to overcome adversity and succeed and others stumble and fail in the midst of obstacles. Students with resiliency take responsibility for their actions, have relationships with good role models, seek help when needed, are confident in their abilities, have an optimistic attitude, respect themselves and others, have plans for the future, are diligent in accomplishing a task, and believe they can solve their problems (Grotberg, 2003). Resilient students' self-esteem, self-regulation, and vision to stay the course "buffer the effects" of negative realities they may often encounter (Wayman, 2002). Life can be unpredictable, but, according to educational resilience theory, how a student perceives adversity determines whether or not the student will conquer it.

According to Schissel (1993), the four personal characteristics resilient children display are social competence, problem-solving skills, autonomy, and a sense of purpose. Another four factors related to resiliency identified by McMillian and Reed (1994) are motivation and goal orientation, positive use of time (e.g., on-task behavior, homework

completion, and participation in extracurricular activities), family life (support and expectations), and school and classroom learning environment (i.e., facilities, exposure to technology, leadership, and overall climate).

Although there are numerous characteristics related to resilience, there are five that seem to show up consistently across the life span (Garmezy, 1993; Garmezy & Rutter, 1983). They are cognitive, superiority, autonomy, social skills, and internal locus of control. Internal locus of control is strongly related to resilience because people with this characteristic believe they have influence over their own fate and they believe they have some control over what happens to them. In addition, a major tenet of locus of control is intrinsic motivation or vice versa. Students who are resilient also have internal locus of control and are intrinsically motivated. Such students believe they can control outcomes affecting them. They have a positive outlook regarding the negative events they may face in school or in life, whereas students with external locus of control react very differently; they see themselves as victims in the educational system almost powerless in affecting the circumstances around them. They do not have a positive outlook on life.

Another characteristic of resiliency is emotion. Even in the midst of stress, individuals with a high level of resilience tend to experience positive emotions (Tugade & Fredrickson, 2004). These individuals seek to understand the good in the midst of the apparent negative experience. This mind-set is a coping mechanism that regulates the effect that a threat may present (Tugade & Fredrickson, 2004). Resilient people let positive emotions guide their actions as they face unfortunate situations. Likewise,

successful students who possess resilience use positive emotions to mediate the effects of negative circumstances.

Educational Resiliency

Only a few studies have researched resiliency in schools, and most of the research has focused on comparing resilient to non-resilient students on family and individual background characteristics and on key classroom processes that have been proposed to foster resilience.

Educational resilience is not viewed as a fixed attribute, but as a response that can be promoted by alterable factors that can impact an individual's success in school. This approach does not focus on attributes such as ability, because ability has not necessarily been found to be a characteristic of successful students (Benard & Western Regional, 1993; Gordon & Song, 1994; Masten et al., 1990).

Resiliency is a characteristic that one may have, but, more importantly, it is believed that it can be taught (Grotberg, 2003; Paphazy, 2003; Wayman, 2002). Paphazy (2003) believes that resiliency is essential to student success. The students who have a positive and active attitude, and behavior of declaring their abilities, a sense of self, and a knowing that they can accomplish whatever they set out to do, grow into adolescents with greater trust, competence, and a purposeful sense of themselves as integral members in their community (Paphazy, 2003). Student resiliency united with caring relationships, high expectations, and meaningful participation will create an environment that will help students view adverse situations differently and empower them to develop a resilient characteristic (Comer, 1984; Edmonds, 1986, Heath & McLaughlin, 1983; Rutter, Maughan, Ouston, & Smith, 1979; Weis & Fine, 1993). Teachers who promote the

teaching of resilience, as Paphazy (2003) recommends, give a powerful gift that helps students confront adversity with confidence and optimism.

An example of a teacher's ability to promote resilience in students is the Success Academy. Success Academy was a program created at Norview High School (Norfolk, VA) because, prior to the program, 800 9th-grade students repeated the grade. In 2005, the school provided a small learning community for 150 first-time freshman to help students see their leadership potential by keeping them in school, encouraging accountability and school connections, fostering positive relationships with teachers and peers, increasing attendance rates, and diminishing students' tendencies to engage in delinquent behavior.

The comments shared by some of the students were as follows:

I was failing all of my classes and needed to be promoted to the 10th grade. Fortunately for me I had teachers who believed and cared about me succeeding. My leadership teacher stayed on me and reminded me about success. I worked very hard and with the support of the teacher I was able to get my grades to passing except one. I took that class in summer school and learned a good lesson—the importance of sharing my experience with other incoming freshmen to help them understand they should never give up. I also had the opportunity to speak with the teachers in training for Success Academy. I shared with them the importance of getting to know their students and how their relationship gives students the confidence to succeed. It is the reason I am passing all of my classes and currently entering the 11th grade. (Harris, 2007, p. 42)

Another student shared how the teacher changed her course of life because he taught her about resiliency—to bounce back when something bad happens. “He showed me how to improve my grade and taught me about excelling. He said the difference between 100% and 105% is that those who obtain 100% are good, but those who obtain 105% excel. My teacher believed in me when no one else did. Instead of failing grades I have C's” (Harris, 2007, p. 43).

Werner and Smith's (1989) study found that among the most frequently encountered positive role models in the lives of resilient children, outside of the family circle, was a favorite teacher who was not just an instructor for academic skills for the child but also a confidant and positive role model for personal identification. Furthermore, as the research of Noddings (1988) has articulated, a nurturing relationship with a teacher gives youth the motivation for wanting to succeed.

The resilient student perspective covers a number of important characteristics that resilient students use to bounce back and be successful in the face of obstacles. Resiliency traits affecting student success consist of having a protective adult to rely upon, a strong sense of self-worth and self-confidence, good friends, a vision for the future, a positive outlook despite negative circumstances, and involvement in school-related activities. Resiliency research attempts to provide educators with inexplicable positive characteristics that help students faced with unfortunate circumstances learn how to successfully confront and overcome them.

Local Models of Student Success

Much of the research on student achievement focuses on successful and unsuccessful students. However, capturing the students' own voices regarding student success is scarce in qualitative literature. Although there is a broad body of research concerning student achievement that is focused on university retention problems, according to Tinto (1987) much of what we believe we know about why students depart from high school is complex and oftentimes wrong or misleading. Since the dropout factors between high school and college were not similar, Tinto devised his own model of student departure that has relevance in understanding the complex, intertwined, family,

social, and institutional variables that influence university students' decisions. He described how pre-entry college attributes such as family background, abilities, and prior schooling influenced the students' goals and commitments and served them as filters for the institutional experience. Students' positive or negative experiences, combined with their ability to integrate academic and social adjustments, lead to a re-examination of the intentions, goals, and commitments. Oftentimes this evaluation process leads to departure for many students (Tinto, 1987). While this model is helpful in understanding why some students depart the educational setting, it does not account for the number of students who succeed despite the adverse conditions. Further research is necessary to explain why students succeed despite adverse conditions.

Padilla (1998, 1999) studied successful college students using a black box approach in order to gain information on the campus experience. The black box concept uses the notion that there is input information that can be discerned and output information that can be determined, yet there is an unknown process in between input and output that results in a transformation. "What happens between these two temporal points, i.e., entering and leaving college, is the black box experience" (Padilla, 1999, p. 134).

The black box is a metaphor for the unknown. The information about the types of students entering college is well-defined, yet the decision-shaping experiences occurring while the students are in college remain unknown. Understanding what happens in the black box determines why students remain in school or choose to depart. Since the students are the experts at navigating through the barriers to completing high school, then they are the keepers of the unknown information in the black box. Only the students

have the heuristics knowledge gained by experiencing the reality of being in the educational setting. Padilla's (1998) description of the "experimental mode" is that one literally has to be in the given environment, and students are well aware of the nuances, ambiguities, assumptions, and changing features of that particular situation. The individual's learning occurs by way of doing—by trial and error, chance encounters, good fortune, and misfortune.

Padilla, Trevino, and Gonzalez (1997) used the experimental mode concept to understand what strategies minority college students employed to be successful. They used the black box approach to identify the barriers to student success and the knowledge and actions the successful student utilized to ensure success. A meaningful taxonomy of barriers to student success was developed from the student input, and the students provided insight into the knowledge and actions that they perceived to be essential for overcoming barriers. From the Padilla et al. (1997) study a local student success model (SSM) emerged, enabling the researchers to examine the implications for policy and practice that impacted these students.

Barker (2005) used Padilla's SSM to obtain information from students at a high-minority high school. The high-school students provided their perceptions of the barriers faced at their particular school, along with the knowledge and actions they felt were needed in order to graduate from high school. One of the important findings from this study was that the students perceived that the lack of counselor access was having a negative impact on students being able to obtain vital information necessary for successful school completion. Since the information about the barriers, knowledge, and actions concerning student success came from the students themselves, the method used

in Padilla's previous college studies was successfully adapted to the high-school setting (Padilla, 1991, 1999; Padilla et al., 1997). Miller (2005) successfully completed another SSM study involving elementary-school students.

The report *Inside the Black Box of High Performing High Poverty Schools* (Kannapel, Clements, Taylor, & Hibpshman, 2005) examined eight elementary schools. The studies were from various places in Kentucky, and all were high-performing yet high-poverty schools. A preliminary set of common characteristics of these schools was generated using the black box approach, then modified as more data were collected. The results revealed that these schools had high expectations, caring, respectful relationships, strong academic focus, systems for regular individual student assessment, non-authoritarian principals who shared decision making, a strong faculty work ethic combined with high faculty morale, and a strategy for recruitment, hiring, and assignment of teachers (Kannapel et al., 2005). Thus, the student success approach has shown to be a useful tool for generating meaningful data to understand the expertise required to navigate through school successfully.

Upward Bound

The largest and longest running TRIO program, Upward Bound, continues to be instrumental in helping minority and educationally underprepared students to successfully navigate through high school and enter postsecondary institutions (White, Sakiestewa, & Shelley, 1998). Both the mission and target population for Upward Bound are defined by the federal statute. According to the United States Department of Education (USDE, 1998), criteria for admission into Upward Bound include low-income, first-generation status (first in their family to potentially attend college), and the need for

academic support services to successfully pursue postsecondary study. Eligibility criteria for admission into Upward Bound and the other TRIO programs included the consideration of low-income individuals from their inception, because students from low-income families were less likely to have access to educational resources that provide the support to be successful academically and in future career opportunities. The reauthorization of the Higher Education Act in 1980 was particularly important with the adoption of the “first-generation” concept for the TRIO Programs. The inclusion of first-generation moved the TRIO Programs into a more inclusive direction in looking at the impact of non-financial barriers to success in postsecondary education. It enabled the TRIO Programs to build a broader coalition for low socioeconomic families and for all individuals who lacked the opportunity and access for a postsecondary education (McElroy & Armesto, 1998; Wolanin, 1996). This suggested that the lack of financial resources was a major barrier hindering low-income families from accessing postsecondary education.

For over 40 years, the Upward Bound program has been graduating students most likely to drop out of high school. As of 2009, there were over 950 Upward Bound programs nationwide, and the students served are 44% African-American, 25% Anglo, 19% Latino, 4% Asian, and 4% American-Indian. The program seeks to bring students to college who meet the federal guidelines. According to the U.S. Department of Education (Education Department General Administrative Regulations, 2008) guidelines for Upward Bound participants, a student must be between the ages of 13-19, have completed 8 years of elementary education, need academic support to successfully pursue an education beyond high school, plan on going to college, and be in need of the services

the program offers to fulfill his or her goals. Two-thirds of Upward Bound participants must be both first-generation and low-income and the other one-third must be low-income or first-generation college students. The target population of the students served is usually 9th through 12th grade.

Upward Bound assists high-school students with acquiring the necessary academic, cultural enrichment, career orientation, and college exposure for those wanting to enter and complete postsecondary education. The Upward Bound program is designed to assist economically deprived, underachieving students who show the potential for achieving a postsecondary educational program, but who lack the motivation and academic preparation to meet the criteria for admission to the postsecondary institutions (Burkheimer, Riccobono, & Wisenbaker, 1979).

The Upward Bound programs' mandated services include a core curriculum of instruction in mathematics through pre-calculus, laboratory science, foreign language, composition, and literature for postsecondary success. Services provided to students in Upward Bound include instruction in reading, writing, study skills, mathematics, and other subjects necessary for success in postsecondary education. Other services include personal counseling, assistance in course selection, tutorial services, exposure to cultural events, academic programs, and other activities not usually available to disadvantaged youth. These include exposure to career options, particularly fields in which disadvantaged youth are underrepresented, on-campus residential programs, and mentoring programs (Myers & Moore, 1997).

Upward Bound exposes students to the college visit by taking them on college tours to give them first-hand experiences about what colleges and universities have to

offer. During the tours, students have an opportunity to develop better knowledge about the college by talking with college counselors and department heads and by participating in campus activities. In addition, Upward Bound students participate in a real-life college experience during the summer, spending between 5 and 6 weeks on a college campus. While on campus, students reside in the dorms with a roommate, eat in the dining hall, and during the day attend academic classes for credit and educational enrichment. Participants take classes and navigate the college campus amongst college students, faculty, and staff during their 4 years in high school.

The Upward Bound program also exposes participants to a variety of cultural and social enrichment activities, such as visiting museums and taking extracurricular activities such as music, art, and dance. The Department of Education provides funding specifically for cultural enrichment activities. Through academic instruction, college tours, financial aid, and career planning, Upward Bound participants receive encouragement to commit to obtaining a college education (Carson-Warner, 2003; McElroy & Armesto, 1998).

U.S. Department of Education statistics show that college enrollment rates for high-school graduates in Upward Bound are 91%, compared to 41% for students not involved with the programs (Koehn-Pike, 2006). Participants in Upward Bound programs are four times more likely to graduate from high school and earn an undergraduate degree than those from similar backgrounds who do not participate in the program (“What Is TRIO?,” 2005). Whereas financial aid helps students overcome financial barriers, the purpose of Upward Bound is to help students overcome academic, class, social, and cultural barriers to higher education.

The Lyndon Johnson administration's vision to create Upward Bound has been one of the most instrumental resources in helping close the achievement gap, especially with its graduation success rates 20% above the national graduation rates. Although the programs are successful in graduating students, it is not comprehensive enough to solve the problem of student failure.

A Nation at Risk (National Commission in Excellence, 1983) and Goals 2000, which was developed by the Clinton Administration to ensure that all students, even students of color, reached appropriate levels of achievement in math, reading, and science, were a clear indication that educators were not making progress in addressing the educational problems (U.S. Department of Education, 1996). In spite of the reforms and education acts that publicized the disparities in the educational achievement among racial groups, whose backgrounds are most likely low-income, the achievement gap continued to widen.

In 2002, under the Bush Administration, the No Child Left Behind Act (U.S. Department of Education, 2006) was prompted by Congress due to the widening of the racial achievement gap. This was based on standardized test scores and the persistent failure of schools to educate all children. The primary purpose of No Child Left Behind was to improve both the educational experience and opportunity for "disadvantaged and minority students and their peers" (Anderson et al., 2007). According to a recent *Phi Delta Kappa Journal* dated December 2007 (Anderson et al., 2007), a petition among educators is calling for the dismantling of the No Child Left Behind Act because it seems more children are being left behind under this act than ever before. Unfortunately, none of the reforms or congressional acts over the last 5 decades have successfully improved

the educational system for all children, especially from poor and minority backgrounds. As stated earlier, individual Upward Bound programs across the nation are doing well in helping students successfully graduate from high school. This does suggest that TRIO Programs do know how to solve the problem. Nevertheless the overall problem is not solved.

Summary

This chapter examined how successful students overcome the barriers to high-school graduation. It explored the impact of barriers to success through the lens of social and cultural capital (Bourdieu & Passeron, 1973; Coleman, 1987). Students who come from disadvantaged, low-income, minority family backgrounds do not achieve at the same rate as White middle-class students. Social and cultural capital theories provide a framework to help understand why these students struggle to achieve. The chapter concluded with a review of student success looking at Padilla's student success model and the U.S. Department of Education federal program Upward Bound that has a history of successfully graduating students from high school.

In chapter 3, I discuss in detail the research design for Padilla's Student Success Model and the research sample used to conduct this study. It concludes with a description of how the data were analyzed as well as the trustworthiness, generalizations, and ethics of the study.

CHAPTER 3

METHODOLOGY

Introduction

Understanding why some students succeed and others fail is important information to help students and administrators avoid the obstacles to success. According to Padilla (1999), it is essential to understand what accounts for student success so that schools can be told what to do in order to increase the success rate. In this study, Upward Bound program high-school participants who are first-generation and low income and the Upward Bound staff provided their insight as to why students succeed. The research design for this study is Padilla's (1999) Student Success Model (SSM). Within the framework of SSM, specific methods and procedures are detailed, including site selection, sample, data collection, and data analysis and procedures.

Problem

“Across the nation 1 out of 3 high school students will not graduate. For Latinos and African-Americans the rate is almost 50 percent. Students from low-income backgrounds are more than six times as likely to drop out of high school as students from middle to upper class families” (Thornburgh, 2006, p. 30). A very high percentage of students who are low-income and minority are dropping out of high school across the nation.

According to the dropout literature, socioeconomics, family backgrounds, and parental involvement are some of the various barriers that hinder students from progressing from ninth grade to high-school graduation. Bourdieu and Passeron's (1977) and Coleman's (1988) literature on cultural and social capital indicate that students' failure to succeed in high school is due to their lack of the social ties, knowledge, and understanding of norms that are natural to the students in the dominant culture.

Conversely, Upward Bound programs across the nation are successfully graduating students who are minority and come from families with a low socioeconomic status. It is not known from these students' perspectives how they overcome the various barriers to success. This study sought to find out how Upward Bound students perceive the barriers they face in high school and how they overcome the barriers that often cause students to dropout.

Purpose of Study

The purpose of this study was to examine how Upward Bound students who are academically successful overcome the barriers to success. The family background of these students is first-generation and low-income, and the research has shown that they typically do not achieve the same graduation rate as middle-class students, yet Upward Bound students are graduating from high school at an average rate of 90% across the nation.

Research Questions

This study specifically addressed the following research questions:

1. What do UB students and staff perceive to be the barriers to successful completion of high school?
2. How do UB students overcome the perceived barriers? Specifically, what does a successful UB student know and do to overcome each barrier?

The answers to these questions can assist students and educational representatives alike in understanding how to effectively address the barriers to high-school success and enhance the success for all students, especially those students being left behind.

Purposive Sampling

This study focused on three Upward Bound programs in Indiana. At the time the study was conducted, there were nine Upward Bound programs in Indiana, and the directors from each UB program came together annually at conferences, activities, and planned meetings. Through this relationship, I developed the criterion to study the top three most successful of the nine Upward Bound programs.

The criteria for this study were as follows: The program directors held their positions for at least 3 years, the program existed in the community for at least 3 years, and the graduation rate for at least 3 years was 75%. The documentation collected and analyzed to determine the top three UB programs in Indiana were retention, high-school graduation data, college enrollment, and location of the programs.

The Upward Bound programs that participated in this study were chosen from the following: Indiana State University, Indiana University, Indiana University-Purdue University Calumet, Indiana University-Purdue University Fort Wayne, Oakland City University, Vincennes University, Purdue University Calumet, and Indiana Wesleyan University. The University of Notre Dame's participation in the study was limited, as I

am the director of the program. Only the program's retention, graduation, and enrollment rates were included to analyze the data among the UB programs in Indiana. Since my research focused on successful students, the students who participated in the SSM study were high-school graduates.

Research Design

Student Success Model (SSM) is a qualitative technique to portray successful students' methods of capturing the perceived reality by the particular students being studied. SSM uses expert thinking systems as a foundation; the student is seen as the expert at being a student and is the best candidate to provide relevant data concerning the issue being studied.

To develop the Student Success Model, Padilla (1998, 1999) used the concept of the black box approach. The "black box" represents what the researcher does not know. It is information that must be revealed by the experts during the process of data collection. The black box approach is a metaphor for the unknown information between input data (students going into high school) and output data (students' successfully navigating barriers to completion).

According to Harmon and King (1994), the "expert" refers to an individual who is widely recognized as being able to solve a particular type of problem that most other people cannot solve nearly as efficiently or effectively (p. 31).

The students, as experts, have two forms of knowledge: heuristics (learning from mentors and experience) and formal knowledge (gained from books and coursework) (Harmon & King, 1994). In other words, the students are the best candidates to provide relevant data concerning successful completion of high school because they possess both

deep knowledge (book learning) and surface knowledge (empirical learning) about the subject (Harmon & King, 1994). Students know firsthand the barriers to graduation, and they also know what it takes to overcome those barriers.

Theory Expertise

The Expertise Model of Student Success (EMSS) is based on a set of assumptions about how students experience their environment and on conceptual borrowings from expert systems theory (Padilla, 2009). There are four assumptions that underline the Expertise Model of Student Success. The first assumption is that of the “black box” experience. A bit is known about the student as they begin their studies and when they graduate, but it is not known why one student progresses toward graduation and the other drops out before completion. The second assumption from the students’ perspectives is the series of barriers the students face during their academic progress and graduation. The third assumption accounts for the ability of some students to overcome the barriers to success. The assumption is that students who are successful are students who are experts at being students. They use their expertise to overcome the barriers to success that they encounter and to successfully meet requirements for graduation. This is based in part on a model of expertise described by Harmon and King (1994) that is used to understand what expertise means in the context of being a student.

Student expertise consists of the total knowledge possessed by the student at graduation (i.e., compiled knowledge). Compiled knowledge consists of two components: heuristic (informal) and academic (formal) knowledge. Academic knowledge is generally derived through formal study that is independent of the environment and takes the form of definitions, axioms, and laws expressed as principles

and theories. Heuristic knowledge is less formally derived, is dependent upon the experience within the environment, and is more often characterized as “rules of thumb” that are specific to a particular domain (Padilla, 1991).

The fourth assumption involves action or the will to act. Heuristic knowledge is necessary but not sufficient to overcome barriers to success. A student must also take effective actions. So in order to model student success, a student must identify both the heuristic knowledge base and the action repertoire of success.

Therefore, the Expertise Model of Student Success includes three parameters: (a) barriers to success, (b) knowledge used to identify effective solutions, and (c) actions to overcome the barriers.

The Student Success Model framework was applied to a school or campus to develop local models of success that can be used to influence both student and school practices to improve the overall rate of student academic performance (Padilla, 1999). Both the knowledge and actions of successful students determine their success at navigating through barriers. Both elements are important in order to understand what occurs in the black box school experience. The data collection method utilized in SSM allows for the examination of both the theoretical and heuristic knowledge.

The Student Success Model relies on a qualitative survey that consists of focus-group discussions aimed at developing an understanding of student success based on the emic perspectives of the participants (Padilla, 1999). These methods include use of the qualitative survey, an unfolding matrix, dialogical groupings, and concept modeling.

Qualitative Survey

The method of data collection that SSM uses places it in the category of what Padilla (1999) calls a “qualitative survey.” It consists of a set of qualitative data acquisition and analysis techniques that, when applied to a local social situation, result in an understanding of that situation based on emic perspectives of participants in that situation as well as the interpretation of the situation by the investigator (p. 138). SSM portrays the views of the participants within the context of their location at that particular moment (those who graduate or are expected to graduate), capturing their perceived reality at that particular setting studied.

Unfolding Matrix

The data collection instrument used in SSM is an unfolding matrix. The unfolding matrix consists of rows and columns that are empty at the start except for column headings, called cover terms. According to Padilla (1994), this technique allows for efficient and effective data gathering when the researcher is attempting the difficult task of collecting qualitative data. The cover terms provide a framework to garner relevant data from the subjects. The matrix is filled using the student’s own words to create the data set. In keeping with earlier studies used to collect qualitative data in this way (Padilla, 1991; Padilla et al., 1997), the matrix begins with the cover term “Barriers,” and the first group of research participants provide information to fill the column. The other columns have the cover terms “Knowledge,” “Actions,” “Changes,” and “Problems.” As participants verbalize their perceptions concerning the cover terms, the information is recorded on the matrix cells. This is the way SSM obtains the perceived realities of the participants through use of a black box approach (Padilla, 1998).

Dialogical Groupings

Participants were asked questions in conjunction with the cover terms. At the conclusion of the data collection process, the completed matrix is a part of the data set used for analysis to develop the program success model.

Although one person could complete the matrix alone, it is designed for a small group of participants, between 5 and 10, to complete during a dialogical session. Tandem groups have been used in prior research because of the intensity and extensiveness of the interaction stimulated by use of the matrix (Padilla, 1999). Each group completes only a part of the matrix, which is then continued by a subsequent group. Padilla (1991) states that by having several small groups of participants, a broader sample of students can participate and will result in a more comprehensive heuristic knowledge base.

For completion of the matrix, participants are primed using the following statement and questions:

Think of a successful high-school student—one who gets promoted and is preparing to graduate.

1. What barriers does such a student have to overcome to be successful, to get promoted?
2. What does a successful student know that helps him or her overcome each barrier?
3. What does a successful student actually do to overcome each barrier?
4. What programmatic changes can the school make to eliminate or lessen each barrier?
5. What problems might result if the changes were actually made?

As these questions are answered, the matrix is completed and analysis begins.

Concept Modeling

Once the matrix is completed, analysis is conducted on each of the columns. The analytic tool used is concept modeling, which utilizes both data reduction and data interpretation (Padilla, 1991). The concept model is a local model of the situation studied based on analysis of each of the columns of the matrix and additional information about the students' environment that will be collected by the researcher. According to Padilla (1999), the simplest approach for doing the analysis is to do a taxonomic analysis of all the exemplars listed in the matrix. This analysis results in a set of categories that include all or most of the exemplars listed in the data columns. The taxonomic analysis constitutes data reduction and contributes to a more abstract understanding of the situation studied (Padilla, 1999).

Ultimately, the entire matrix is reduced to a set of categories and subcategories that summarize barriers faced by students being studied, knowledge that students possess to overcome the barriers, actions the students take to overcome the barriers, actions the program might take to mitigate the barriers, and unintended consequences that might occur if the program took action (Padilla, 1999). By finding relationships between the categories that resulted from the taxonomic analysis and using other evidence, which may include observations, interviews, or other techniques, the researcher develops a final local model for student success for the program (Padilla, 1999).

Procedures

An initial phone call was placed to each of the eight Upward Bound directors requesting their participation in the study and it was followed by a formal letter of consent. Each director provided program data on retention, high-school graduation rate, college enrollment, and program location via email and telephone. In order to determine the top three Upward Bound programs, a table was created to gather and analyze the data that was provided.

The top three programs were selected by an average score of the data provided. I contacted the top three programs by email and phone and made plans with each director to conduct the study at their Upward Bound college campuses. The plans required that the directors of each program provide me with a minimum of five Upward Bound staff and students to participate in the study and to arrange a convenient time and place to conduct the interviews.

The students who participated in the study graduated from high school and were placed in small focus groups as well as the counselor/advisor and instructors/tutors from each Upward Bound program. Each focus group had a minimum of five individuals. The interview for each focus group lasted approximately 60 minutes, and each student and staff group was primed to ensure they had a good understanding of what was expected of them during the interview.

Before the interviews began I provided a brief explanation of the process. I explained that the paper on the wall, with the drawn columns listed as Barriers, Knowledge, Actions, Changes, and Problems, is called an empty unfolding matrix and that this was the research tool to gather the information. I informed them that the

information provided from the group would be written down in the designated column and that the Barriers column would be the first to be filled. To prepare them for the discussion, I asked each group to think of a successful student in their high school who was making progress toward graduation; that student could be them or someone else they knew. Then I asked the group to think about what are some barriers that such a successful student must overcome in order to graduate from high school.

Once the interview began, each group spent approximately 15 minutes identifying the barriers, knowledge, and actions of successful students, about 10 minutes on the changes, and 5 minutes on problems that might arise if the changes they recommended were implemented. As the group members gave their responses, I was writing them down in the designated columns. In addition, I used a tape recorder to record the interview to provide backup for the data as well as a resource for clarifying the data provided by the focus groups. All of the data are available to anyone interested in seeing it.

Once the focus group interviews were completed, the director of the program was interviewed individually to provide feedback on the preliminary models of success derived from the data provided by the Upward Bound students and staff on the completed unfolding matrix. The purpose of interviewing the Upward Bound staff was to provide clarification and triangulation of the data. The same interview process was completed for each of the three programs.

Data Analysis

Analysis of the data began with the completion of the unfolding matrix columns by the dialogical groups (Padilla, 1994) and triangulation (Fetterman, 1998). As stated

earlier, the purpose of the counselor/tutor and staff group interviews was to provide triangulation of perspectives in order to improve the robustness of the findings.

The feedback in each column of the completed matrix by the students, counselors/advisors, and instructors/tutors was analyzed to identify categories and relationships of each Upward Bound program. The manner in which the data were collected in the unfolding matrix taxonomies was constructed noncontingently. A noncontingent taxonomy is created when the categories of the taxonomy have no constraints placed on them. In other words, the categories identified from the data were independent of the barriers identified. The directors' interviews were utilized for clarification of the categories and relationships in the completed matrix and for the purpose of comparing and contrasting the directors' responses to the data gathered by the groups. This process was followed in order to develop a local model for student success of the top three UB programs.

Trustworthiness of Study

Sharan Merriam (1998) insists that each case in a cross-case analysis must first be treated as a comprehensive case. She suggests, however, that by increasing the number of cases, one increases the potential for generalizing beyond the particular case. A reader may be more inclined to believe evidence interpreted from several cases as opposed to one single phenomenon. Miles and Huberman (1984) agree with this line of thinking, stating that when one compares sites or cases, one can validate the range of generality of a finding or explanation, and at the same time pin down the conditions under which that finding will occur. Eisner (1998) calls this process of triangulation structural corroboration. It is a means through which multiple types of data are related to each

other to support or contradict the interpretation and evaluation of a particular setting. This study is a great example of Eisner's (1998) concept of structural corroboration. Padilla's SSM is a structural instrument that collects the evidence that breeds credibility and allows me as the researcher to be confident about the observation, interpretation, and conclusions.

Merriam (1998) suggests that trustworthiness, credibility, dependability, and consistency are enhanced through member checks, triangulation of data and methods, an audit trail, and a statement of the researcher's biases. One method of increasing data quality is through triangulation. Fetterman (1998) states that triangulation "is at the heart of ethnographic validity--testing one source of information against another to strip away alternative explanations and prove a hypothesis" (p. 93). In this study the data collected were provided by multiple student and staff from multiple focus groups, from multiple programs. The student groups and staff groups had opportunities to agree or disagree with each other's views. Triangulation of data occurred when the students' and staffs' claim confirmed a previous group's claim. This method improved validity and this type of triangulation, which uses more than one set of informants, improves credibility.

In this study, two models of student success were developed from the students and the staff. These models were reviewed by the program directors, which provided additional input for me on the evolving concept models. Through the dialogical focus groups' recordings and triangulation of the data, I was able to corroborate what I saw emerging as each student's and staff's beliefs about barriers to success and overcoming those barriers. By describing the steps taken in my data collection and analysis, I created an audit trail that, according to Eisner (1988), is made up of my own biases, past

experiences, and implicit thoughts that impact my research interpretation. However, this process makes it possible for another researcher to use the trail that I am leaving behind as an “operating manual” to recreate my study (Goetz & LeCompte, 1984).

Generalization

Eisner (1998) indicates that in the research process the content that is generalized is ideas couched not only in linguistic form, but also in skills and images. People generalize skills when they know how to apply them in situations other than the ones in which they were initially learned, and they generalize images when they use them to search for and find features of the world that match or approximate the images they have acquired.

Retrospective generalization is an idea that is described in the findings that allows one to see past experiences in a new light. In this study an illuminating idea is that students who have good communication with their teachers tend to be more successful in school. A skill that I learned from interacting with students in this study is the ability to engage students through conversation and positive feedback so they feel connected to their environment. An image in the findings that prompts one to act is that despite the many problematic circumstances that students have to deal with on a daily basis, they have inward strength that allows them to continue striving. Educators can draw upon this, and students need and want this.

Generalizations derived from research should not be taken as the gospel, but should be considered, shared, and discussed. It is an effort to increase the relationship between products of the research and their use in school as well as one of mutual inquiry and negotiation (Geertz, 1973).

According to Eisner (1998), such a concept of generalization lightens the burden but does not send the message of irresponsibility regarding the description, interpretation, and evaluation of the research. Instead, it is a reflection of the recognition that generalizations are tools with which researchers work and are to be shaped in context.

Ethics

Ethical consideration of my study consists of confidentiality of data, anonymity of participants, and informed consent. Informed consent statements are required by Andrews University Institutional Review Board (IRB), which holds researchers accountable for ethical behavior. Before I began my research, the IRB reviewed the research proposal, looking for evidence and assurances that the study would cause no harm to the participants.

The Upward Bound program director was given an abstract of the intended study and a consent form explaining the research protocol. During my initial interview with the participants I explained to them the purpose of my study and shared that the outcome of the study would be based on the data collected and that, like most researchers, I was not able to determine what would emerge from the study (Eisner, 1988).

Summary

This chapter focused on the question to be studied, which was “Why do some students succeed and others fail?” It briefly identified the various barriers that students encounter in their school or at home as some of the problems behind student failure. It identified the purpose of the study, which was to study students who participate in

Upward Bound who are successfully overcoming the various barriers identified in the dropout literature and are graduating from high school.

The research method used to conduct the study was Padilla's (1998) Student Success Model qualitative technique. According to Hamon and King (1994), the students who were studied are considered the "experts" because they are widely recognized as being able to solve a particular type of problem that most other people cannot solve nearly as efficiently or effectively (p. 31). The rest of the chapter provided details regarding the sample that was used to gather the data and how the data were collected and analyzed. It concluded with addressing the trustworthiness, generalizations, and ethics of the study.

CHAPTER 4

THE THREE CASES

Introduction

Indiana students are not meeting the requirements of Core 40, which was first established in 1995 and is the recommended high-school curriculum for all students. This curriculum was designed to prepare students for success both in college and in the workforce. Yet with a high percentage of students departing high school before completion, they are not being adequately prepared for college or the workforce. As stated earlier, Indiana has a 52% dropout rate, and low-income and minority students make up a large portion of the students who are not completing high school. Furthermore, Indiana Statewide Testing for Educational Progress-Plus (I-STEP+) demonstrates the achievement gap existing between low-income and minority students to their peers. African-American and Hispanic students in Grade 10 are passing the math and English tests at rates of 25% and 33%, respectively, compared to White students who pass at a rate of 63%. Low-income students in the 10th grade are passing at a 35% rate, compared to higher income students at a 65% rate. Significantly, the math and English I-STEP+ is required in order for students to receive a high-school diploma. Students who fail the test do not receive a high-school diploma, and most colleges will not accept students who do not pass the I-STEP+. Students who are unable to perform

academically, which is apparent from the state's standardized test scores, are more than likely candidates for dropout. When students continue to fail, it shows the schools' inability to ensure students' academic success. This failure results in loss of funding under the No Child Left Behind Act, which requires the majority of students to reach proficiency under state standards in reading and math (U.S. Department of Education, 2005).

This research studied successful students who are participants in three Upward Bound programs in Indiana. These students who have successfully graduated from high school identified the barriers they perceived to be hindering students from successfully navigating the high-school process and graduating. They informed this research based on their experiences as to what successful students know and do in order to overcome barriers. Their insight may help educators determine the underlining issues affecting unsuccessful students.

This study sought to identify the barriers to student success from successful high-school students who were participants of three Upward Bound programs in Indiana. The data were gathered using an unfolding matrix that consisted of five columns: Barriers, Knowledge, Actions, Change, and Problems. The data in each column reflected the students' and staffs' perceived barriers to success and what students know and do to overcome the barriers. In addition, the Change and Problem columns reflected the changes needed if the barriers identified are addressed and the problems that could ensue if the changes were implemented.

This chapter continues with a description of the Indiana Purdue Fort Wayne (IPFW) Upward Bound program and the students and staff who participated in the study.

The first section presents the student data collected identifying their perceived barriers. The second section reflects the data under the heading “Overcoming the Barriers, Knowledge, and Actions.” In this section, I reflect on the analysis of concept modeling to create a non-contingent analysis of the students’ categories for knowledge and actions. This analysis, which is independent of the identified barriers, develops a local model of success for IPFW Upward Bound. The final section identifies the changes and problems perceived if the barriers are to be addressed. These sections are then repeated for the IPFW staff data presented.

IPFW Upward Bound Program

IPFW Upward Bound is located on the Indiana University-Purdue University Fort Wayne campus in Fort Wayne, Indiana. The university has more than 12,000 students enrolled from nearly 50 states and more than 40 countries. The IPFW Upward Bound program is located in the Student Union, and throughout the first floor there are signs all along the hallway walls advertising the program. Representing the university’s colors are the students’ handprints painted white and blue on the Upward Bound program’s wall, which is made of glass. Written in the same colors is “Upward Bound Program.” On the UB staff doors are pictures of student graduates, and in the director’s office are awards she received for her accomplishments in the program. On the wall above her desk is an African-American schoolhouse picture and right over the picture is a gold graduation cap with a diploma. The Upward Bound program shares office space with 21st Century Scholars, which is a state-funded program that helps low-income students pay for their college tuition as long as they successfully complete high school and do not get involved

with drugs. The two programs work closely together to ensure student success in both programs.

The IPFW Upward Bound program has four full-time staff and serves 50 high-school students from two high schools located in the city of Fort Wayne. The students who participate in the program range from 9th through 12th grade and the students' ethnic backgrounds are 11% Asian, 70% African-American, 2% Caucasian, 12% Hispanic, and 5% multiracial, while 66% of the students are female and 34% are male.

The participant sample included two groups of students, full-time and part-time staff. The student and staff sample consisted of 11 participants each. There were 6 students in group 1, 5 students in group 2, 6 staff in group 1, and 5 staff in group 2. The student group consisted of 9 females and 2 males; 4 of the students were African-American, 2 Asian, 2 Caucasian, 1 Hispanic and Caucasian, 1 Hispanic and African-American, and 1 Hispanic. The staff sample consisted of 7 females and 4 males; 6 of the staff members were African-American, and 5 were Caucasian. Two of the staff members in group 1 were former alumni of the IPFW Upward Bound Program and held the positions of Program and Resident Assistants. The two staff groups were employed with the UB program for a minimum of 1 year and a maximum of 3 years.

At the beginning of each focus group session, the students and staff members were asked to think about a successful high-school student, one who gets promoted and is preparing to graduate, and then to respond to the following question: "What barriers does such a student have to overcome to be successful, to get promoted?" This question served as a means for completing the unfolding matrix and resulted in multiple responses from each group. Each student and staff group was interviewed for 60 minutes to

complete an unfolding matrix. Information on barriers, knowledge, actions, changes, and problems was taken from the two student groups and staff groups to discover what these students and staff perceived to be barriers to student success. Numerous barriers were identified by all members of both student and staff groups from a broad range of areas, including the student's home and school environment, peer relationships and influences, family support, family responsibility, and personal characteristics. Students and staff also provided data on the knowledge and actions that are necessary to overcome barriers. In addition, based on the identified barriers, they proposed changes the schools should make to reduce or eliminate the barriers. Finally, both groups identified potential problems that the schools could encounter if the changes were implemented.

The students' and staff members' perceptions that follow detail the information provided from each group in the categories that were mentioned. The data from these categories were compiled into a local model of student success for high-school students who participated in the study for the IPFW Upward Bound Program.

The Students' Perceptions

Barriers

Two groups of IPFW students were to think about a successful high-school student, one who gets promoted and is preparing to graduate, and then respond to the following question: "What barriers does such a student have to overcome to be successful, to get promoted?" The student participants identified more than 40 barriers in response to the initial question (Table 1). The seven categories that were developed are lack of motivation, lack of confidence, peer pressure, systematic failure, lack of parental

Table 1

Categories of Barriers for Data Obtained by IPFW Upward Bound Students

Category of barriers	Barriers
Lack of motivation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Getting good grades Cannot concentrate Family issues No role models Changes as you grow Staying motivated Naysayers Bad school Bad students Family environment Friends telling you school is not worth it
Lack of self-confidence	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Frustration with difficult classes Afraid to ask for help Perception of being stupid Trying to be White Being called names Poverty
Peer pressure	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Drugs, sex, and alcohol Serious boyfriend/girlfriend relationship Teen pregnancy Fights Hanging with the wrong crowd Inability to say no to friends Don't do well to be liked
Systemic failure	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Teachers do not care Teachers cannot teach Teachers only care about money Teachers do not get paid much School policies Administrators power tripping Put-downs by administrators Counselors do not help
Lack parental support	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Lack of involvement Lack of motivation Uneducated parents Unable to assist with homework

Table 1—*Continued.*

Family responsibilities	Babysitting siblings and household chores Being your own parent Having to work
Lack resources	No car No computer Poverty
Stress	Balancing school, work, and relationships Overactive Reputation of being smart

support, family responsibilities, lack of resources, and stress. Many of the barriers identified by the students were personal problems they face, along with problems involving their peers, teachers, and their own self-confidence.

Lack of motivation

The students agreed that motivation is key in accomplishing their academic goals, and it is the driving force in attaining success. However, there are many situations students encounter that diminish their motivation. One student said, “Because you are making a transition as you are growing, because every minute you’re in high school you are steadily changing, it is hard to stay motivated and focused on what you need to do in order to make it through.” The transition from middle school to high school is very difficult for some students. The high school is much larger, there are a lot more students, and, unlike middle school, high-school teachers and counselors are not constantly reminding students about what they should or should not do. In high school, students have a lot more freedom, and for many students it is a very scary process having to make the right choices. Trying to fit in and belong seems to be the underlying fear that affects

students' academic progress, and having friends who tell you "that school is not worth it" does not instill a motivated attitude within the student.

Another issue that factors into a student's motivation is their inability to concentrate in school because of family issues and relationships. One student said, "A distant mother and/or father cause stress because you have no one to look up to, no role model . . . and they can be distant with their emotions." Not having a stable family adds stress and pressures for students in high school. Students are not motivated about school when faced with these challenges, and it affects their ability to achieve good grades in their classes. On the other hand, some students are in homes where their parents have no interest in education or are unable to assist the student with homework due to their lack of education. Sometimes a parent's language barrier and being new to the country and not knowing anyone also impacts the student's attitude toward school. Furthermore, some students have to work to support the family and have difficulty balancing their time between family, work, and concentrating on school. In the end, school usually loses out.

Another device that diminishes the students' motivation is negative people within the community. A student stated, "You have a lot of naysayers who say you are not going anywhere, you are not going to make it." For this student, it was hard to remain motivated because she was constantly bombarded with negative words about her future. The school's reputation also affects a student's motivation, as one student shared, "I know a lot of people who went to Harding, and they say that Harding is really not a good school and all the students there are bad." Consequently, negative put-downs are often made, which affect the students' overall attitude and their performance in the classroom. According to these students' responses, situations they encounter personally in their

homes, at school, or in the community decrease their motivation toward being successful in school.

Lack of self-confidence

Students who lack confidence in themselves and their abilities have difficulties overcoming personal and academic barriers. A student indicated that “having natural ability to understand the different courses you take are very challenging. . . . Some courses may be harder than others, and if you fail a class and have to retake it you become frustrated.” Furthermore, “because you failed that one class you believe you will not pass your other classes.” Experiences of failure cause some students to become paralyzed. Their thoughts of failure affect their ability to perform. Another student shared, “I was the type of student who was in denial. . . . I actually needed help with my assignments, but I was afraid to ask a question because of what I thought someone else might say . . . or being judged for getting help. . . . I thought it is something I should already know so I did not ask.” A student’s fear of looking stupid to their peers or their teachers is a struggle that many students battle with in their minds. To avoid embarrassment, students pass up opportunities to receive help from their teachers. Instead, they decide not to be active participants by not asking questions or participating in class discussions or activities. Unless a teacher, parent, or friend intervenes, some students’ low self-esteem leads them down a path of academic destruction. Even students doing well academically battle with their self-esteem and sometimes find themselves compromising their education by not working at their full potential in order to fit in.

A student with low self-esteem is prey for bullies. One of the students shared, “Bullies pick on certain students and sometimes these students stop doing well in school

and some drop out.” Name-calling of students who are doing well in school seems to be common among students who are not doing well academically. One student said, “I hang out with my guy friends, but I do my work and get my education, but people make comments, saying, ‘You are always in your books . . . you are always getting good grades . . . you think you are better than us.’” The student indicated that his friends’ comments sometimes discourage him from doing his work and “I try to be more like them . . . so I am losing my identity.” This situation is even more of a problem for minority students who are doing well academically. These students hear comments from other minority students, such as, “You’re too White . . . you’re trying to act White . . . you’re not one of us anymore.” This behavior, according to the students, has caused them to become discouraged and not work at their potential. Another student said, “I knew I could do better, but I wouldn’t, just so they didn’t say anything else to me.”

Another area that decreases a student’s confidence is students living in poverty. One student shared, “In my freshman year we did not have things like heat and water in my house and that was a big barrier for my self-esteem. . . . I couldn’t go to school and did not want to because I couldn’t take a shower.”

In a society where it is important to “belong,” many high-school students are faced with the pressure of choosing whether to learn or fit in. According to the students’ responses, failure to ask questions, doing well academically, and poverty are situations in which students’ lack of self-esteem is tested or affected.

Peer pressure

The students are very familiar with this barrier and how it influences their success. One student stated, “Peer pressure is naturally going to bring you down and

make you not want to do as much, especially if you hang around the wrong crowd or people who do not want an education.” The students recognize that making the right choices is not easy. Another student shared, “You have to study for a test, but all of your friends are going to a party, but you need to study because you do not know the material, but it is hard to say, ‘No! I don’t want to go to the party!’” Students may constantly hear their friends express that “education is not important . . . you don’t really need it,” and sometimes they begin to believe what they hear their friends are saying. This mind-set changes students’ outlook on education, and as long as they are feeling good about fitting in, school is not as important.

Unfortunately, in many schools drugs and alcohol are accessible to the students and have become a part of their school environment. According to one student, “Drugs and alcohol is not like peer pressure. . . . Everyone is doing it and there is no reason not to do it . . . not necessarily peer pressure, but more of ‘why not,’ it is a lifestyle, how we communicate.” Although drugs and alcohol are illegal and not good for their health, instead of standing up against it, students view it as a way of life among their peers, and therefore it is okay, although they recognize it is a barrier to their success.

Another barrier students encounter that is part of the high-school culture is boyfriend/girlfriend relationships that also involve having sex. Students recognize that serious relationships among male and female students can be very painful and distracting, especially if the relationship breaks up or results in pregnancy. Yet these relationships are an important aspect of socialization among teens, and thus students feel it is necessary to socialize in that manner.

According to one student, “Oftentimes when students end relationships it is very messy and leads to fights among the girls because they are jealous of a new girlfriend.” Furthermore, “immaturity among male and female students leads to name-calling and teasing, which results in fights,” and is definitely a major barrier to the students’ success, because oftentimes they are suspended from school and, depending on the nature of the fight and its frequency, some students are expelled. However, although students recognize fighting as a barrier, it is not more important than the respect they believe they will gain for fighting.

Although peer pressure to participate in drugs, alcohol, relationships, sex, and fighting is recognized as a major barrier for students’ success, fitting in appears to hold greater weight in their worldview.

Systematic failure

The students expressed their dissatisfaction with the support they receive from some of their teachers. One student shared, “Some teachers really do not care about what they are doing.” Another student said, “Some teachers just do not know how to teach,” and another student believed that “teachers just care about the money.”

The students also indicated that they thought some of the school policies did not make any sense. One student explained, “You are limited to three bathroom passes for the whole semester.” Another student felt that sitting in the cafeteria for a whole class because you arrived late is a waste of time because you are not allowed to get any work done. The students believe that school authorities “abuse their authority” and “put students down. . . . You feel like they are harassing you about a dress code and then threaten to kick you out.”

According to these students, “the counselors do not help them very well.” One student shared, “The only time counselors talk to you is when you are given your course schedules and you have to request to talk to them . . . then they get back to you late.” Another student shared, “My counselor came to me too late with a request and it prevented me from getting the classes I needed to get from that semester.”

The students’ responses indicate that they are not satisfied with the support they receive in school or the manner in which they are treated by those in authority. The barriers identified by the students are a reflection of the lack of support they receive during school, yet they are expected to be successful in an environment that does not appear to be conducive to learning.

Lack parental support

Many students lack the support needed in the home to encourage them in their academic studies. Divorce has become very prevalent in society and it weighs heavily on students who are faced with family separation. One student shared, “My parents were divorced and I had to deal with that in a certain sense . . . being torn between my mother and my father.” Another student expressed the struggle with a family death. “A support not being there that was once a big support and now you have to support yourself. . . . It is hard when you are the only one.” A student also shared, “My parents were kind of absent, not really involved at all with what I did in school. . . . They liked that I got good grades, but would not motivate me to do better.” Another student felt that because of parents’ lack of education and language barrier, the parents were not interested in education and were unable to assist with homework or help with preparation for college.

In these circumstances, although school may be of importance, it is competing with the students' daily needs. As such, some students come to school unable to focus on their schooling.

Family responsibilities

Family issues were another major barrier identified by the students that diminishes students' motivation. Family responsibilities make it difficult for students to focus on their school work, which affects their grades. A student shared, "I had to work, it was not for fun, I was one of the main providers in my home . . . and not having it count towards school was really hard to handle." Other students are responsible for caring for their siblings and taking care of household chores because their parents are working. These responsibilities are a distraction from the students' studies, because it is difficult for the student to balance adult responsibilities and focus on school. According to one student, "Some students work 40 hours a week to get extra money for college because their family cannot afford it."

Many students have to deal with issues such as parents' health, divorce, and death while trying to concentrate on school. The problems they face do not have any simple answers. For one student, disability was a barrier. "My mother, she had mental disorders while I was growing up in high school, and it was very difficult for me because I had to be my own parent and a parent to my mother sometimes." Due to the parent's illness, the student had the responsibility of providing the parent with her day-to-day needs. However, the academic and personal needs of the student were left unmet due to the parent's disability. Family responsibilities placed on students, although necessary at times

due to the family's socioeconomic status, are a heavy burden for students and sometimes a barrier to their success.

Lack resources

A lack of resources in their homes is a barrier to students fulfilling their academic goals. One student talked about how not having heat and water in the house was a big barrier to her self-esteem. Students who live in poverty are often not equipped with the essentials necessary to fulfill certain expectations. For instance, one student shared that a major challenge for their family is not having a car or a computer in the home. She indicated that it is a struggle for a student to complete a research assignment without those resources. Low-income students are oftentimes placed in circumstances beyond their control, which affects their ability to perform academically and is a barrier to their success.

Stress

The students also identified certain situations that bring about stress in their day-to-day activities. A student shared that balancing schoolwork and athletics was pretty difficult. "I found it difficult to find time to study when you have practice." "On game days, you are focused too much on the game and not on your schoolwork." Many students who are involved in sports oftentimes do not make schoolwork a priority, which can lead to academic failure, especially if their parents, teachers, and coaches are not checking to see if they are balancing the two.

Another student addressed the difficulty in balancing school, work, and relationships with the opposite sex or simply being overactive in various school and

community activities. Students realize that planning their time wisely is necessary for their success.

Yet another student indicated that one's self is the biggest barrier when faced with the stress of expecting to do well. "Having a reputation of being smart . . . everyone is looking at you and you're the example for everyone else . . . too much pressure . . . everything is on you . . . your parents, teachers, and friends don't want you to mess up."

For many students, the stress of fulfilling sports and organizational activities or a job, as well as the pressure of living up to expectations placed on them by others, can become a barrier to their academic success.

Overcoming Barriers: Knowledge and Actions

This section presents the findings related to the knowledge and actions of IPFW Upward Bound students regarding the identified barrier categories. After analyzing the taxonomy of barriers, one model of success was developed. The non-contingent model of student success is based on the categories I identified from the student data. The model analyzes the knowledge and actions independently of the barrier categories to create a local model of success of the knowledge and actions successful students take to overcome barriers.

Knowledge

Despite the many barriers successful students encounter, they do have knowledge regarding what is necessary in order to overcome the barriers. When the Director of IPFW read the students' responses for this category, her exact words were "a bit surprised; I sometimes feel the students are oblivious and not aware of what is going on

in their environment.” However, these students are aware, and it is apparent based on their comments. The five categories identified for what students’ know about barriers were determination, sense of self, high standards, role models, and time management (Table 2).

Determination. Many of the statements shared by the students conveyed that they understood the importance of committing to their education. Students said things like, “There are going to be barriers along the way, but the important thing is to overcome them. . . . Education pays off in the long run. . . . Your negative friends will not get you a job in the future. . . . If we do not do the things to succeed, life is going to be much harder than it already is . . . it is not going to get better.” These responses demonstrate that the students are determined to get an education and the benefits of succeeding in school. They recognize that life is not fair, but remaining focused on their goals is worthwhile because “although you may not get what you want right now . . . when you graduate from college and get that perfect job, you’ll be happy for the rest of your life.”

Sense of self. Developing a sense of self is a journey that all people take and for some the journey is longer than others. Yet for successful students it is their sense of self that gives them the courage and determination to overcome obstacles they encounter. One student shared, “Although some things do not seem attainable, successful students can do it because they have been successful in the past.” According to these students, it is the challenges that they face that “cause them to grow . . . make them a better person . . . and in their eyes that’s real!” Yet, their success is not achieved alone. These students recognize that “it is okay to ask for help.” There are counselors and teachers who are

Table 2

Categories of Knowledge for Data Obtained by IPFW Upward Bound Students

Category of knowledge	Knowledge
Determination	<p>Education pays off in the long run There are barriers along the way Keep trying when you fail Don't give up when you get a bad grade Can overcome barriers Can attain what seems unattainable Don't strive to succeed and life will be harder Nothing is free</p>
Sense of self	<p>Know what they want Believe they can be successful Success is within You are not what others say Okay to make mistakes Learn from your mistakes There are people there to help me Okay to ask for help when you are struggling</p>
High standards	<p>Good attendance Good grades Requirements for college Study hard Punctual Take challenging classes Plan for teachers Choose your friends Involve in extracurricular activities Avoid picking fights</p>
Role models	<p>Others are looking up to them Succeeding for other students Other students are counting on them Volunteers Importance of helping others Must respect others How to treat others Stay out of trouble Say no to drugs</p>

Table 2—*Continued.*

Time management	Use time wisely Balance their time Be organized
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willing to help them when they seek their assistance. Yet even with the support that is available, the students admitted that they do make mistakes; however, “life is not over when you make a mistake . . . and you are not beaten down by it. . . . You know there is another way out and that is by learning from your mistakes . . . that is what makes you successful.”

The students’ responses indicate that they are confident in their abilities to succeed in spite of difficult circumstances they may encounter along the way.

High standards. Successful students know that they have to set high standards to be successful. The standards shared by the student participants varied from choosing their friends wisely—individuals who share the same academic values as they do—to planning for their teachers—this refers to the teachers’ teaching style or their personality. Whatever the teacher throws at them, the successful student knows they will be prepared for it. The students also shared that success in high school includes taking challenging classes as well as getting good grades in those courses. They are aware that college admission officers are impressed by students who take rigorous courses and that they are more likely to be accepted into the college of their choice if they do well academically. In addition to getting good grades, the students know they must prepare for college entrance exams such as the SAT and ACT.

The students also were knowledgeable about the value of getting involved in extracurricular activities. These opportunities help them learn to work well with others and keep them in a positive environment where they will be less likely to end up in a negative confrontation with other students.

Successful students know that to acquire success they must study hard, have good attendance in school and for their extracurricular activities, and at all times do their very best to be punctual.

Role models. These successful students expressed their sense of responsibility to others. They understood that their success was bigger than themselves and reached beyond their own life. A student stated, “People are looking up to us so we are not only doing it for ourselves, but for everybody that is counting on us.” They also understand the importance of volunteering at community centers, such as the Boys and Girls Club or the YMCA, which provides them the opportunity to give back and teach other students what they have learned.

As role models, these students know the importance of respecting others and respecting themselves. Therefore, they treat others the way they want to be treated. By saying no to drugs and staying out of trouble, successful students know they are leading by example. By making good decisions they know they are more likely to fulfill their academic goals.

Time management. Managing time effectively determines one’s success, and successful students understand that their achievement is based on using their time wisely and being organized as they balance their busy schedules. These students know that it is

a challenge to keep up with their school work, participate in extracurricular activities, spend times with friends, and work a job. However, they also know that if they do not plan how they spend their time, it is possible they will fail to fulfill their goals. As such, they recognize the importance of planning a schedule that will allow them to meet the expectations of all their responsibilities.

Actions

The six categories identified by IPFW students regarding the actions students take to overcome barriers were goal-oriented, resourceful, introspective, self-confidence, priorities, and initiative (Table 3).

Goal-oriented. These successful students recognized that success requires “giving 100%.” In order to achieve their goals, they learn to adapt to their environment or situation. Although some goals may be far-reaching, they do whatever it takes to meet the expectations and do not allow time to limit them. Good grades require that they study hard, and that is exactly what they do to be successful in their courses.

Successful students take classes that will help them get into the college of their choice, and their objective is to make honor roll while in high school. They understand good grades will open up many doors of opportunity and make them eligible for scholarship monies they apply for. They also recognize that they must work hard because “nothing in life is free.”

In addition, successful students know that a healthy diet is important to their success; thus they discipline themselves to eat right, especially before a test. Furthermore, they take on leadership roles to learn the skills needed to be successful.

Table 3

Categories of Actions for Data Obtained by IPFW Upward Bound Students

Categories of actions	Actions
Goal-oriented	Gives 100% Does whatever it takes Discipline themselves and take on leadership roles Adapts Does not allow time to limit them Get good grades Study hard Take classes that will help them be successful Make honor roll Apply for scholarships Eat right
Resourceful	Talks to others about their concerns/problems They use their resources Take advantage of their resources Talk to teachers to get help
Introspective	They reflect Learn from others Think before they act Calm under pressure Problem solve
Self-confidence	Do not conform Make good impressions Hang out w/people who want to be successful Break off stressful relationships Police each other Don't do drugs
Priorities	Turn in college & financial aid application on time Do projects early Good planning skills Put school first
Initiative	Have good social skills Network Get involved in clubs Stay active Volunteer in community

Resourceful. Successful students have issues and pressures like many other students; however, the steps they take in resolving their problems is how they overcome them. These students know how to take advantage of their resources. If they do not understand their schoolwork, they talk with their teachers so they can help them comprehend what they are teaching. If they have a problem, they find a teacher, counselor, or adult they respect whom they can talk to and will listen to them. Successful students take advantage of the resources available to them to assist them with their academic and personal goals.

Introspective. Oftentimes the problematic situations students find themselves in are due to reacting as opposed to responding. However, successful students reflect on their actions and experiences and think before they act upon something. Much of what they do is based on what they have learned from others. Successful students pay attention to the adults and other peers around them who are doing things that are working well.

These students are problem-solvers, and they are calm under pressure. They have a good understanding of themselves and their goals so that, when faced with daunting circumstances, they are able to take the necessary steps to see the problem through.

Self-confidence. Being confident was a response made very clear by the participants. Successful students hang out with people who are going to be successful, not “people that turn to drugs and alcohol or those that fight with other students.” These students understand the importance of making a “good impression” on their teachers, and they also realize they “do not have to conform” to other people or groups in order to fit

in. The students indicated that “if they are in a stressful boyfriend/girlfriend relationship, they will break it off.” Successful students also take on the responsibility of “policing each other” to make sure they remain focused on their academic goals.

Priorities. Having priorities is very important for students’ success. Successful students know that education is a priority. One student gave an example about having a job. “If you are struggling in a class and you have a job, then you will try to work less hours.” For successful students, school comes first because it is the pathway to college. As high-school seniors, their priority is completing college and financial applications and handing them in on time. Successful students have good planning skills to ensure that they meet all project deadlines.

Initiative. These students shared that successful students “have good social skills” and have the ability to network well with peers in their clubs and other people through community service activities. These students recognized that “students who participate in community service and volunteer are given scholarships.” Scholarships are a great way to finance their education, therefore volunteering in the community and giving back is a priority for successful students. One student said, “People that are given scholarships volunteer a lot in their community because it looks good on a college application . . . and it is important to give back and not just take.” Successful students take the initiative to seek out opportunities that will help them fulfill their goals.

Overcoming barriers: Changes and problems

This section reflects the categories of changes identified by the IPFW Upward Bound students regarding the barriers and the problems that could be encountered if the changes were implemented.

Changes. The categories identified for change to alleviate barriers identified by the IPFW Upward Bound students were academic support, academics/curriculum, supportive teachers/counselors, policies, and parent involvement (Table 4).

Academic support. The students indicated that they need more support from the school to help them academically, and they suggested having study tables with tutors. The students believe that this activity would be helpful with their studies and would help avoid involvement with negative people. They also felt that the library should be kept open for a longer period of time and transportation should be provided for students whose parents cannot get them there. Another change shared by the students is a desire to have more mentors volunteering their time, more activities for students to be involved in, and more programs like Upward Bound for students.

Academics/curriculum. The students expressed that while in high school they should find out what they want to do in college and suggested that classes should be geared to college. They also expressed that the materials used for helping students choose a career should be updated. Finally, they indicated there was a need to provide ESL classes for those students for whom English is a second language.

Table 4

Categories of Change for Data Obtained by IPFW Upward Bound Students

Categories of change	Recommended changes
Academic support	Study tables for kids to study and get away from negative people Library stay open longer for students who do not have computers Have transportation for students to get to the library Mandatory study time with tutors to help More mentors volunteering their time More programs like Upward Bound More activities for students
Academics/curriculum	Classes geared towards interest in college Update materials for career issues ESL classes for students from other countries
Supportive teachers/counselors	Teach teachers how to communicate with kids Teachers should be concerned with the progress of the students in the classroom Teacher should monitor if students are able to keep up with their pace and not leaving students behind Mandatory for teachers to make classes fun, entertaining and relatable More counselors available to students with more time Effective social workers in the schools
Policies	Stricter punishment for boys Opportunity for student to have a voice in certain situations Student government should have more authority in changing or making policies
Parent involvement	Involve parents more in school Schools should be more involved in the family life

Supportive teachers/counselors. Students believe that teachers need help in learning how to communicate with kids, and they should be more concerned with how each student is progressing in their class and monitor whether students can keep up with

the pace of the class. They also conveyed the need for teachers to make classes more fun, entertaining, and related to their interests. In regard to counselors, they commented that there is a need for more counselors, because “so many students have to wait two weeks” before they can get an appointment with a counselor. Finally, they felt that the social workers assigned to the schools were ineffective, because they could not meet the needs of the large number of students.

Policies. Policies such as having “stricter punishment for boys” and “the punishment fitting the crime” were comments made by the students in regard to policy changes. Students felt strongly that they should have an opportunity to address certain school situations and that student government should have more authority in changing or making new policies. Students also believed that schools should call parents about positive behavior, not only for negative incidents, and that school personnel should “give students more praise.”

Parent involvement. The students shared that there is a need to involve parents more in school activities and that the schools should be more involved in the family. Many parents lack the education or resources to be of support to their children; the students felt that the school should do more to know what is going on in the families of their students and develop activities that would help the students get more involved in school activities.

Problems. The categories identified as problems the schools would encounter if the changes were implemented are lack of funds, parents, student support, time, and caring teachers (Table 5).

Table 5

Categories of Problems for Data Obtained by IPFW Upward Bound Students

Categories of problems	Problems with change
Funds	Lack of funds to address the changes
Parents	Parents not supporting kids or changes like study tables Protest stricter policies Transportation Language barriers
Student support	Support from students Some students do not want to learn
Time	Patience and time to see the problem through
Teachers	Finding teachers that want to be there to teach Teachers not wanting to attend training

Funds. The first problem that students perceived would occur if the changes they recommended took place was money to support the changes. They recognized the schools do not have the money needed for change.

Parents. The students also believed that the parents would probably not support the study tables or stricter punishment for boys. Although transportation to the library would help students get there, some parents would not like the idea that their child is not home to do chores. Pertaining to the punishment of boys, there is a perception that the school comes down harder on boys, and the parents see it as a form of prejudice against their child. Finally, the language barrier would prevent families from supporting policies, because they do not understand or they feel intimidated.

Student support. The students felt that they themselves would be a problem because many students “do not want to learn” and therefore would not be supportive of participating in more activities, even if they were available.

Time. Finally, these students had the insight to know that time is needed to see the problems through, and they were not certain that those in authority would take the time necessary to address the problems. The students recognized that the process for change could not occur quickly.

Teachers. The students believed that the schools would be unable to find teachers who want to be in the schools to teach and they would be unwilling to participate in the training needed to help them communicate better with students and make the classes more enjoyable and relatable to the students. The rationale for this thought process is that teachers really do not care about teaching students from their background nor are they willing to learn how to relate to them in order to communicate more effectively. They also believed that it would require more of the teachers’ time to make the classes enjoyable and relatable, and, based on their relationships with teachers, they did not believe they would want to do it.

The Staff Perceptions

Barriers

Two groups of IUPFW staff consisting of instructors, counselors, advisors, and tutors were asked the same questions as the IUPFW students: Think about a successful high-school student, one who gets promoted and is preparing to graduate, and respond to the following question: “What barriers does such a student have to overcome to be

successful, to get promoted?” The barriers identified by the staff were sense of self, peer pressure, financial strains, parental support, lack of stability, teachers, and disabilities (Table 6).

Sense of self

The staff indicated that students who do not have a sense of self struggle with identity issues such as trying to fit in and appearance. They stated that, whether it is in the classroom or an outside activity, the question students are asking is, “How do I fit in?”

For many female students, they are concerned with their bodies and whether it is acceptable. Many girls deal with weight issues of either too much or not enough. Some girls do not think “they are pretty enough” or “don’t have the right clothes” or the “right skin color.” The way students feel about their appearance affects how they feel within.

The staff agreed that students’ lack of sense of self often leads to feelings of “not being as good as other students.” The ramifications of these thoughts are students who “feel stupid” about asking questions when they do not understand what is being taught in the classroom. They assume they should already know the answer to the question they want to ask and therefore decide not to ask the questions. These thoughts and feelings lead to the students having low expectations of themselves.

Students who do not feel good about themselves and have low expectations sometimes choose to end their lives. The staff indicated that “peer acceptance leads to violence, not gang violence, but suicide due to peer acceptance.” According to one staff member, in the state of Indiana teen suicide is the number two cause of death.

Table 6

Categories of Barriers for Data Obtained by IPFW Upward Bound Staff

Category of barriers	Barriers
Sense of self	Identity Appearance Feeling stupid Low expectations Not as good as other students
Peer pressure	Trying to fit in Hanging with the wrong crowd Drinking Drugs Sex
Financial strains	Parents unemployment Students work to support household Lack school supplies Clean clothes Proper health care
Parental support	Lack knowledge about college Gap between parent/guardian and student Too much TV Music, Videos
Lack of stability	Moving around Phone disconnected Abuse Drug influences Manners Social skills Permissive parents No parents in home
Uncompassionate Teachers	Negative responses to students Not helpful Low expectations Money Lack compassion
Disability	Eyesight Wheelchair

Peer pressure

The staff shared that peer pressure affects the students educationally, socially, and physically. They stated that students who are smart and do well but do not want to be considered a “nerd” by their friends or be constantly questioned by their friends sometimes give up opportunities like running for class president so they can be considered a member of the group instead of being asked, “Why don’t you fit in?” Furthermore, since it is not cool to get good grades, getting a C or D is now great!

Staff stated that they know students who did not originally drink or do drugs but do now because of the friends they have chosen to hang out with. Many students are constantly asking themselves, “How do I avoid things I do not want to do without seemingly being smart?” or “How do I avoid sex and be considered an equal?” The negative peer pressure students encounter in school causes many of them to make choices that are detrimental to their health and definitely affect their performance in school.

Financial strains

The staff shared that parents’ unemployment has a trickle-down effect on the family and especially the student. Some students are faced with the responsibility of having to work to help support the household. This particular responsibility takes time away from the students focusing on their studies.

Parents in poverty lack the finances to support their child educationally. The staff shared that students come to school without the necessary supplies because their parents cannot afford them. In addition, some students may come to school untidy or they do not come at all because they do not have clean clothes to wear.

Finally, the staff mentioned that “a lot of kids do not have access to proper healthcare.” Some students have mental problems but are unable to get the help they need.

Parental support

The staff stated that lack of parental support is a barrier to student success. Some parents lack knowledge about college because they did not have a college experience and therefore are unable to comprehend the process. These parents are not able to provide guidance for their children and oftentimes do not realize the depth and significance of the educational process.

For students whose grandparents are raising them, the gap is even bigger. The staff indicated that there is a huge gap between students and their parents and that it is even bigger for students who are being raised by their grandparents. The information students are retrieving through music, videos, internet, and TV is overwhelming. Although the information can be good, it can also be a barrier to success if it is not monitored by the parents. Yet, because of the parents’ educational gap or the gap in grandparents’ age, they may not know how to monitor or set limitations for their children because of their lack of knowledge and ability. Therefore, students may spend a lot of time focusing on things that are of interest to them and not giving the same attention to their school work.

Lack of stability

Unfortunately, many students’ home environments are very unstable and, according to the staff, this is a success barrier. There are many students whose families

are constantly moving, and this affects a student's ability to adapt to the school environment and become acclimated. In addition, many family phones are disconnected, and this hinders the teacher or school from contacting the parent or guardian in an expedient manner.

The staff also indicated that some students live in homes where their mother's boyfriend is also living in the home with the family. Some parents have more than one boyfriend and expose their child to sexual promiscuity and drug usage and sometimes influence their child to participate in using drugs in the home. For many students, these unstable situations have led to physical, mental, sexual, and emotional abuse.

In addition, students whose parents are not in the home lack the social skills and manners necessary to relate to their teachers and school personnel. Students do not understand the appropriate way to address their teachers or may become defensive to a teacher's constructive criticism because it is not a common practice in the home. Without the proper stability in the home, the students do not understand what is and is not appropriate. Lack of knowledge of school expectations is a barrier for these students' success.

Uncompassionate teachers

Based on the responses from the staff, there are teachers who love to teach, but there are many teachers who teach only for the money, and these particular ones lack the compassion necessary to teach. Students who have teachers who lack compassion sometimes walk into those classes feeling insignificant. Some teachers prefer teaching certain types of students, those who are gifted as opposed to students who are poor and are perceived as less gifted. The staff stated that some students may ask their teacher for

help, but the teacher does not help them, and some teachers ignore their students as if they were not there.

Finally, some teachers, as well as other school personnel, have low expectations of some students. They expect some students to do poorly. As such, low expectations are set for the students and courses are made easier. These students are not being academically prepared for college and life, but are nevertheless continually promoted to the next grade level.

Disability

The staff expressed that students who have physical disabilities with blindness or are in wheelchairs sometimes do not get the support they need from the school, and this is a barrier to success. Due to overcrowding in the school, there is a lack of personnel and funding to effectively ensure that students with learning disabilities are getting the assistance they need academically and physically.

Overcoming barriers: Knowledge and actions

This section presents the findings related to the knowledge and actions of IUPFW Upward Bound staff regarding the identified barrier categories. After analyzing the taxonomy of barriers, one model of success was developed. The non-contingent model of staff perceptions of student success is based on the categories identified by the researcher from the staff data. The model analyzes the knowledge and actions independently of the barrier categories to create a local model of the knowledge and actions that staff perceive that successful students take to overcome barriers.

Knowledge. The IUPFW staff responses regarding the students' knowledge was very positive. The staff spoke with a joyous tone and their eyes lit up as they expressed with pride what successful students knew. The categories identified for knowledge were value of education, sense of self, high standards, and time management (Table 7).

Value of education. The IUPFW staff indicated that successful students know that success comes from within and that they also know they are going to succeed in spite of the competition because "positive consequences await them if they perform well." The staff articulated that successful students understand that getting an education opens doors of opportunity and those opportunities pay off in time.

Successful students know that since there is life after high school they must have a vision for their long-term goals. Their plan for fulfilling their vision is to take responsibility for their education, have fun learning what they learn, and always be prepared because adversity is consistently there.

Sense of self. Staff members stated that "successful students know it is important to go to someone when they need help and no matter what they are going through at the time, it does not define them." They remarked that "successful students are motivated, know their strengths and weaknesses, and, most importantly, they know it is okay to make mistakes and to turn their mistakes into positives." These students understand that their education is important to them and, therefore, they make a conscious choice not to compromise. Their attitude is "they will succeed in spite of the competition."

Table 7

Categories of Knowledge for Data Obtained by IPFW Upward Bound Staff

Categories of knowledge	Knowledge
Value of education	<p>Good things will happen if they do what is right</p> <p>Positive consequences await them</p> <p>Education pays off</p> <p>Education open doors</p> <p>There is life after high school</p> <p>Education is their responsibility</p> <p>Learning can be fun</p> <p>Vision for long-term goals</p> <p>Adversity is constantly there</p>
Sense of self	<p>Talk to someone if they need help</p> <p>Their struggles do not define them</p> <p>Motivated</p> <p>Strong</p> <p>Strengths and weaknesses</p> <p>Stress coping skills</p> <p>Self help</p> <p>Okay to make mistakes</p> <p>Turn mistakes into positives</p> <p>Will succeed in spite of competition</p> <p>Cannot compromise</p> <p>What is important to them</p>
High standards	<p>Set high expectations for themselves</p> <p>Have support from one significant person</p> <p>How to obtain goals</p> <p>Do not make the same mistakes over and over</p> <p>Integrity is important</p> <p>Involvement in organizations, sports, or hobby</p> <p>What they do not want</p>
Time management	How to set priorities

High standards. According to the IUPFW staff, successful students know it is important to set high expectations for themselves. In spite of the circumstances they may encounter, these students seek out at least one significant person who is supportive of them. They know how to achieve their goals, but recognize they make mistakes at times; however, the lesson is to not repeat the same mistakes over and over again. According to the staff, successful students discern what they want and recognize that having integrity along with involvement in extracurricular activities and social organizations will help them achieve their success.

Time management. The staff indicated that successful students know how to manage their time and know the importance of meeting the deadlines for their assignments. They do well at balancing the various activities they are involved in, such as sports, work, volunteering, and even responsibilities at home.

Actions. The IUPFW staff identified various characteristics that successful students commonly have, and they were categorized as initiative, introspective, and determined (Table 8).

Initiative. The IUPFW staff stated that successful students network with their teachers, counselors, and members in their community. They also communicate effectively with their peers and those in authority and understand the importance of being punctual for class and activities. These students acknowledge the value of volunteering their time. Furthermore, they set goals, develop their plans to succeed in life, and, at the same time, look for positive things in other people and encourage them to join them in their success.

According to the staff, successful students' success comes from their ability to ask questions as well as seek guidance and support. They are committed to their goals and, as such, they value accountability.

Introspective. Finally, successful students are introspective. They make good choices and they learn from the bad ones. They do not let bad choices get them down, and they learn from those experiences and the experiences of others. Successful students recognize the importance of “delay[ing] gratification.” These students “think before they act” and “weigh their options.”

Determined. Successful students are fighters. They “do more than what is required of them, and they make themselves learn the things they need to know.” These students are go-getters; they “take initiative” and “pursue things that will better themselves” along the way. Successful students “do not settle.” They are diligent, and they persevere until they acquire what they set out to achieve.

According to the staff, successful students who have problems at home find an outlet to address the issue. They do not “make excuses” for their situation and do “what is necessary” to get the job done. These students are aware of the various barriers, but they do not let obstacles get in their way. Instead, they find creative ways to block those who try to bring them down.

Overcoming Barriers: Changes and Problems

This section describes categories of changes identified by the IPFW Upward Bound staff if the barriers were addressed and problems that could be encountered if the changes were made.

Table 8

Categories of Actions for Data Obtained by IPFW Upward Bound Staff

Categories of actions	Actions
Initiative	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Network Communicate Ask questions Accountability Seek guidance and support Set goals Set timelines Stay committed Are punctual Encourage others to join them to be successful Look for positive things in other people Self-control Helpful Involved in extracurricular activities Take school seriously Compete with themselves and others Take initiative Do homework Good attendance
Introspective	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Make good choices Weigh their options Learn from their experiences Delay gratification Think
Determined	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Do not make excuses Block those who try to bring them down Find an outlet when things are not working at home Do not let obstacles or barriers get in their way Preserve Make themselves learn Not afraid to be creative Do not settle Do what they must to get the job done

Changes

The categories of changes needed to address the barriers identified by IPFW staff are as follows: teaching/curriculum, school perceptions, internal/external relationships, and school system standards (Table 9).

Teaching/curriculum. The IPFW staff indicated that the school's curriculum has a problem keeping up with the times and, as such, needs a more student-centered approach to the curriculum that involves more hands-on learning and increased student

Table 9

Categories of Change for Data Obtained by IPFW Upward Bound Staff

Categories of change	Recommended changes
Teaching/curriculum	Student-centered approach Include media with academics More reading More hands on learning Cultural exposure More student engagement in the classroom Keeping up with the times Bridging gap between young and old technology
School perceptions	Judging school as poor Labeling schools
Internal/external relationships	Greater partnerships with community and schools Flexibility in school system (red tape)
School expectations	Higher expectations Reasonable expectations Boosting confidence Support system Safe zone Support structure More after school programming

engagement in the classroom through media applications. They also recommended that schools enhance cultural exposure and bridge the gap between the young and the old. Finally, opportunities for students to read more are also recommended.

School perceptions. The staff indicated that judging schools as poor due to student diversity and state standardized testing creates a big problem. It is necessary for educational personnel to stop labeling schools as good or bad because of where they are located.

Internal/external relationships. The staff indicated that there is a need for greater collaboration between the school and the community as well as among school personnel within the school. Among school personnel, there is a need for more flexibility within the school system because there is too much red tape. It is difficult to bring about change in schools when there is a lot bureaucracy.

School expectation. The staff members indicated that schools should have higher and reasonable expectations for students in order to boost the students' confidence. In addition, there needs to be a support system or structure that comes alongside the students and encourages them. Included in their recommendations are opportunities to increase student reading with the assistance of public partnership. Safe zones for students should be created to address the various issues that students encounter in school along with increased after-school programming.

Problems

The problems identified by the IPFW staff if changes were made to address the barriers were teachers, community, and lack of funds (Table 10).

Teachers. If the changes for expectations of teachers were implemented, it would require teachers to spend more time planning and preparing for course curriculum as well as additional training so the teachers would be equipped with the knowledge to develop a class syllabus that is well rounded. Many teachers may not want to put in the increased time required, and they may not be interested in attending more training or additional schooling to meet those expectations.

Table 10

Categories of Problems for Data Obtained by IPFW Upward Bound Staff

Categories of problems	Problems with change
Teachers	More work for teachers Increase expectations of teachers
Community	Involvement Conflict resolution Diversity training
School System	No Child Left Behind Educating community and media Accept there is a problem
Funding	Money Low income families Tax increases

Community. Members of the community would have to move beyond their differences and be willing to come together and get involved with the schools through conflict resolution and diversity training. Unfortunately, it is believed that this is not something the community would be willing to do with the schools.

School system. The staff indicated that the school system would have difficulty accepting the fact that producing successful students is a problem and the expectations for No Child Left Behind are unreasonable. They also would have difficulty, due to common societal perceptions, about what is a good or bad school.

Funding. The schools lack the funds needed to implement recommended changes; many of the families in the community are low-income and the community would fight against the school system if they tried to increase taxes to fund the public schools.

Summary

IPFW students identified information leading to a local model of barriers that signifies the obstacles faced by students desiring to complete high school. For each of the eight barriers—(a) Lack of Motivation, (b) Lack of Confidence, (c) Peer Pressure, (d) Systematic Failure, (e) Parental Support, (f) Family Responsibilities, (g) Resources, and (h) Stress—the student participants revealed knowledge and actions required for overcoming the barriers. The data were analyzed to create a local model of student knowledge and actions that successful students take to overcome barriers.

It was found that students' success in high school is very important to the successful student and is reflected in their knowledge and actions through their

determination and being goal-oriented. These characteristics influence their thoughts, decisions, and actions personally, academically, within their family, their relationships with their teachers, and their interactions with their friends.

IPFW staff provided information leading to a local model of barriers that signify their perception of obstacles faced by students desiring to complete high school. For each of the seven barriers—(a) Sense of Self, (b) Peer Pressure, (c) Financial Strains, (d) Parental Support, (e) Lack of Stability, (f) Teachers, and (g) Disability—the staff participants revealed knowledge and actions required for overcoming the barriers. The data were analyzed to create a local model of the staff members' perceptions of students' knowledge and actions required to overcome barriers.

The staff believed that successful students have a strong value for education and they recognize the benefits of being successful in high school. The staff indicated that the students' belief impacts their thoughts, decisions, and actions in achieving academic success. It is reflected in their determination to succeed in spite of their circumstances and to not compromise their long- and short-term goals.

OCU Upward Bound Program

Oakland City University (OCU) is located in the rolling hills of southern Indiana and is ideally situated in the rural community of Oakland City, which has a population of 3,000. It was founded in 1885, and its mission is to have a learning community dedicated to academic excellence, technical preparation, and life-long learning. Oakland City University is fully accredited, has a student enrollment of 2,000, and offers over 40 undergraduate and 5 graduate degrees.

The Oakland City Upward Bound program has a full-time staff of three and serves 50 high-school students from four high schools located in Oakland City. The students are predominantly Caucasian, and 66% are female and 34% male. The office is located in the administration building and is made up of a cluster of rooms that is shared with other university departments. The UB staff was preparing to move from their current location, so there were a lot of stacked boxes all around the office. On the Director's door is a poem entitled, "Believe in Yourself," and TRIO logos are posted around the office along with myriad pictures of student groups in various activities, including graduation. On the walls of the office there are a framed copy of the Nelson Mandela speech, some art posters, and plaques from senior classes.

The participant sample included one group of students and one group of full-time and part-time staff. The student sample consisted of eight students—five females and three males. The staff group consisted of nine members; four were male and five were female. Three of the male staff members were Caucasian and one was African-American, and all of the female staff were Caucasian. The staff consisted of two full-time employees, four tutor/instructors, and three resident assistants who served as counselors for the UB students; one of the resident assistants is a former UB student. Except for one resident assistant, all the staff members have worked with the program from a minimum of 1 year up to 8 years.

At the beginning of each focus-group session the students and staff were asked to think about a successful high-school student, one who gets promoted and is preparing to graduate, and to respond to the following question: "What barriers does such a student

have to overcome to be successful, to get promoted?” This question served as a means for completing the unfolding matrix and resulted in multiple responses from each group.

Each student and staff group was interviewed for 60 minutes to complete an unfolding matrix. Information on barriers, knowledge, actions, changes, and problems was taken from the two student groups and staff groups to discover what these students and staff perceived to be barriers to student success. Numerous barriers were identified by all members of both student and staff groups from a broad range of areas, including the student’s home life to school life, peer relationships and influences, family support, family responsibility, and personal characteristics. Students and staff provided information on the knowledge that is necessary to overcome barriers. They also identified various actions to overcome barriers based on their knowledge and proposed changes for reducing or eliminating the barriers. Problems were also identified that may occur if the suggested changes made by the students were implemented.

The students’ perceptions below detail the information provided from each student group in the categories that were mentioned. The data from these categories were compiled into a local model of student success for high-school students who participated in the study for the Oakland City University Upward Bound program.

The Students’ Perceptions

Barriers

Student participants at OCU Upward Bound identified many barriers in response to the initial question, and, of those barriers, the five categories developed were lack of motivation, lack of confidence, peer pressure, distractions, and family responsibilities.

Many of the barriers identified by the students were personal problems they face, along with problems involving their peers, teachers, and their own self-confidence (Table 11).

Lack of motivation

The OCU students shared that laziness and procrastination are a major barrier to succeeding in school. Not doing homework, studying, or waiting until the last minute to

Table 11

Categories of Barriers for Data Obtained by OCU Upward Bound Students

Categories of barriers	Barriers
Lack of motivation	Laziness Procrastination Not wanting to study Not understanding what is going on in class School is a waste of time Classes has nothing do to with your interest Cannot get scholarships to go to college Cannot go to college because you don't want to be in debt
Lack of confidence	You believe you fail before you try You won't amount to much of anything Teachers telling you to drop out because you won't finish No support from family No support from teachers
Peer pressure	Hanging out with friends Parties Not really being you so people will like you Getting pregnant Having sex so boys will like you Getting pregnant because it is the popular thing to do
Distractions	Getting involved in to many activities Cannot organize self and accomplish task Too much to do in the senior year Changes from middle school to high school
Family responsibility	Having to work

complete assignments can be very stressful since the reason behind this behavior is that students do not understand what they are learning in the class. Some students do not understand because they are not interested or feel the class is a waste of their time. This attitude is based on students' perspective that the class has nothing to do with anything they are interested in. Other students feel classes are too easy and they lose interest. Unfortunately, this attitude is coupled with the belief that since they cannot get scholarships for college, they will not be able to attend college because they do not want to be in debt. Students' inability to relate to schoolwork, along with the belief that there is no money to attend college, is a major barrier to their success.

Peer pressure

The OCU students shared that peer pressure is a major barrier to succeeding in high school because of the things you allow yourself to do just to be popular. Students hang out with their friends and attend parties where there is drinking and drugging instead of studying for an exam or completing assignments or projects, because everyone else is doing it. Ironically, the behavior many students portray is not who they really are; they only act this way or participate in certain activities all for the sake of being accepted by their peers. Unfortunately, some female students have sex with boys so the boys will like them, which sometimes leads to pregnancy. However, since getting pregnant is a popular thing to do among students, many students who find themselves in this situation are unaware of the challenges of having a baby and the effects their action have on their educational success.

Lack of confidence

The OCU students shared that a lack of confidence affects their success in high school because of what they believe about themselves or what others say about them. Some students believe they will fail even before they try because a family member or teacher told them “they will not amount to much of anything,” or teachers tell students to drop out because at the rate they are going they will not finish anyway.

Not having support from family or teachers is a major barrier for students who may already lack confidence in their ability to perform academically. Unfortunately, some students who do not perform academically seek other ways to be accepted, especially without guidance and direction from family and teachers.

Distractions

The OCU students shared that distractions can be a barrier to success. Some students get involved in so many activities that they are unable to prioritize what should be done first, and their involvement distracts them from their school work. Other students are unable to deal with all the changes they encounter while making the transition from middle school to high school. In high school they have to decide whether they will hang out with their friends or do their homework. Furthermore, in their senior year, students, along with passing all of their classes, also have to fill out college applications and financial aid forms and participate in senior activities, but friends, parties, and application deadlines can become a distraction and, before they know it, they are not doing well in their classes.

Family responsibilities

According to the OCU students, some students have major family responsibilities on their shoulders that hinder their academic success. Some students have to go to work after school because the money they earn supports their family. Students who have to work have difficulty concentrating on school work, and this leads to incomplete school assignments, which affect their grades. Yet, for these students who are helping their families, finances take precedence over school.

Overcoming Barriers: Knowledge and Actions

This section presents the findings related to the knowledge and actions of OCU Upward Bound students regarding the identified barrier categories. After analyzing the taxonomy of barriers, one model of success was developed. The non-contingent model of student success is based on the categories I identified from the student data. The model analyzes the knowledge and actions independently of the barrier categories to create a local model of the knowledge and actions successful students take to overcome barriers.

Knowledge

The OCU students identified three categories regarding things students know about overcoming barriers. The categories are the value of education, standards, and a sense of self (Table 12).

Value of education. The OCU students know that college is not for everyone, especially as it pertains to their career interest; however, whatever a person decides to do, it is important to excel in it. As such, the students recognize that it will require

Table 12

Categories of Knowledge for Data Obtained by OCU Upward Bound Students

Knowledge category	Knowledge
High standards	Plan for the future Talk with students who are doing well Talk with teachers Balance school, work, activities and social life Manage your time and plan for things Want a nice job after college
Value of education	Sacrifice your wants for the things you need to get done Excel in something School lasts only for a short time Going to college and getting a life is important College is not for everyone depending on your interest
Sense of self	Do not let peer pressure make you do things you normally would not do Don't let others' opinion of you affect how you think Popularity is not important

sacrificing the fun things they want to do in order to accomplish the tasks they need to get done. The OCU students acknowledge that school lasts only for a short time and preparing for life is important; therefore, going to college is an essential decision in planning for their careers.

High standards. The OCU students acknowledge that in order to overcome barriers to success they must set standards for themselves. They recognize that having a plan is very important to determine the direction for their success. In order to fulfill their plans, the students shared that they must have good relationships and communication with their teachers, as well as friends who are also doing well in their academics. In addition, they are aware that they must have good time-management skills to balance

school, work, activities, and their social life. The OCU students realize that setting standards will help them successfully achieve a good job after college.

Sense of self. The OCU students recognize that negative peer pressure is definitely a barrier to success, but they know that having a sense of self helps them make good choices. The students are aware that it is important to avoid doing things because others are doing it, especially if it is out of their character. They know some people will always have negative things to say about them, but knowing who they are helps them to steer clear of those individuals and not let their opinion determine their worth. Furthermore, popularity is not important if it means they are unable to be true to themselves.

Actions

The OCU students identified what successful students commonly do to overcome barriers, and these actions were categorized as confidence, priorities, and initiative (Table 13).

Confidence. The OCU students' responses revealed the confidence necessary for students to be successful. Hanging out with the right crowd is very important because it determines the choices they make, and having friends with similar goals is helpful in achieving success. In addition, friends who have similar goals avoid certain activities or conversations, such as sex, and can be a sounding board.

Achieving success requires a strong sense of self, and successful students possess this characteristic as they choose not to conform to their peers but to be themselves and

Table 13

Categories of Actions for Data Obtained by OCU Upward Bound Students

Categories of actions	Actions
Confidence	Hang out with the right crowd Avoid conversations about sex Do not conform Be yourself Keep your eye on the ball Associate yourself with people who will support you in trouble
Priorities	Study Drop activities for school Use time wisely Keep a calendar
Initiative	Talk to someone when problems occur between students Ask for help when you need it Use the resources you have Take more challenging classes Seek programs that can help you manage your responsibilities

do things that make them happy. Furthermore, successful students have a sense of resiliency. When things get hard or are perceived to be difficult, that is not the time to “give up” but to “keep your eye on the ball.” They have developed relationships with people who will support them in times of struggle or trouble.

Priorities. So many high-school students have a number of responsibilities, in addition to schoolwork, that hinder their academics. However, successful students make school their priority. This is accomplished by choosing to study first instead of hanging out with friends. If their schoolwork is suffering because they are involved in too many

activities, they will drop out of some of the activities. Successful students use a calendar to schedule their activities so that they can use their time wisely.

Initiative. The OCU students indicated that successful students have to take the initiative to achieve desired goals. There are many peer pressures that students face every day, so having a plan about how to address them is very important. The OCU students shared that there will always be other students who have negative things to say about them and they have a choice to talk to an adult about the situation and the person who spread the negative rumor. They believe that addressing the issue one way or the other is better than pretending it is not happening.

Since being successful in high school is the ultimate goal, successful students seek individuals who will be available to help them in times of need. School counselors are good resources, and they are there to help, so it is imperative that students take advantage of the opportunity and have someone who will listen to them.

These students take charge of their lives. If the classes they are taking are easy, they meet with their counselors to take more rigorous classes. However, for students who have to work and care for their siblings, taking on such a challenge can be difficult. Yet the successful students seek programs that will work around their school schedule and responsibilities so that they can manage all of their responsibilities.

Overcoming Barriers: Changes and Problems

This section identifies categories of changes identified by the OCU Upward Bound students' data if the barriers were addressed and problems that could be encountered if the changes were made.

Change

The categories of change needed to address the barriers identified by OCU students are as follows: teaching/curriculum and school activities (Table 14).

Teaching/curriculum. OCU students indicated that many students lack interest in the classes they take in school because they are unable to understand what the teachers are trying to teach. One of the ways the OCU students believe this problem can be resolved is if the teachers provide learning styles and methods which can be adaptive to each individual student.

School activities. OCU students addressed the fact that many students who are doing well in school activities such as the arts do not get recognition because it is not basketball, football, or volleyball. They think that schools should seek more opportunities to recognize all school activities and that there should be a limit to the number of activities students are allowed to be in.

Problems

The categories identified by the OCU students for problems were lack of support and teachers (Table 15).

Table 14

Categories of Change for Data Obtained by OCU Upward Bound Students

Categories of change	Change
Teaching/curriculum	Learning styles and methods
School activities	Minimum number of activities More opportunity for recognition

Table 15

Categories of Problems for Data Obtained by OCU Upward Bound Students

Categories of problems	Problems
Lack of support	Complaints Less appreciated Recognition
Teachers	Unwilling to attend training

Lack of support. The OCU students conveyed that there was a need for change pertaining to student recognition for various school activities; however, if these changes occurred, they believed many parents and students would complain about the changes, there would be a lack of support towards recognition for academic activities, and that students who are doing extremely well in school may feel less appreciated.

Teachers. As it pertained to requiring teachers to use different learning styles and methods in the classroom, the OCU students believed the teachers would not be willing to go back to school to get the training necessary to change how they teach.

The Staff Perceptions

Barriers

Two groups of OCU staff consisting of instructors, counselors, and advisors were asked the same questions as the OCU students: Think about a successful high-school student, one who gets promoted and is preparing to graduate and respond to the following question: “What barriers does such a student have to overcome to be successful, to get

promoted?” The barriers identified by the staff were the educational system, teachers, lack of parental support, family responsibility, and peer pressure (Table 16).

Educational system

The OCU staff articulated that the school system is a barrier to the success of students. They indicated that “education is not keeping up with the times.” What the

Table 16

Categories of Barrier for Data Obtained by OCU Upward Bound Staff

Categories of barriers	Barriers
Educational system	Not keeping up with the times Not teaching students how to learn Learning disabilities School not successful for students Department of Education No Child Left Behind Lack of responsibility Watered-down education Minimum standards
Unsupportive teachers	Lack of commitment to learning Lack of interest in students Lack of support and understanding Negative disposition
Lack of parental support	Parental involvement Uneducated parents Not important in their culture Transportation Education not important Overbearing Unrealistic goals
Peer pressure	Drugs and alcohol Not labeled as cool Pre-marital sex Teen pregnancy Self-worth
Family responsibility	Having to work

teachers are teaching is not keeping up with the changes of the current student generation. They stated that schools have to teach a wider variety of students, and they have to water down the standards in order to provide students with the minimum standards. Furthermore, information has doubled in the last 100 years. “Teachers are not teaching students how to learn anymore,” but merely how to memorize facts.

The school itself is not a successful environment for the students because of the unrealistic standards being set by the Department of Education and No Child Left Behind for students and teachers. In addition, students are not successful in school because they have this sense of entitlement and do not recognize their responsibility in the educational process. Although it may not seem negative, students are consumed by technology with the usage of the internet and cell phones and are not focusing their time on their academics.

Unsupportive teachers

The OCU staff shared that the barrier some students encounter is the teachers in the school. Some teachers lack the commitment to learning that is necessary to help students who need the extra attention. Unfortunately, some teachers have a lack of interest in students as well as a lack of understanding as it may pertain to their home and family life. Some teachers have a negative disposition that is not conducive to learning and does not lend itself to providing the support that many students need from their teachers.

Lack of parental support

The OCU staff indicated that for many students the lack of support they receive from their parents is a major barrier to their success. Some parents do not have a high-school diploma or do not feel that going to high school benefited them, so, therefore, they do not see the value of school for their children. In their culture, education is not important. Because of the poverty that exists within some families, the here and now is what is important, not planning for the future. Whether the support consists of providing transportation, purchasing school supplies, helping with hoping, or merely giving their child encouragement, it really does not matter. On the other hand, some parents can be very overbearing and set unrealistic goals for their children because they want them to succeed so badly. For some students, if they do not earn all A's they are grounded or unable to participate in extracurricular activities.

Family responsibility

The OCU staff indicated that financial barriers hinder student success. The parents of many students who live in poverty do not acknowledge the value of a college education. The greater need is to provide money for the household. Therefore, many students must have after-school jobs to support the family. Having a job that provides income is more important for some families than going to school and getting an education.

Peer pressure

The OCU staff shared that peer pressure is a barrier to a student's success. For some, a lack of self-worth leads them to participate in activities that they may not want to

participate in, but they do not say no. So many activities are not cool today, like going to school and doing well in your classes.

Students who lack self-confidence find themselves involved in pre-marital sex, which oftentimes leads to teen pregnancy. The OCU staff indicated that because some students lack self-respect, they allow their bodies to be abused. They indicated that it is hard for teachers to instill self-worth into a 15-year-old student if they do not have it.

Overcoming Barriers: Knowledge and Actions

This section presents the findings related to the knowledge and actions of OCU Upward Bound staff regarding the identified barrier categories. After analyzing the taxonomy of barriers, one model of success was developed. The non-contingent model of staff perceptions of student success is based on the categories I identified from the staff data. The model analyzes the knowledge and actions independently of the barrier categories to create a local model of the knowledge and actions that staff perceive successful students take to overcome barriers.

Knowledge

The categories identified for knowledge by the OCU staff are value of education, resourceful, and standards (Table 17).

Value of education. The OCU staff shared that the students' upbringing determines their outlook on success. Many students know that school is important, but providing support for the family takes priority over school. Although a person can live without a college education, the extent of that living can be limited.

Table 17

Categories of Knowledge for Data Obtained by OCU Upward Bound Staff

Categories of knowledge	Barriers
Value of education	School is important but financial stability takes priority Extent to living without college degree is limited Schools are not there to push students If students show up they will move forward The system has failed the students Teachers are overworked Teachers do care and want them to be successful
Resourceful	There are options Support systems Their way around the system Some teachers care and some don't How to survive
Standards	Drugs Sex

Students also acknowledge that the school system has failed them. The schools are not there to push them; if they show up to school, they know they will move forward. Teachers are not there for them, but rather serve just to push them through and get them out. At the same time, students know that teachers are overworked and that some teachers do care and want them to be successful.

Resourceful. The OCU staff shared that some students know how to be resourceful. They know that they have options in spite of what their situation may be. Some students know how to navigate around the school system through their relationships with their counselors, teachers, and school personnel. They also know that

some teachers really care while others may not; however, no matter the circumstances, they know how to survive.

Standards. The OCU staff conveyed that successful students know the importance of establishing standards. They specifically addressed how successful students understand the importance of avoiding drugs and that drinking excessively can lead to harming themselves or others. In addition, drugs and alcohol lead to poor decisions, such as having sex, which also leads to teen pregnancy.

Actions

The categories of actions identified by the OCU staff are negative behavior and initiative (Table 18).

Negative behavior. The OCU staff indicated that some students do the bare minimum. Whatever they think they can get away with is as much as they will do. The

Table 18

Categories of Actions for Data Obtained by OCU Upward Bound Staff

Categories of actions	Actions
Negative behavior	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Bare minimum Boredom Do things to get a reaction Disrespect teachers Get respect from peers
Initiative	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Stay involved in school Seek opportunities to learn Listen to those willing to help Seek out people who will support them Seek acceptance

OCU staff attributes this behavior to the students' home life; there is no sense of accomplishment or ambition towards education. In addition, some students do and say disrespectful things to get a reaction from their teachers. The OCU staff indicated that this behavior may be due to the lack of attention the students experience at home from their parents and that it is a "cry for help." If this cry for help is not fulfilled by the teachers, the students know what things they must do to get respect. Unfortunately, the students may go to a gang or some other negative group to fill the void they have from a lack of attention. Students know that it is important to belong, to be accepted, and to be cool; therefore, they know what they must do to feel a sense of security and stability.

Initiative. The OCU staff shared that some students recognize the importance of taking initiative for their learning. Some students stay involved in school even if their home life lacks stability. They seek opportunities to learn from their teachers and friends and they establish relationships with people who will support them and direct them toward a path of success. These choices increase students' sense of belonging and acceptance.

Overcoming Barriers: Changes and Problems

This section identifies categories of changes identified by the OCU Upward Bound staff data if the barriers were addressed and the problems that could be encountered if the changes were made.

Change

The change categories identified by OCU staff are teaching and curriculum, educational system, and community collaboration (Table 19).

Table 19

Categories of Change for Data Obtained by OCU Upward Bound Staff

Categories of change	Change
Teaching curriculum	Learning styles Subject variation Character building Revision Process
Educational system	Leadership Educate society
Parent involvement	Atmosphere Reaching out Opportunities Schedule

Teaching/curriculum. The OCU staff indicated that in order for the schools to address learning challenges that students face in school, the curriculum needs to be changed so it can educate students in more ways than one, which includes different learning styles, variation of academic subjects, and character building, such as self-esteem, self-respect, and self-worth. In addition, school administration’s revision of the curriculum should remove the instant-gratification mentality of getting things done. Instead, they must demonstrate that learning is a process that takes time. As such, the plan to make curriculum changes should be done piece-by-piece because creating a curriculum that meets the needs of individual students will require a great deal of time.

Educational system. The OCU staff articulated that there needs to be better administrative leadership within the school buildings. Administrative leaders need training to address the needs of the student and school personnel. Furthermore, the

educational system needs to take time to educate society’s view of education. Learning is a process that requires “seeking better ways to figure out and address our problems; cannot give up on the students.”

Parent involvement. School personnel need to make the school a friendlier place for parents so they feel welcome when they visit. Administrators and teachers need to do a better job of reaching out to parents and students who feel isolated and creatively provide opportunities for the parents to be more involved with the teacher and the student. In addition, schools should work around parents’ schedules for student-teacher conferences; this can help parents and teachers get on the same page, which is a definite need for a student to be successful.

Problems

The categories of problems identified by the OCU staff are time, money, and educational values (Table 20).

Table 20

Categories of Problems for Data Obtained by OCU Upward Bound Staff

Categories of problems	Problems
Time	Long-term issues
Money	Funding commitment
Values	Unrealistic view Lack of commitment
Education system	Curriculum changes One size fits all

Time. The OCU staff shared that in order to address the changes that were recommended, a lot of time is required. However, they do not believe educators are willing to take the time to deal with long-term issues such as changing the curriculum to meet the learning needs of each individual student.

Money. The OCU staff does not believe the educational system will be able to receive the funds to address the barriers. In addition, they also do not believe the community will provide funding support to make the necessary changes. It is their belief that the community attitude to the schools' problems is "not their problem."

Values. The OCU staff believed that our society really does not have strong values regarding education, and change to people's values cannot be forced. They conveyed that society has an unrealistic view of what goes on in the schools and that the system is not really committed to the school. The problem is that the educators do not understand the problem and society does not really want to know.

Educational system. The OCU staff stated that school systems will not be supportive of providing a hands-on curriculum, probably due to the required time and money. In addition, because of the lack of money, they do not have the ability to keep up with the technological changes in society. Furthermore, the staff indicated that today's schools operate as factories, and therefore they lack the resources (teachers, supplies, resources) to teach for the sake of learning.

Summary

Oakland City University Upward Bound students identified information leading to a local model of barriers that signifies the obstacles faced by students desiring to complete high school. For each of the five barriers—(a) Lack of Motivation, (b) Lack of Confidence, (c) Peer Pressure, (d) Distractions, and (e) Family Responsibilities—the student participants revealed knowledge and actions required for overcoming the barriers. The data were analyzed to create a local model of student knowledge and actions that successful students take to overcome barriers.

It was found that successful students have a strong value for education. This attitude is reflected in their knowledge and actions through their setting of high standards and priorities in achieving academic success. Their attitude influences their thoughts, decisions, and actions personally, academically, within their family, in their relationships with their teachers, and in their interactions with their friends.

Oakland City University Upward Bound staff provided information leading to a local model of barriers that signifies their perception of obstacles faced by students desiring to complete high school. For each of the four barriers—(a) Educational System, (b) Teachers, (c) Lack of Parental Support, and (d) Peer Pressure—the staff participants revealed knowledge and actions required for overcoming the barriers. The data were analyzed to create a local model of the staffs' perceptions of students' knowledge and actions required to overcome barriers.

The staff believed that successful students have a good perception of the educational system. They recognize that getting an education makes a difference in one's career status, but they also understand that life circumstances oftentimes take precedence.

They recognize that the school system has failed them since some successful students perform only at the bare minimum. However, because they understand that success does open doors, they know how to take the initiative to gain the necessary results for success. The staff indicated that the students' beliefs impact their thoughts, decisions, and actions in achieving academic success. It is reflected in their decisions to set standards that will help them avoid social peer pressures and their actions in successfully navigating the educational system.

PC Upward Bound Program

Purdue Calumet is a regional campus within the Purdue University system that is located in Hammond, Indiana. It is an urban campus with an undergraduate and graduate enrollment of over 17,000 students. It first opened its doors in 1951 for 2-year degrees, and today it has six accredited programs in technology, nursing, management, education, engineering, and liberal arts. The mission is to prepare and support education professionals in developing diverse approaches to educational strategies, to use their knowledge and research to empower the people they serve, to be sensitive to the unique needs of themselves and the diverse population they serve, and to advocate and model quality education and lifelong learning.

Purdue Calumet Upward Bound program serves 240 students and is located in the administrative building along with two other TRIO programs: Educational Talent Search and Student Support Services. Directors of all three programs work very closely to ensure high school and college graduation for the students they serve. During the academic year the PCUB serves the students at the campus in Hammond, but during the summer students are served at Hammond campus and the Lafayette campus at Purdue University.

Interviews for PCUB were conducted at both campuses. At Purdue University the PCUB office is located in the Armstrong building, where university classes are held. Offices and space for program activities are also located in a large residential hall, which is where the UB students and their counselors reside during the 6-week summer program. The rising juniors take English, math, web class, journalism, and biology and also create a senior year book. At the Lafayette campus, rising sophomores take SAT, math, and English, and they commute daily.

The Purdue Calumet Upward Bound program has a full-time staff of five and serves 240 high-school students from 15 high schools located in the cities of Hammond, Gary, Lake Ridge, Whiting, and East Chicago. The students who participate in the program range from 9th to 12th grade, and the students' ethnic background is made of 1% Asian, 64% African-American, 10% Caucasian, 24% Hispanic, and 1% multiracial, while 66% of the students are female and 34% are male.

The participant sample included one group of students and one group of full-time and part-time staff. The student sample consisted of five students—three females and two males—and all were African-American. The staff group consisted of eight staff; two were male and six were female. Four of the female staff were African-American and two were Caucasian; the two males were also African-American. The staff consisted of four full-time employees, two instructors, and two resident assistants who served as counselors for the UB students.

At the beginning of each focus group session, the students and staff were asked to think about a successful high-school student, one who gets promoted and is preparing to graduate, and to respond to the following question: “What barriers does such a student

have to overcome to be successful, to get promoted?” This question served as a means for completing the unfolding matrix and resulted in multiple responses from each group.

Each student and staff group was interviewed for 60 minutes to complete an unfolding matrix. Information on barriers, knowledge, actions, changes, and problems was taken from the two student groups and staff groups to discover what these students and staff perceived to be barriers to student success. Numerous barriers were identified by all members of both student and staff groups from a broad range of areas, including the student’s home life to school life, peer relationships and influences, family support, family responsibility, and personal characteristics. Students and staff provided information on the knowledge that is necessary to overcome barriers. They also identified various actions to overcome barriers based on their knowledge and proposed changes for reducing or eliminating the barriers. Problems were also identified that may arise if the suggested changes made by the students were implemented.

The students’ perceptions below detail the information provided from each student group in the categories that were mentioned. The data from these categories identified the barriers the PCUB students perceive high-school students encounter that hinder them from successfully completing high school.

The Students’ Perceptions

Barriers

One group of PCUB students was asked to think about a successful high-school student, one who gets promoted and is preparing to graduate, and to respond to the following questions: “What barriers does such a student have to overcome to be successful, to get promoted?” Student participants at PCUB identified many barriers in

response to the initial question, and, of those barriers, the five categories developed were lack of motivation, lack of confidence, peer pressure, school, community, family responsibilities, and parental involvement. Many of the barriers identified by the students were personal problems they face, along with problems involving their peers, teachers, and their own self-confidence (Table 21).

Lack of motivation

According to the PCUB responses, many students are not motivated in school because of the negative relationships they have with their teachers and counselors. In particular, the PCUB students shared that teachers and counselors tend to speak negative words to students, such as, “You’re not meant to do this,” sometimes referring to a student’s desire to go into a particular career or take certain subjects. Those students who lack confidence internalize what they hear the teachers saying and believe it to be true. Once they believe they are not capable of accomplishing a goal, some students become discouraged and eventually give up on school. Sometimes giving up is easier because the student may be in an environment that does not care about education. The PCUB students shared that everywhere they go, “people label you as a drug dealer or gang banger,” depending on the neighborhood a student lives in. Therefore, the likelihood of the student fulfilling those predictions is possible. If students are being put down by their teachers and counselors and are expected to be a product of their environment, which is to fail, it seems easier for some students to believe what they hear and see and fulfill the statistic. According to the PCUB responses, words have power, and negative words from school personnel, family, and members of their community are a major barrier students have to overcome.

Table 21

Categories of Barriers for Data Obtained by PC Upward Bound Students

Categories of barriers	Barriers
Lack of motivation	Teacher put-downs Lack of confidence Being a statistic Internalizing put-downs Foster child Identity School Teenage mom Balancing work, school, caring for siblings/baby Good paying job Procrastination
Peer pressure	Not listening Not giving things up Fitting in Following the crowd Family influences
School environment	Disruptive classrooms Lack of materials and resources Not wanting to learn Teasing Afraid to go to school Bullies Gangs School vs. life
Family responsibilities	Caring for siblings Childcare for teen mom Caring for baby Teen dad not present Sick parents Working
Lack parental support	Parents jobs No time Unsupportive of teen mom Put-downs by parents Parents influence quitting school

For other students, their lack of motivation comes from their lack of identity. One student in foster care stated, “Not knowing where you come from, where you started, makes it hard to figure out where you want to go or where you want to be in life.”

Students in search of their identity can sometimes make poor choices. For instance, students who become pregnant often feel like giving up school because their parents constantly put them down by saying, “You have messed up your life.” With the tremendous responsibility of caring for the baby while trying to keep up with school, when they hear parents say, “You might as well drop out of school,” it sometimes seems like the best solution. Other students who have the responsibility of working and taking care of their siblings because their parents are working become overwhelmed with their responsibilities and sometimes have no energy or desire to focus on school.

On the other hand, many students see school as a waste of their time. They do not think they need their education to make money because making \$11.00 to \$12.00 an hour sounds good, and, for students hired at the steel mill, they believe they are set for life making \$19.00 an hour. For others, it is a matter of procrastination. Students wait till the last minute to complete assignments, and the frustration and anxiety they feel causes them to lose motivation.

Peer pressure

The PCUB students felt that peer pressure is a barrier to high-school success, because students think they know it all and are not willing to listen to those who have experienced high-school life and are willing to share what they have learned. Instead, students, being very impressionable in high school, follow what the crowd is doing and are not willing to give up going out with friends or doing things that will lead them down

a path of destruction. Unfortunately, students' desire to fit in and be perceived as cool leads to poor choices. Oftentimes students are unwilling to take responsibility for their poor decisions or take control of their destiny.

Regrettably, students also face peer pressure at home from older siblings or cousins who did not complete high school and are working. They would introduce the world from their point of view, discouraging education and enticing students to follow their lead.

School environment

The PCUB students indicated that school itself can be a barrier to success. They talked about classes that are very disruptive because of rowdy students who do not want to learn and the teachers' inability to get the class under control. Every time students joke around, the teachers have to stop to redirect, and this takes away from learning time. Therefore, students are unable to learn the lesson for the day. Sometimes students who are from poor families are targets for teasing and ridicule by the students who are not in school to learn. In addition, some classes do not have the proper materials needed to do certain things in class, such as a computer, printers, paper, or ink.

Another major barrier students face in high school is related to gangs and bullying. Many students fear going to school because they are afraid they will be jumped by other students. Others are forced out of school because they are threatened by other students. For students who are faced with these situations, their life is more important than school, and, as such, they skip school to avoid danger or they drop out all together.

Family responsibility

Many students have many responsibilities in addition to school due to their family's financial situation, such as the number of children in the family or becoming teen moms themselves. According to the PCUB students, some students are unable to focus on their schoolwork because their parents work and the student is responsible for looking after their siblings. For some students, it is their responsibility to wake their siblings up in the morning, get them dressed, feed them, and make sure they are on time for school, all the while knowing they are going to be late because of these responsibilities. However, the students have a sense of responsibility to their family because they know their parents are out working to pay the bills and to keep a roof over their heads.

Other students work to contribute to the household. One example was a student who had an older parent who was ill and the student cared for the parent and worked to support the family. For students who are teen moms, having to work is inevitable because they do not have anyone to watch their baby while they are in school, so they have to pay for childcare. Since childcare is expensive, they must work in order to pay for an agency to care for their child while they attend school. For many teen moms the teen dad is not present, so all of the responsibility for caring for the baby is left on their shoulders. According to the PCUB students, it is difficult for a student to be successful in school while taking on the responsibility of working and caring for a baby, especially when the mom is also just a child.

Lack parental support

Another barrier that affects students' success is unsupportive parents. The parents' role in the students' education is very important, but many students are required to do it alone. Many parents work long hours or have more than one job and oftentimes are unavailable or too tired to help with school work. Other parents may have so many children that they do not have time to give the required attention to the students' education. In addition, for students who are teen moms, oftentimes because their parents are very disappointed they are not very supportive, and this is reflected in words they use to put them down or discourage them from trying to work through all their responsibilities, especially school.

Overcoming barriers: Knowledge and actions

The PCUB students were requested to review the list of barriers they identified and respond to the following questions: "What does a successful student have to know and do to overcome the barriers?" This section presents the findings related to the knowledge and actions of PC Upward Bound students regarding the identified barrier categories. After analyzing the taxonomy of barriers, one model of success was developed. The non-contingent model of student success is based on the categories I identified from the student data. The model analyzes the knowledge and actions independently of the barrier categories to create a local model of the knowledge and actions successful students take to overcome barriers.

Knowledge

The categories developed for knowledge identified by the PCUB students are the value of education, expectations, sense of self, and resourcefulness (Table 22).

Value of education. The PCUB students shared that “you have to know there are barriers to attaining your education and to be aware of them.” They said that being aware

Table 22

Categories of Knowledge for Data Obtained by PC Upward Bound Students

Categories of knowledge	Knowledge
Educational value	Aware barriers exist Naïve Right to learn Outcome of completion Benefits of education Reality of life
High standards	Okay to make mistakes Learn from mistakes Right decisions Goals Achieve goals Recognize distractions Take responsibility
Sense of self	Determined Product of your environment Caring for self Taking responsibility Barriers Recognize weaknesses Okay to make mistakes
Resourcefulness	Deal with problems Always a way out Seek out help Seek resources

of barriers is the first step to success. When students know barriers exist, they can then proceed to move toward their goals, learning during the process how to break the barriers down. The students stated that they cannot be “naïve” to things that can hinder them. They shared that most students who overcome barriers know they have a right to learn, therefore nothing can stop them from achieving their goal to be educated. In addition, the students stated that “life is not fair or easy,” but the outcome of actually finishing school is worth enduring all the tests and trials a student may encounter, because having an education will provide many opportunities and open many doors.

High expectations. “Anything worth having requires hard work,” and, according to the PCUB students, successful students know they must have personal expectations to acquire success. As such, successful students set ambitious and attainable goals and they do what is required or necessary to achieve their goals. They do their best to avoid distractions, such as serious relationships, sex, and drugs, as well as separate themselves from peers who may distract them from achieving their goals. Successful students are very independent and do not rely on others to get them through when faced with obstacles. They recognize that they need others to help them be successful, but they do their best to work out their problems and not complain or blame others for their plight. Successful students also know it is okay to make mistakes and to learn from those mistakes as they continue to make decisions for their lives.

Sense of self. Students who are successful have a good understanding of themselves. They know that barriers exist, but they also know there is nothing that can stop them from doing what they aim to achieve. Successful students realize that although

they live in rough neighborhoods, they do not have to be a rough person. They can determine who they will be by the choices they make. Successful students know that many people will not care for them if they do not care for themselves. Therefore they take pride in themselves and carry themselves in a way that will help them attain their goals.

The PCUB students stated that successful students know they have to be accountable for their actions and cannot blame others for their mistakes. They know they are not perfect and there is room for error. Successful students know their success is up to them, so they determine who they will be and what they will do.

Resourceful. Successful students know how to face their problems and take care of them. For students who find themselves in a difficult situation, they know there is a way out. If they are struggling in a class, they know they should speak with the teacher or find a tutor to turn the situation around. Sometimes students are in a situation they cannot handle, like another student bullying them. In such a situation, the PCUB students know that they have to go to someone “higher up” and tell them about the situation to avoid getting into a fight or getting hurt. Successful students know their counselors and teachers are there to help them get their education, and it is up to them to tap into those resources to get the help to succeed. They know their counselors can provide them with information about course selection, colleges, and scholarships and their teachers can provide assistance when they are struggling in a class or serve as a reference for opportunities such as being accepted into an organization.

Actions

The categories developed for actions identified by the PCUB students are priorities, determined, and initiative (Table 23).

Initiative. The PCUB students said, “Successful students listen.” These students are active listeners taking in the information and advice they receive from adults or friends and applying it to their lives. Successful students seek help from their teachers

Table 23

Categories of Actions for Data Obtained by PC Upward Bound Students

Categories for actions	Actions
Initiative	Listen Take advice Claim responsibility Find outlets Create positive places Participate in programs Go to tutoring Use available resources Seek help
Priorities	Set goals Prepare Structure Time management
Determined	Challenge themselves Exceed expectations Strive for excellence Overcome barriers Never let go Stay ahead No is unacceptable

and mentors to help them identify the necessary resources, “like tutoring,” so they can do better in their classes. They participate in programs that will help them develop practical life skills such as collaborating, problem solving, and communicating. Successful students create or seek out environments that are positive. Whether it is in the library or the park, these students find places where they are not stressed and have time for themselves. In addition, successful students seek people who can be outlets for them to share what is going on in their lives—a place and person to vent their concerns or problems to.

Finally, when successful students make a mistake they take responsibility for their actions and do not look to others to do it for them.

Priorities. The PCUB students stated that successful students set goals and then do the work to achieve the goals. One of the ways they achieve their goals is by participating in college preparatory programs that will provide them with academic resources and services. They prepare for college by taking the necessary classes, studying, taking SAT exams multiple times, sending out multiple college applications, and talking with teachers and counselors who can provide them with sound advice.

Students who are successful lead structured lives with schedules that help them to complete tasks such as their homework, work, and caring for their siblings or their own child. They also practice good time-management skills to stay on top of their responsibilities in order to accomplish their tasks.

Determined. Students who are successful do not take no for an answer. If they encounter a teacher or counselor who tells them they cannot do something, they will go

over their heads and speak to the individuals in authority. These students do not allow anyone or anything to make them let go of their dreams. Successful students are determined to go higher than what is expected, and they push themselves to accomplish what some may deem to be impossible. If they are struggling in a class, they find a friend who is doing well in the subject and ask for their help. PCUB students shared that successful students strive for excellence by staying ahead. In their classes they will read a chapter ahead to be prepared for questions they do not understand for the next class. They also challenge themselves by taking classes that are rigorous.

Successful students are so determined to overcome barriers that they create opportunities to diffuse the stress. For some students, their happy place is playing a sport, video games, puzzles, music, or volunteering in the community. Whatever takes their mind off the stress is what they creatively seek out to do.

Overcoming Barriers: Changes and Problems

This section identifies developed categories of changes identified by the PCUB students that address problems that could be encountered if the changes for the recommended barriers were made.

Change

The categories for changes the PCUB students identified are the school system, teachers, and family (Table 24).

School system. The PCUB students stated that the schools really need to change how they deal with student issues. They indicated that the system for treating students as “bad seeds” should be altered. Schools should not be quick to remove students from

Table 24

Categories of Change for Data Obtained by PC Upward Bound Students

Categories for change	Change
School system	Bad seed Addressing student problems Child care Strict on teachers Career preparation
Teachers	Need more Who love their job Who care
Students	Student empowerment
Family	Remove negative influences Attention towards family backgrounds Stronger PTA

schools who are perceived as trouble makers. They should be given a chance and provided with opportunities that can help the student. In addition, the PCUB students felt the school can do a better job of addressing student problems instead of saying that they will work on it and then never addressing it.

In addition, the PCUB students believe that schools should take more time to understand the family backgrounds of their students and try to address the problems students face with caring for their siblings and/or the children of teen moms. The PCUB students believe that the schools should be stricter on teachers who put students down with negative comments. They also suggested that the classes offered in the curriculum should be designed to help prepare students for careers they are interested in pursuing.

Teachers. According to the PCUB students, there is a need for more teachers, especially in the urban neighborhoods, because the classes are over-crowded and one teacher is the science and English teacher, the coach, and the lunch lady. There is also a need for teachers who love their job and are not teaching just for their paycheck. The PCUB students stated that there is a need for teachers who care and who will encourage and uplift the students toward graduating from high school and seeking a higher education. They said, “There is a need for teachers who will be role models for the students, someone they can look up to.”

Students. The PCUB students indicated that there is a need to remove the negative influences from the students through student empowerment. The idea is to train the students who are on the track for success to speak and encourage other students to do the same thing. In addition, these students will have the ability to tell students who are not interested in being successful that they do not fit in. Through student empowerment, the school will be able to decrease negative peer influences.

Family. One of the changes the PCUB students suggested is that the school should pay closer attention to family backgrounds and provide resources and support to help the families, which would in turn help the student. Although education is important, some of the family issues such as students having to care for their siblings or parenting their parent or child are very problematic for families, and they believe the schools can help ease some of their problems by providing childcare or a buddy system that can provide support for the students.

The PCUB students also felt there should be a stronger PTA that focuses on support for mothers to help them care and take more of an interest in the child's education.

Problems

The developed categories identified as problems by the PCUB students are money, teachers, and parent involvement (Table 25).

Lack of funding. The PCUB students believe one of the problems in addressing the changes is the lack of funding available to make the needed changes. Currently, the schools in the region hardly have the money to support the students they currently have in the school and barely have the supplies to support each student.

Teachers. The PCUB students believe there would be a problem removing teachers who do not care about the students because of teacher unions as well as trying to recruit caring teachers to urban neighborhoods. According to the PCUB students, there is

Table 25

Categories of Problems for Data Obtained by PC Upward Bound Students

Categories for problems	Problems
Money	Lack of funds
Teachers	Inability to get more teachers
Parent involvement	Lack of support
Communities	Industrial-based companies

a shortage of teachers, and this problem has a trickle-down effect. A scarcity of teachers leads to over-crowded classrooms, which also lead to a lack of resources to teach the students. This problem occurs as early as elementary school. Therefore, by the time a student gets to high school both the student and the teacher have given up. The teacher is burned out and the student has given up on himself. Based on this analysis, by age 16 the student is ready to drop out.

Parent involvement/support. The PCUB students shared that many parents feel that supporting their family and providing shelter and food is more important than getting involved in the schools. At the same time, some parents are discouraging their child from going to school because, for one reason or another, they are not interested in the child getting an education. Other family members who are not interested in school are also negative influences for the student in the household.

Community. The PCUB students stated that not every community is education-minded. Industrial-based companies like the Mill do not care whether students graduate from high school. They are more interested in getting students to work for their company. Some students see working for these companies as a much easier route because they do not need to do all the work required for attaining a high-school diploma and are able to earn a decent wage.

The Staff Perceptions

Barriers

Two groups of PCUB staff consisting of instructors, counselors, and advisors were asked the same questions as the PCUB students: Think about a successful high-

school student, one who gets promoted and is preparing to graduate, and respond to the following question: “What barriers does such a student have to overcome to be successful, to get promoted?” The categories of barriers identified by the PCUB staff are lack of motivation, peer pressure, distractions, attitude, behavior, poverty, family responsibilities, lack parental support, safety, and trust (Table 26).

Lack of motivation

The PCUB staff shared that lack of motivation is a barrier for successful students because some gifted students are placed in regular classes and the work they are required to do does not engage or challenge them and they lose interest in school. On the other hand, students in general are bored in class because the teachers’ mode of instruction is lecturing, and that style of teaching does not keep the attention or interest of the students, especially students who may learn kinetically or in a different manner. In addition, students have difficulty relating to the classes they take in school because they do not understand why they need to learn calculus, for example. They also do not see how classes in school relate to the outside world or how they apply later on in their lives. Furthermore, students do not understand the purpose of school: “They have no idea how their success in high school or non-success will affect their lives.”

The PCUB staff also indicated that having a learning disability is a barrier for successful students because these students have to work twice as hard as regular students, and they need to be involved in programs that will help them understand the best learning strategies to overcome their disability, and unfortunately those opportunities are unavailable in the school. Furthermore, students with or without learning disabilities need to be pushed by their teachers and parents, but neither group is really enforcing

Table 26

Categories of Barriers for Data Obtained by PC Upward Bound Staff

Categories for barriers	Barriers
Lack of motivation	Gifted students in regular classes Boredom Lack purpose Inability to relate Inability to understand success Teaching and learning styles Not being pushed Language and cultural barriers Discrimination and prejudice Lack of trust Learning disabilities
Peer pressure	Drugs Follow negative crowd Gangs Eating disorders Being smart Doing homework Self-esteem Males being macho Good grades Not thinking for themselves Inability to ask or receive help
Distractions	Getting into serious relationships Teen pregnancy Dedication to sports Pregnancy leads to absences/dropping out Lack of socialization due to technology Drugs and alcohol
Attitude	Being your own cheerleader Taking pride in grades Inability to see their potential Defeatist attitude Media portrays false reality Lack strong work ethic

Table 26—*Continued.*

Behavior	Inability to receive constructive criticism Challenging authority Disrupts classroom Negative attitude towards rules Sense of entitlement Arguing with teachers
Poverty	Socio-economics Parents in poverty Lack of resources Cost of raising a child Teen pregnancy School resources
Family responsibility	Working Care for siblings Make adult decisions
Lack of parental support	Lack of education Inability to prepare for high school/college Not encouraging Illness Emotionally or mentally unstable Lack of involvement Inability to help with homework Divorce Addictions Lack of guidance Lack structure
Lack of safety	Accessibility to alcohol and drugs in home Emotional and sexual abuse Gangs Parents who are addicted
Lack of trust	Inability to ask or receive help Cannot relate to unconditional help Challenging authority

success in high school or the goal of a college education as an expectation, and that is a barrier to students' success.

For some students, discrimination, language, and cultural barriers are reasons for the lack of motivation by students. Students feel like the school is aimed at a particular culture or type of student. Students read a story or problem and are unable to comprehend it. There are also students who are teased because of their religious beliefs and actions, such as praying every morning at the flagpole.

The students who have these issues do not know if there is a trustworthy teacher or counselor they can go to who can help them with their concerns. Their lack of trust is a barrier that prevents them from receiving help and support within the school.

Peer pressure

The PCUB staff stated that many successful students' inability to deal with peer pressure is a barrier to their success. Some students who are smart and able to get good grades tend to not be who they are so they can be accepted by their peers. In schools today, being smart is not cool, so if a student wants to be perceived as cool by their peers they make the choice to not work, not do their homework assignments, or not work at their academic ability in order to fit in with the crowd. Unfortunately, this mind-set leads to students making poor choices such as getting involved in drugs and participating in gang or bullying activities. Doing drugs for some students is a quick fix to meeting monetary needs, but they do not take into consideration the consequences of those actions. And yet for some students, participation in gangs is the only way they feel accepted.

The PCUB staff stated the reason many of the students choose to follow the crowd is because of their lack of self-esteem. For instance, some girls have eating disorders because to be in the “in crowd” you have to be thin, whereas many males, especially African-American males, do not want to be perceived as a “sissy” or “nerd,” so they do not do their school work and cut classes to be perceived as “macho.” Students’ lack of self-esteem is the reason many students do not ask for or receive help. Some students feel that if they ask for or receive help it will be perceived negatively by their peers, but sometimes the students are afraid to be themselves because they do not want to be rejected.

Distractions

The PCUB staff shared that one of the barriers to students’ success is distractions. Many students get involved in activities or behaviors that distract them from their school work. Although it is important for students to be involved in extracurricular activities, for some students who are involved in a sport, that activity takes priority over their school work. They spend more time practicing and preparing for their games and do not give the same attention to school work, and their grades suffer for it. On the other hand, students have become so engaged in technology that they lose track of time surfing the web, listening to music, watching videos, or texting and messaging their friends and do not get their school assignments completed.

Another student distraction is getting involved in serious relationships with the opposite sex. Much of their time is spent focusing on the relationship and less on school. Unfortunately, some relationships lead to sexual involvement, which leads to teen pregnancy. Going through pregnancy and having to care for a baby is a huge distraction

that takes the student's focus away from school. For some students, the changes they encounter during the pregnancy as well as having to care for the baby after it is born lead to school absences and sometimes dropping out of school.

Attitude

The PCUB staff indicated that students' attitudes are a barrier to success. Some students do not ever get to the point where they become their own cheerleaders and take pride in getting good grades. Instead, they focus on the negative. For instance, when some students fail the standardized test they do not say, "Well, I only missed so many, let's see how I can turn this around"; instead they give up and stop trying. They allow failure to paralyze them and take on a defeatist attitude. Unfortunately, this attitude does not allow them to see their potential to be successful, because they magnify the failure instead of focusing on their ability to turn things around.

The PCUB staff also stated that students' false perception of the media is the reason behind their inability to perform at their academic potential. In their minds, everything comes easily, so they think just by saying they want to do something it will happen. They have no perception of hard work, and they do not understand that hard work pays off in the long run. This attitude comes from students' need to be a part of the crowd and to be like everyone else instead of believing in their own individuality.

Behavior

According to the PCUB staff, students' behavior is a barrier to success. Many students have difficulty accepting constructive criticism from their instructors. As such, these students choose to argue their points with the teacher, which leads to disruption in

the classroom. This behavior prevents the teacher from completing the lesson for the day and the students in the class are unable to learn or take advantage of their class time.

Some students are unable to accept the school policy rules and, as such, challenge school authority through insubordination or truancy. This behavior once again distracts school personnel from focusing on academic needs of all students, including the student creating the problem.

Finally, some students unfortunately behave as if they are entitled to certain things. Their attitude reflects a notion that the world owes them something in spite of their behavior. Interestingly, their negative behavior is initiated because they believe they have a right to have what they want without earning it.

Poverty

The PCUB staff shared that poverty is a barrier to students' success. Students from low socioeconomic backgrounds most likely come from families that do not have a higher education and therefore are probably in poverty. These students are unable to have the resources other students have to be successful, because the parents are unable to afford to raise their child. On the other hand, some families are faced with a cycle of poverty due to teen pregnancy. Once the child becomes pregnant, the only way to survive is through state support, such as welfare, and once a child is introduced into this lifestyle at such a young age, it is very difficult, if not impossible, to come out of it.

Finally, students who are in poverty tend to attend schools in poor neighborhoods, and, as such, those schools lack the resources necessary to help students succeed academically.

Family responsibilities

According to PCUB staff, students' family responsibilities are a barrier to success. Many students are unable to focus their attention on their academics because they have the responsibility of working to provide financial support for the family or for themselves because they are a teen mom, or because they are responsible for caring for their siblings while their parents are at work. In these circumstances, teenage boys and girls are placed in situations in which they are unable to be a child and are required to make adult decisions at a very young age. These responsibilities place the importance and value of an education at the lowest priority.

Lack of parental support

The PCUB staff shared that parental support is necessary for students to overcome barriers to success. Unfortunately, many students are faced with a lack of support from their parents because of the parents' lack of education. Many parents are unable to prepare their children for high school, much less college. Parents who may not have completed high school themselves are not able to help their children with their homework. In addition, some parents choose not to encourage their children to focus on school because of their negative experiences in school. As such, they are unable to provide the necessary guidance and are not involved in their child's education.

Sometimes, illness is a reason parents are not supportive of their child's education. A parent may be limited in what they can do because of their disability. Other students whose parents divorce do not receive support from their parents due to living arrangements or because of the parents' hostility toward each other and inability to give the needed attention to their child.

Yet some students lack support because their parents are emotionally or mentally unstable or suffer from addictions. In these circumstances, students are in environments that are not safe and oftentimes lack the structure the child needs to be successful in school.

Lack of safety

The PCUB staff indicated that students' safety is a barrier to their success. There are many students who have access to alcohol and drugs in their homes, especially students from single-family households. Some parents who are addicted to alcohol and drugs influence their children to indulge in these activities. Unfortunately, some students live in homes where they witness emotional and physical abuse or are involved in sexual abuse. When a child is not safe in their home, school is their safe haven, but oftentimes they are unable to focus on their school work because of the conditions of their home life.

On the other hand, some students are afraid to go to school because of gang activity in their neighborhood or because of where they live. Students who live in certain neighborhoods are victims for gang initiation, and gang members threaten them.

Lack of trust

The PCUB staff stated that students' lack of trust is a barrier to success. The reason some students do not ask for or receive help is because they do not trust their teachers or counselors. The reason for their lack of trust might be due to how they perceive teachers' or counselors' treatment of students. Students challenge authority in school because they do not believe school personnel care about them; for them their authority is an issue of power, or "power tripping." Because of this perception, students

are sometimes unable to relate to teachers or counselors who can provide them with help. However, in the student's mind, there is a motive behind the counselor's or teacher's actions, and their lack of trust prevents them from viewing it differently.

Overcoming Barriers: Knowledge and Actions

The PCUB staff was requested to review the list of barriers they identified and respond to the following questions: "What does a successful student have to know and do to overcome the barriers?" This section presents the findings related to the knowledge and actions of PC Upward Bound staff regarding the identified barrier categories. After analyzing the taxonomy of barriers, one model of success was developed. The non-contingent model of staff perceptions of student success is based on the categories I identified from the staff data. The model analyzes the knowledge and actions independently of the barrier categories to create a local model of the knowledge and actions that staff perceive successful students take to overcome barriers.

Knowledge

The developed categories the PCUB staff identified as knowledge are educational value, expectations, sense of self, and resourceful (Table 27).

Educational value. The PCUB staff indicated that successful students know that doing well in high school is going to benefit them in the long run and their life after high school will be much better because they took advantage of their education. They also shared that successful students know that there is a purpose for the rules they must follow in high school, and by following rules they are learning how to function in society.

Table 27

Categories of Knowledge for Data Obtained by PC Upward Bound Staff

Categories for knowledge	Knowledge
Educational value	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Life is difficult Will face obstacles Benefits of high school Life after high school Purpose of rules
High standards	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Friends with similar goals Networking Awareness Work hard to succeed Completely informed about their decisions Cannot give up Learn from mistakes Set goals Priorities Time management Persistent attitude Stay away from peer pressures
Sense of self	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Turn criticism into positives Believe in themselves Know their limitations World does not revolve around them Receive constructive criticism How they learn
Resourceful	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> More than one way to solve a problem Understand accountability Critical thinkers Able to get to their destination What works best for them Tutoring is a friend Multi-task well Well-rounded

Successful students are aware that life is difficult and that obstacles are inevitable, but, with the right attitude and belief in their ability to succeed in spite of life's challenges, they will be all the better because of it.

High standards. The PCUB staff shared that successful students know that without high expectations success is impossible. Successful students know that who their friends are will determine who they will become, therefore they choose friends who have similar goals as they do and at all cost they do their best to avoid peer pressure. At the same time they know they are not perfect and will make mistakes, but they also understand they must learn from their mistakes and do their best not to repeat them.

Successful students know they must be aware that obstacles exist, but they also know they must work hard to overcome unforeseen obstacles in order to succeed. Sometimes opportunities arise that may seem good, but successful students know they must do their best to be completely informed about decisions they make and no matter their choice, good or bad, they must not give up on their desire to succeed.

Successful students know that having a persistent attitude is the only way to overcome challenges they encounter. They prepare for life challenges by setting goals they plan to achieve, managing their time, and networking with friends, teachers, and counselors who can help them be successful.

The PCUB staff shared that successful students are usually involved in many activities because they recognize the importance of extracurricular activities and giving back to the community; however, they are very good at knowing how to prioritize their time in these activities.

Sense of self. The PCUB staff stated that successful students have a keen sense of self. These students believe in themselves and, because of their belief, they are able to receive constructive criticism from their teachers and turn the criticism into positives. Successful students are selfless; they know that the world does not revolve around them and are concerned for the needs of others.

Students who are successful know how they learn, so if they are a visual learner they know they need to see the total concept they are learning about. Most importantly, successful students know their limitations. If they find themselves in a situation they are unable to handle, they do not give up; they seek help from someone or research another way that will help them reach their goal.

Resourceful. The PCUB staff shared that successful students are very resourceful, and it is apparent in their ability to know that there is more than one way to solve a problem. These students know that problems are opportunities to seek solutions. They are critical thinkers, and when faced with a situation, they consider what is best for them at that time in order to make the best decision. As such, they are able to navigate the process to reach their desired destination.

Successful students know that tutoring is their friend and by taking advantage of the service they will do better academically. Tutoring helps them understand how they best learn and provide them with strategies to study. In addition, tutoring, as well as their teachers and counselors, is a form of accountability for successful students. They know that success comes with having activities and people they will have to answer to.

Finally, successful students know that it is important to be well-rounded and have the ability to multi-task. They know that involvement in school, sports, fine arts, and

community service teaches them how to enjoy life and gives them the ability to handle the responsibilities of each activity. It also teaches them how to be orderly.

Actions

The action categories identified by the PCUB staff are initiators, determined, and sense of self (Table 28).

Initiators. The PCUB staff shared that successful students take the necessary actions to succeed. These students are the ones who sit in the front row for every class or school function because they do not want to be distracted during their time of learning.

Table 28

Categories of Actions for Data Obtained by PC Upward Bound Staff

Categories for actions	Actions
Initiators	Find someone to talk to Get involved in things that will keep them on track Sit in front of the class
Determined	Find ways to fulfill goals See obstacles as challenges Do what is necessary despite their situation Ask questions or research things they do not know Do things that make them happy Do things that are good for themselves Do things to prepare for the future They have hobbies
Sense of self	They learn from their mistakes They work well in groups Enjoy and welcome learning experiences They help others They are outgoing Are more independent Accept help and input from others

Successful students get involved with activities such as tutoring to help them stay on track in getting good grades. In addition, if they find themselves in a situation they are unable to handle, they find someone to talk to who can help them. These students do not wait for help; they go after it.

Determined. The PCUB staff stated that successful students are determined students. These students see obstacles as challenges, and if something they are working on is not working, they find other ways to fulfill their goals. They do not allow circumstances to determine their success; they determine their success in spite of negative situations. As such, when faced with a problem they seek advice from those in authority, ask questions, and research the information they are not familiar with or do not understand in order to resolve the problem.

Some successful students come from environments that are not conducive for their success, but these students counter this situation by getting involved in activities that will prepare them for the future and participate in services that increase their skills. In addition, they find hobbies and do things that will make them happy and do not focus on the negativity that may surround them.

Sense of self. According to the PCUB staff, successful students have a strong sense of self. These students are the kind of students who welcome learning experiences and enjoy and work well with other students. They are confident about the skills they bring to a group and are open to new information or ideas they gain from team experience. As such, these students are very outgoing and seek opportunities to help others in need of their assistance. Although successful students tend to be more

independent than students who are not as successful, they are humble enough to be open to and accept help from others, and when they make a mistake they know it is okay and to learn from their mistakes.

Overcoming Barriers: Changes and Problems

This section identifies categories of changes identified by the PCUB Upward Bound staff data if the barriers were addressed and problems that could be encountered if the changes were made.

Change

The change categories the PCUB staff identified are the school system, students, parents, funding, and partnerships (Table 29).

School system. The PCUB staff indicated that one of the changes to the school system necessary in order to overcome the barriers that successful students encounter in school is helping educate parents so that they can become more involved in their children's education. They also shared that there is a need for more counselors because the student-to-counselor ratio is too great. In addition, they stated that there is a great need to hire teachers who care about the students and a need to do a better job of providing resources for teachers in the special education department.

Furthermore, the schools need more technological resources to keep up with the times and the attitude regarding the value of education needs to be changed, because, as it currently stands, it seems unimportant.

Table 29

Categories of Change for Data Obtained by PC Upward Bound Staff

Categories for change	Change
School system	Educating parents More counselors Hiring teachers who care about students Resources for special education department Change values regarding education More technological resources
Students mind-set	Complete buy-in from students Change mind-set of students More programs to support students Awareness of opportunities for students
Parent involvement	Educating parents Complete buy-in from parents Workshops for parents
Funding	Equal and improved financial funding for schools
Partnerships	Businesses connecting with the school corporation

Students’ mind-set. The PCUB staff stated that the changes necessary to overcome the barriers to success are for students to change their mind-set about the importance of their education and to completely buy in to the educational process provided by the schools. In addition, there is a need for more programs to support the needs of students as well as providing awareness to students about the services that are available to them.

Parent involvement. The PCUB staff indicated that changes necessary to help parents be more involved in their child’s education are a greater need to educate parents

about the high-school process and to provide the information in the form of workshops. In addition, the school must find ways to get complete buy-in from the parents.

Funding. The PCUB staff shared that in order for change to take place in the schools there is a need for equal and improved funding among schools. Schools in the poorer neighborhoods should have equal resources and funding as schools in wealthier neighborhoods.

Partnerships. The PCUB staff stated that one of the ways to bring about the necessary changes is for businesses in the community to partner with the schools to increase resources within the schools.

Problems

The categories of problems the PCUB staff identified are parents, school, community, and funding (Table 30).

Parents. The PCUB staff indicated that one of the problems the schools will encounter if the changes are made is that parents will feel uncomfortable coming into the schools. These feelings are based on parents' lack of knowledge regarding the educational process. Many parents will not be open to these changes and the implementation of new programs for parents means more taxpayers' money, and parents will not be interested in anything that will cost them more money. Finally, parents are just not interested in becoming more involved in the schools.

School. The PCUB staff stated that a problem the schools will encounter if changes are made is the ability to hire teachers who care about the students. The school

Table 30

Categories of Problems for Data Obtained by PC Upward Bound Staff

Categories of problems	Problems
Parents	Parents feeling uncomfortable Lack of knowledge Parents open to change Implementing programs for parents Getting parents involved
School	Teachers who care Curriculum School not being a safe place
Community	Change Family life Politicians
Funding	Money to address changes

system will not be open to changes in the curriculum that are more conducive to the needs of the students as opposed to state standards. Finally, without increasing fear, such as adding more security in schools, it will be difficult to make schools a safer place for students.

Community. The PCUB staff shared that one of the problems the school will encounter with the community (parents and politicians) is the community’s unwillingness to change its view on education and to acknowledge the inequities among schools.

Funding. The PCUB staff indicated that the inability to have access to the funding necessary to address the changes is a problem.

Summary

Purdue Calumet Upward Bound students identified information leading to a local model of barriers that signifies the obstacles faced by students desiring to complete high school. For each of the five barriers—(a) Lack of Motivation, (b) Peer Pressure, (c) School, (d) Family Responsibilities, and (e) Parental Support—the student participants revealed knowledge and actions required for overcoming the barriers. The data were analyzed to create a local model of student knowledge and actions that successful students take to overcome barriers.

It was found that successful students have a strong sense for the value of education. This attitude is reflected in their knowledge and actions through their determination and high expectations of achieving academic success. Their attitude influences their thoughts, decisions, and actions personally, academically, within their family, in their relationships with their teachers, and their interactions with their friends.

Purdue Calumet staff provided information leading to a local model of barriers that signifies their perception of obstacles faced by students desiring to complete high school. For each of the 10 barriers—(a) Lack of Motivation, (b) Peer Pressure, (c) Distractions, (d) Attitude, (e) Behavior, (f) Poverty, (g) Family Responsibility, (h) Lack of Parental Support, (i) Lack of Safety, and (j) Lack of Trust—the staff participants revealed knowledge and actions required for overcoming the barriers. The data were analyzed to create a local model of the staff members' perceptions of students' knowledge and actions required to overcome barriers.

The staff believed that successful students have a strong value for education and they recognize the benefits of being successful in high school. The staff indicated that

the students' belief impacts their thoughts, decisions, and actions in achieving academic success. It is reflected in their determination to succeed, their sense of identity, and their expectations to achieve their long- and short-term goals.

CHAPTER 5

CROSS-CASE ANALYSIS, RECOMMENDATIONS, AND CONCLUSIONS

Introduction

This concluding chapter summarizes my study and briefly addresses the critical areas by triangulating the results from the dialogical group interviews in order to find out how successful high-school students perceive the knowledge and actions necessary to overcome barriers they encounter in high school. This chapter includes the following sections: literature overview, research design, results, discussion, student success model, conclusions, recommendations, and suggestions for future research.

Conceptual Framework

There is a wide range of reported factors that contribute to students' success in high school. This study examined how successful students overcome the barriers to high-school graduation. It explored the impact of barriers to success through the lens of social and cultural capital (Bourdieu & Passeron, 1973; Coleman, 1987). Students who come from disadvantaged, low-income, minority family backgrounds do not achieve at the same rate as White middle-class students. Social and cultural capital theories provide a framework to help understand why these students struggle to achieve.

Research Design

The research design for this study was Padilla's (1999) Student Success Model (SSM). Within the framework of SSM, specific methods and procedures are detailed, including site selection, sample, data collection, and data analysis and procedures.

The Student Success Model (SSM) is a qualitative technique to portray successful student methods capturing the perceived reality of the particular students being studied. SSM uses expert thinking systems as a foundation; the student is seen as the expert at being a student and is the best candidate to provide relevant data.

The method of data collection that SSM uses places it in the category that Padilla (1999) calls a "qualitative survey." It consists of a set of qualitative data acquisition and analysis techniques that, when applied to a local social situation, result in an understanding of that situation based on "emic" perspectives of participants in that situation as well as the interpretation of the situation by the investigator (Padilla, 1999, p. 138). SSM portrays the views of the participant within the context of their location at that particular moment (those who graduate or are expected to graduate), capturing their perceived reality at the particular setting studied.

The data collection instrument used in SSM is an unfolding matrix. The unfolding matrix consists of rows and columns that are empty at the start except for column headings, called *cover terms*. According to Padilla (1994), this technique allows for efficient and effective data gathering when the researcher is attempting the difficult task of collecting qualitative data.

Three programs were selected from the nine Upward Bound programs in the state of Indiana. Selected programs met the following criteria: (a) program directors had at

least 3 years of experience in the field, (b) the program existed in the community for at least 3 years, and (c) the graduation rate had been at least 75% for 3 years.

Analysis of the data began with the completion of the unfolding matrix columns by the dialogical groups (Padilla, 1994) and triangulation of findings (Fetterman, 1998).

Research Question 1

In response to the first research question—What do students and staff perceive to be the barriers to successful completion of high school?—the primary barriers identified by the Upward Bound students and staff from all three programs were lack of motivation, peer pressure, and family responsibilities.

Barriers Identified by UB Students

The primary barriers identified by the UB students from all three programs were “lack of motivation,” “peer pressure,” and “family responsibilities,” and two of the three programs also identified “lack of confidence” and “lack of parental support” (Table 31). As discussed earlier in this chapter, students’ lack of motivation comes from a variety of sources: frustration with difficult classes, negative comments being made by individuals in school and in the community, a sense that they will not amount to much of anything. In addition, students are highly influenced by peer pressure from their friends, which can lead to poor decisions as well as pretending to be someone they are not. Furthermore, many students have adult responsibilities due to their families and financial circumstances.

Students’ lack of confidence is partly due to the poor relationships and lack of support from their parents and teachers who too often tell them they will amount to

Table 31

Categories of Barriers, Knowledge, and Actions by Students From All Three UB Programs

Cover terms	Category responses
Barriers	Lack of motivation Peer pressure Family responsibility Lack of confidence (IPFW and OCU) Lack of parental support (PC and IPFW)
Knowledge	High standards Sense of self Value of education (OCU and PC)
Actions	Initiatives Priorities Self-Confidence (IPFW and PC)

nothing. These feelings are intensified by poor grades and feelings of embarrassment because although they realize they need help, they are reluctant to seek help out of fear of looking stupid in front of their peers or teachers. At the same time, students’ lack of parental support does not give them confidence or prepare them to handle the academic rigors they encounter in school.

Barriers Identified by UB Staff

The primary barriers that the UB staff identified for all three programs were peer pressure and lack of parental support. Two of the three programs identified “unsupportive teachers” and “family responsibilities” (Table 32).

According to the UB staff, peer pressure is a huge barrier to students’ success in high school. They indicated that many students who begin high school on the right track

Table 32

Categories of Barriers, Knowledge, and Actions by Staff From All Three UB Programs

Cover terms	Category responses
Barriers	Peer pressure Lack of parental support Unsupportive teachers (IPFW and OCU) Family responsibility (OCU and PC)
Knowledge	High standards Value of education (OCU and PC) Sense of self (PC and IPFW) Resourceful (OCU and PC)
Actions	Initiative (PC and OCU) Determined (PC and IPFW)

often end up becoming someone they are not. Instead of participating in class and doing their assignments, they take on the negative attitudes of their peers and choose not to participate or work to their potential in class. In addition, they socialize with students who appear not to care about school and who choose to participate in activities that are not healthy, such as drugs, alcohol, and sex.

Unfortunately, many of the students who follow the crowd come from homes where parental support is lacking. These students do not have adults in the home who are setting expectations about their education or their behavior and are not available to help them with their academic or social problems. Students who lack parental guidance and have chosen to adhere to peer pressure are oftentimes unsuccessful.

These same students are subject to negative commentary by unsupportive teachers. Teachers who put students down or say discouraging things to the students

generally behave in that manner because of the students' behavior in their classroom. This creates a vicious cycle: The student has chosen to be influenced by negative peer pressure and struggles with lack of support at home, but the way this causes him or her to behave further marginalizes his or her position in the classroom.

Finally, students who are responsible for caring for their siblings or being the breadwinners for their families may find it challenging to focus in school. For these students school can be perceived as a waste of time because it takes away from their duties to their family.

Research Question 2

In response to the second research question—What do students and staff perceive to be the knowledge and actions of successful students for overcoming the barriers they encounter during high school?—the primary areas of knowledge identified by the Upward Bound students were sense of self, high standards, and value of education, and the primary actions were initiatives and priorities.

Overcoming Barriers: Student-Identified Knowledge

In spite of the many obstacles high-school students encounter, according to the UB students' responses, successful students are aware of what they must know to overcome the barriers to their success. The primary knowledge categories identified reveal that successful students have a “sense of self” and “high standards” (identified by all three programs). Additionally, two of the three programs identified “value of education.”

Students who overcome the barriers of success have a strong sense of self. They understand who they are, acknowledging their strengths as well as their limitations and weaknesses. Successful students have a sense of self-worth and that leads to thoughts of success within themselves in spite of negative circumstances. Although they feel the pressure of their circumstances, within themselves they have a self-reliance that says they can overcome obstacles through determination and by seeking help from those who can assist them. Successful students are aware that barriers exist, and to a great extent they believe that overcoming the barriers is a part of their learning process and builds their character.

In addition, successful students know how to set high standards. These students recognize that in order for them to remain motivated in overcoming the barriers they encounter, they must have standards or expectations in place. Their standards help them navigate the high-school process through the decisions they make, individuals they choose to be in relationship with such as their teachers, counselors, and fellow peers, and the plans they put in place to assist them in achieving their goals. They also understand that education will provide opportunities that would otherwise not be unavailable.

Overcoming Barriers: Staff-Identified Knowledge

In spite of the UB staff's outlook on the barriers students face in high school, they had very promising things to say about what successful students know to help them overcome the obstacles—in many cases echoing the same things the students said. Successful students primarily set “high standards.” They also have a “strong sense of self,” “value education,” and “are very resourceful.”

UB staff believe students set high standards because these provide the map that guides them to achieving their goals. Successful students develop a plan of action that they follow to remain on their path to success. They recognize that getting a good education will pay off in the long run by opening doors of opportunity. Successful students realize that life is not easy, but attaining their education is the only way they can create a better life for themselves. Their approach to their success is to enjoy school and have fun learning while understanding that the rules they must abide by and the obstacles they encounter are all part of their learning process.

Overcoming Barriers: Student-Identified Actions

The primary categories that identify what successful students do are “initiative” and “priorities” identified by all three programs. Two of the three programs identified “self-confidence” as actions that successful students take towards overcoming barriers. Successful students realize they must have a proactive attitude. These students reach out to the necessary individuals who can help them. They ask questions or do the research to find the resources they need. They participate in organizations that teach them good leadership and interpersonal skills, and they put those new learned skills into actions with their teachers and counselors.

In addition, they recognize that their success is dependent upon putting first things first, and they prioritize. Although they may have to work, take care of siblings, and volunteer at a community function, they make certain that school comes first. Therefore, they set aside time to make sure they accomplish their academic goals along with their other responsibilities. Finally, successful students socialize with people who are also confident about the goals they hope to aspire to and are not willing to conform

just so they can fit in with their peers. When times are tough these confident students turn to their friends with similar ideals for support.

Overcoming Barriers: Staff-Identified Actions

According to the UB staff from two of the three programs, the primary things successful students do is to “take initiative” and “be determined.” These students take the necessary steps to get the help they need or to learn things that will help them in the future. They do not wait on others when they are faced with a challenge. Instead they take the initial steps to solve their problems. In addition, these students are determined to succeed. They do what they must to get the job done, and they do not complain. They are not afraid to ask questions, and they do not settle for less than success. Successful students see obstacles as challenges; they seek the positive in adverse circumstances.

Discussion

Although first generation and low income are the criteria for Upward Bound, it is often perceived as a minority program. Whereas the UB students from IPFW and Purdue Calumet are diverse and are from urban areas, the students from Oakland City University are predominantly White and are from rural areas.

One category that was not identified by the OCU students but was identified by the other two UB programs is lack of parental support. This is important to note because the OCU students’ families most often work in factories or on farms, and college is not a priority. However, the students did identify family responsibility as a barrier because they oftentimes have to care for their siblings or work. This leaves one to assume that, for the OCU students, parental support consists of their families’ work ethic. Although

their family responsibilities can be a distraction, it is also their contribution to their family and provides a sense of belonging. Furthermore, if the students decide to go to college, they do have parents' support.

These data indicate that students' racial backgrounds and regional locations do not make a difference and reveal their ability to overcome barriers and be successful when provided with educational support. In addition, IPFW is the youngest of the three Upward Bound programs, and their students are experiencing the same success as those in the other programs. These differences show the impact of the support the students receive from the Upward Bound staff and align with Coleman's concept of the role of community and relationships in helping students to achieve academic success. Students who lack support have difficulty overcoming barriers.

Students' lack of motivation varies from frustration with difficult classes to negative comments made by school authorities or members in the community signifying they will not amount to much of anything. Although the staff did not identify lack of motivation as a barrier, they did identify lack of parental and teacher support, which definitely leads to a lack of motivation in students. According to Coleman (1988), support between the parent, teacher, and student is important for students' success since it helps teach the student how to communicate and socialize in the educational setting.

Both students and staff indicated that students are highly influenced by peer pressure from their friends, which often leads to poor decisions, including students pretending to be someone they are not. For students who are low-income and from minority backgrounds, the importance of conforming to the norms and values of the school in order to obtain the social and cultural capital, which is necessary for their

success, is often discarded out of fear of not being accepted by their peers (Fine, 1991; Ogbu, 1991; Stanton-Salazar & Dornbusch, 1995).

Even though the staff did not identify lack of confidence as a barrier, it is apparent that students who lack parental and teacher support may not be as confident as students who have supportive relationships. Furthermore, many students have adult responsibilities because of their families' financial circumstances, and this can create emotional and physical strain. These family responsibilities can decrease students' ability to focus on their school work. Students who are unfocused are more vulnerable to peer pressures they may encounter in school. Lack of parental involvement, a factor crucial as a source of cultural and social capital, may explain behavioral outcomes that lead to dropping out (McNeal, 1999a, 2001).

In spite of the many obstacles high-school students encounter, successful students know that having a sense of self and high standards is necessary in overcoming the barriers they encounter. Although they feel the pressure of their circumstances, their belief in self within provides a sense of purpose that says they will succeed.

In addition, successful students recognize that in order for them to remain motivated in overcoming the barriers they encounter, they must have high standards in place. These high standards help them navigate the high-school process through the decisions they make, the individuals they choose to be in relationship with, such as their friends, teachers, and counselors, and the plans they put in place to assist them in achieving goals.

Furthermore, successful students understand they must take initiative and set priorities in order to be successful. The students realize they must have a proactive

attitude. Therefore, successful students do not wait for people to come and assist them. They reach out to the necessary individuals who can help them and they ask questions or do the research to find the resources they need. Finally, successful students recognize that their success is dependent upon putting first things first. Although they may have to work and take care of siblings, they make certain school is first. The implications of these findings from the Upward Bound students and staff are strongly related to the functions of social and cultural capital.

UB Program Provides Social and Cultural Capital

Both Bourdieu (1986) and Coleman (1988) indicate that students' educational attainment and achievement is not a product solely of the students' natural talents and abilities. In their view, the child's lack of social and cultural capital is a significant factor. Children from families with high socioeconomic backgrounds are thought at an early age to understand the social norms of society and the "rules of the game" so they are better able to master their academics. Students from low socioeconomic status backgrounds often lack those skills because of their parents' lack of educational attainment and work commitments. However, through participation in programs like Upward Bound they are able acquire both social and cultural capital.

Social Capital

Coleman's (1988) emphasis on the relationships that children develop in their community is a significant aspect of social capital. Their success in school is dependent upon those relationships, and, according to Coleman (1988), we can consider dropping out of high school to be something similar to neighborhood suicide due to the absence of

a student's functional connection to others in their community. Upward Bound is a place where the students know that the staff, tutors, and counselors (college students) believe in them and are eager to help them succeed. These individuals serve as sounding boards for the students, and they provide them with words of advice and encouragement to keep them on the right track. Upward Bound meets the students' need for community and social connections. The relationships the students develop in the program help them develop their sense of self and build up their sense of self as revealed in the findings. In addition, the relationship developed between the students and staff promotes within the students a feeling of caring and belonging.

Cultural Capital

Bourdieu and Passeron's (1977) emphasis of cultural capital is focused on one's ability to acquire the knowledge and ability to apply it accordingly. Therefore, students who acquire cultural capital must have the ability to receive and internalize this capital. Since schools tend to expect students to arrive with cultural capital, it is necessary to provide opportunities for students who lack cultural capital to attain it. The activities administered and the relationships developed in Upward Bound help students acquire and internalize cultural capital.

The summer residential experience is a good example of how Upward Bound students acquire and apply cultural capital from the aspect of habitus. Habitus is a person's internalized dispositions for thinking and behaving that influence the actions the person takes. In this case, the summer residential component provides an opportunity to students—whose families have never gone to college—to experience what it is like to be a college student by taking classes for credit with college professors, living in the

residential hall with roommates, and eating in the dining hall. In addition, they learn how to navigate the campus through the various social and cultural activities they participate in while on campus. They participate in tutoring sessions, and the tutor (a college student) identifies the concepts the students do not comprehend and helps them understand the concepts through practice and repetition. As discovered in the results, activities such as these develop confidence and determination.

The relationships developed and programmatic activities provided through Upward Bound increase students' accumulation of social and cultural capital, which also increase the students' ability to successfully acclimate to the norms of the dominant culture in spite of their circumstances. During their time in the program Upward Bound students develop a strong sense of self and they become resilient to the barriers that can impede their success.

Upward Bound Students Are Resilient

Students who are successful at overcoming risk factors such as living in poverty, living with siblings who have dropped out of school, or having to care for siblings in the home are educationally resilient. Resilient students have the ability to adapt in spite of challenging or threatening situations. They take responsibility for their actions, have relationships with good role models, seek help when needed, are confident in their abilities, have an optimistic attitude, respect themselves and others, have plans for the future, are diligent in accomplishing tasks, and believe they can solve their problems (Grotberg, 2003).

The UB students and staff findings are similar to the characteristics of resilient students. Successful students know that believing in, caring about, and taking

responsibility for themselves help them overcome barriers that might hinder them from success. These students take initiative. No matter their circumstances at home, they seek opportunities to learn from their teachers, counselors, and friends, and establish relationships that will support and direct them toward their path of success. They take the initiative to acquire the information or resources they need to resolve their problems.

According to Benard and Western Regional (1993) there are numerous characteristics of resiliency, but one that shows up consistently that relates to the findings in this study is a sense of purpose. Based on the findings in this study, Upward Bound students have a sense of purpose that comes from their sense of self and high standards. As stated by the students and staff, successful students understand the importance of making their education a priority. Statements such as “Education comes first” are an indication of the value they place on attaining academic success. Although students may have many commitments at home, at school, and at work, successful students have a mental schedule of the order in which things must be done to accomplish their goals. They do not allege that it is easy, but determining their priorities helps keep them on course.

Students who believe in themselves have a positive outlook on the negative events they may face at home or school. This behavior is characteristic of locus of control and it is strongly related to resiliency. Students with internal locus of control believe they have control over what happens to them and they are intrinsically motivated.

Throughout the study, words that were repeated by the UB students and staff were that “successful students believe in themselves and believe they will succeed in spite of their circumstances.” It is clear based on the findings from the study that successful

students are aware that barriers exist and also understand that how they perceive and respond to the barriers they encounter determines whether they will overcome them.

One can reason that students with a sense of purpose and locus of control can view barriers as an obstacle course, or as challenges they must go through—doable. The student who lacks purpose and locus of control will perceive barriers as a series of challenges they cannot overcome because in their mind it is not possible—it requires too much to successfully climb what they perceive to be a large brick wall to get to the other side. For that student, overcoming barriers is not doable.

A more specific example is viewing the thought process and choices students make as they navigate high school. For the purpose of this example, one can view the high-school experience as an obstacle course. Upon entering high school, the student encounters the rigorous course work they are required to learn. The student with an intrinsic sense of purpose and locus of control will say “This class is hard,” but the words that will follow are “I will have to work very hard to do well—I can do it,” or “I might need to get some help to make sure I do well in this class.” The student who does not have the same resilient characteristics will say “This class is hard—I don’t think I can do this—What am I going to do?—I am going to fail.” The initial thoughts regarding their feelings about the course for each student are the same; the difference in their responses is based on their perspective and attitude. Whereas the student with a sense of purpose has a positive attitude about doing well in the course, the student who lacks the resiliency characteristics has a self-defeatist attitude.

According to UB students and staff, successful students recognize that barriers are a part of life. “Life is not easy” and/or “Life is not fair” are the statements made by the

students. Successful students believe they are able to overcome obstacles in spite of their circumstances. “They find new ways to solve problems” and although they may make mistakes, they “learn from their mistakes” and try again. Successful students have the initiative to face their problems head on and they are not afraid of failure. They believe they learn from failure and failure reveals their strengths and weaknesses.

Words and phrases characteristic of resiliency that evolved from the UB students and staff groups were: “diligent,” “seek help,” “turn mistakes into positives,” “will succeed in spite of competition,” “believe nothing can stop them,” “determine who they will be by the choices they make,” “know what they want,” “there are people there to help me,” and “ask for help when you are in over your head.”

These words and phrases are similar to the words indicated in the resiliency research such as self-esteem, self-regulation, and vision to stay the course to “buffer the effects” of negative realities students may encounter (Wayman, 2002).

What is significant about the findings regarding the perception of successful students’ knowledge and actions is that resiliency is a characteristic that can be taught (Grotberg, 2003; Paphazy, 2003; Wayman, 2002).

As stated earlier, Upward Bound helps students acquire and internalize social and cultural capital through the relationships they develop with the staff and through their participation in the program. The students learn how to relate with adults and their peers through communication and socialization. They also become knowledgeable about the norms and rules of the game within the education system that are prevalent to their peers who are of the dominant class. With these skills Upward Bound students develop the ability to be resilient and succeed in spite of their family or environmental circumstances.

Local Model of Student Success

The data from this study provided information leading to the development of a local model of success. This model reflects the views of Upward Bound students concerning perceived barriers to students' successful completion of post-secondary school and ways in which students overcome those barriers in order to graduate. The discussions in chapter 4 provided the data leading this model.

Figure 1 is an illustration of a high-school student's path to success. As illustrated in Figure 1, the high-school student begins the high-school experience with external barriers and formal knowledge and heuristic experiences, and these are represented by the two rectangles on either side of the high-school student. The amount of knowledge, experiences, and external barriers varies for each student. Some begin the high-school experience with more or less. As students begin high school they also encounter internal barriers with the school environment. The two dotted squares represent the internal barriers. They are dotted to signify that students can overcome the internal barriers they encounter during high school. The shapes are also connected to each other to demonstrate how a student's participation with one barrier can affect other aspects of their school experience. How students deal with the internal barriers they encounter may depend upon their knowledge and experiences and external barriers. Although students encounter internal barriers during their high-school experience, there are also opportunities to gain new knowledge. The first bold line labeled "knowledge" across the figure represents the knowledge the students can gain through the new gained understanding or experiences. This knowledge is gained from teachers and counselors and programs such as Upward Bound. It is also gained through their experiences with

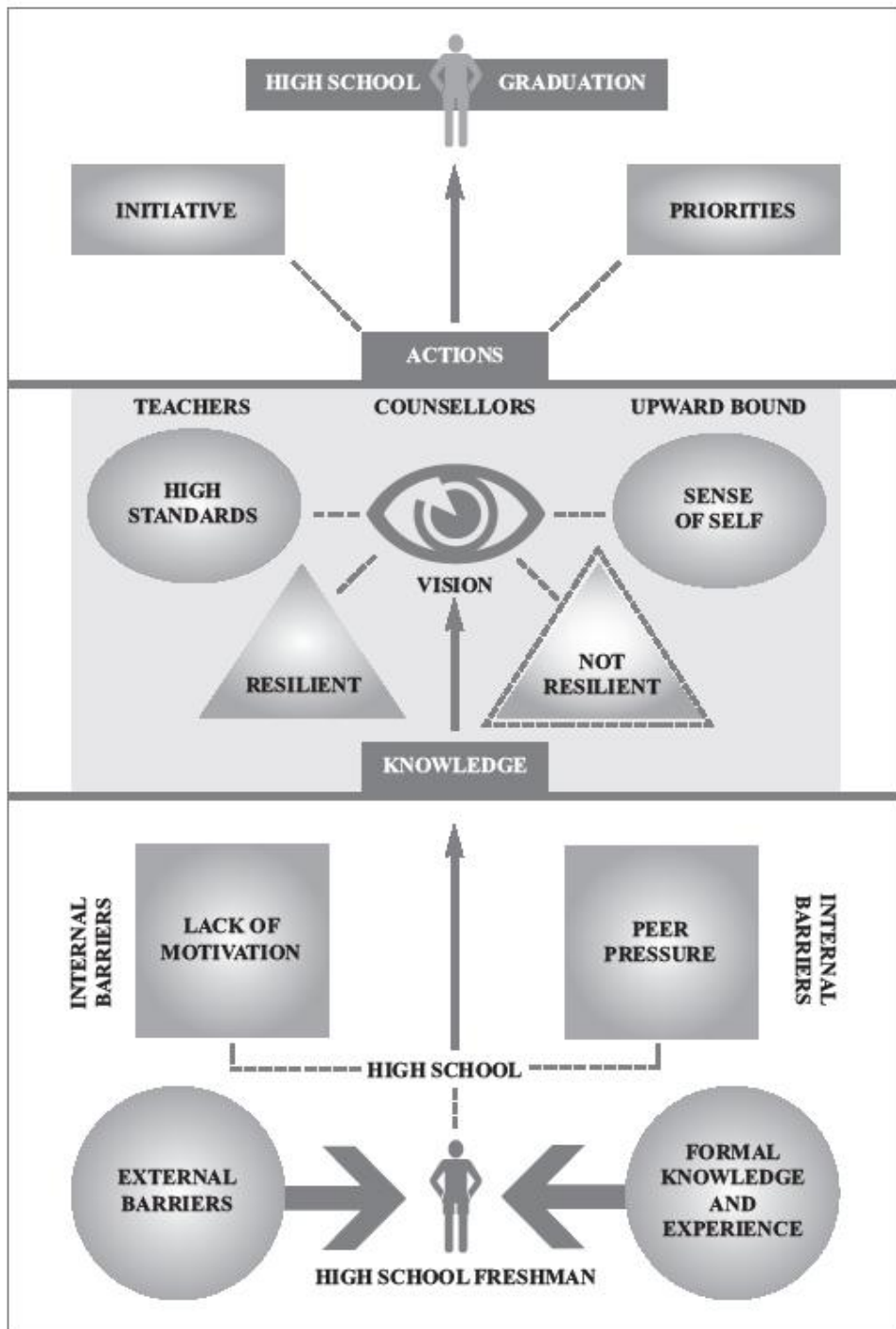


Figure 1. High-school students' path to success.

encounters of internal barriers. The bold line representing knowledge is a critical juncture in the students' high-school career. Their knowledge determines the choices students make and determines their future decisions. The two triangles represent the students' perception of their knowledge and choices. The dotted triangle signifies a student who is not resilient, and the solid rectangle signifies the student who is resilient. The eye in the middle of the two triangles represents the students' vision or perception of their environments: the students' ability to see beyond their circumstances or a view of their desires and goals. The resilient student has a vision that reflects a positive outlook on themselves and on their life. They recognize that barriers exist, but believe they are capable of overcoming the barriers and are hopeful they will succeed. The student who is not resilient has a vision that reflects hopelessness. These students see themselves as victims of the barriers and their attitude is one of failure. Consequently, the barriers blind the student who is not resilient. From their perspective they are unable to overcome the barriers and may eventually exit the school experience although, as represented in Figure 1, the dotted triangle reflects that they can overcome the barriers if they utilize their resources: teachers, counselors, and programs such as Upward Bound. The resilient student has a positive outlook because the barriers do not blind them. Instead, because of their optimistic attitude they utilize opportunities of support to help them overcome barriers and therefore are able to continue with their high-school career in spite of the barriers they encounter. In addition, the school resources can also help them manage dealing with external resources.

The second bold line labeled "actions" represents the actions successful students take to make appropriate decisions to successfully complete school. Students' actions are

another critical juncture in the high-school career because students must apply the knowledge they have learned or experienced in order to be successful.

The high-school experience is new to every student, and, as demonstrated in Figure 1, each student engages high school with varying experiences and knowledge. Some students may begin the process less academically inclined than other students. Others may enter the process with limited parental support. Yet, many students start the process unaware of the academic expectations or the knowledge of how to navigate the high-school experience. Although the school has control over the internal barriers students encounter, it does not have control of the various external barriers students inherited or encounter during their high-school experience. However, as stated earlier, if students utilize the school resources and knowledge, the experiences they will gain can help them manage the external barriers.

The school, however, does have control over the internal barriers students encounter in school. They can address how students manage the internal barriers through the student's connectedness to the school. This can be accomplished through the students' relationships with their teachers, counselors, peers, provision of the required academic coursework, instruction, academic assistance to ensure students understand what they are being taught, and guidance with college, career opportunities, and practical life skills. In addition, directing them to programs such as Upward Bound will provide additional guidance and support for students who having difficulty overcoming various internal and external barriers.

Thus, from the data derived from the successful Upward Bound students and staff, the local model of success indicates that students who are resilient are more likely to

overcome barriers to success. Resilient students have a strong belief in self and their ability to control and influence their outcomes. Students with resilient characteristics believe they have the ability to overcome the various barriers they encounter through school support and community organizations. The students who are not resilient need help believing in themselves and envision the possibility of overcoming barriers through available support in and out of the school. Because acquisition of social and cultural capital plays a significant role in students developing resiliency within themselves and because resiliency is a characteristic that can be learned, any means in which the school can employ or facilitate resiliency in their school mission and curricula will increase students' chances of successfully graduating from high school.

Finally, my findings indicate that Upward Bound is designed to get at-risk students into college work. These findings give us great hope that added resources such as those provided by Upward Bound can be very successful in reversing the nation's dropout crisis and increasing the human capital of youth. Students who participate in Upward Bound acquire the social and cultural capital that helps them become resilient to barriers that can impede their academic success and this has implications for their success in other endeavors. In 1964, Lyndon B. Johnson sought a solution to level the playing field for those in poverty and facing racial barriers to higher education. Forty-five years later, Upward Bound Programs seem to be fulfilling President Johnson's vision and this nation's need and promise for a stable solution to the dropout crisis in America.

Recommendations

As a result of this research that studied how successful students overcome the barriers to success, it is reassuring to know there are solutions to address the myriad of

barriers that negatively impact our educational system and affect our students from successfully graduating from high school. As such, the following recommendations are suggested.

1. Since the knowledge and practice of social and cultural capital develops characteristics of resiliency and resiliency can be taught to students, federal, state, and local policy makers should find practical ways to integrate aspects of those theories in school personnel training and the curriculum.

2. Since school and community support is very significant for the success of all students, there needs to be greater collaboration between those in school administration and those in the community to provide the services necessary to ensure that students who are most likely to struggle with various external and internal barriers have the needed support and resources to succeed.

3. Since funding is an issue and can be a barrier to some schools' ability to implement stronger support systems, especially for the students who are struggling academically and socially, it is recommended that the high schools write for the Upward Bound grant through the Department of Education.

Suggestions for Future Study

1. Conduct a study to show how a student's sense of self and purpose is developed in students.

2. Conduct a study to find out if aspects of social and cultural capital are incorporated in the school's educational philosophy, would there be an increase in students' success rate in high school.

Conclusions

This research study identified what successful students perceive to be the barriers to success as well as the knowledge and actions to overcome the barriers. The overall results of this research are summarized in the following concluding statements:

1. The Upward Bound students agreed that the barriers successful students encounter in high school are lack of motivation, peer pressure, and family responsibilities.

2. The Upward Bound students agreed that the knowledge needed to overcome the barriers is a sense of self and high standards.

3. The Upward Bound students agreed that the actions needed to overcome the barriers are initiative and priorities.

4. The local model of success demonstrates that successful students are resilient and they believe that in spite of the internal barriers they encounter they have the ability to overcome them and achieve their goals.

5. The knowledge and actions identified by the Upward Bound students are notably similar to the characteristics of resiliency. The successful students' sense of self and high standards is what drives their sense of belief and purpose within and gives them the ability to overcome barriers. Their characteristics of taking initiative and setting priorities are what allow successful students to take the necessary actions to overcome the barriers.

APPENDIX

APPENDIX A

GRADUATE PETITION TO QUALIFY TO SERVE
ON THE DISSERTATION COMMITTEE

APPENDIX B

REQUEST FOR DOCTORAL DISSERTATION COMMITTEE
AND TOPIC APPROVAL

APPENDIX C

IRB APPLICATION AND APPROVAL

Application for Approval
**Research Involving Human Subjects
 Research**



Institutional Review Board
Office of Scholarly

Tel: 269-471-6360 • Fax: 269-471-6246

INSTRUCTIONS:

Your application will not be processed unless the relevant documentation has been submitted and is legible. Use this form as a cover sheet and attach to it the following items: (1) The appropriate *Research Protocol*, (2) An *Informed Consent Form* (if required), (3) An *Audit Statement* and, (4) Other documentation as needed—*Cover Letter of Explanation*, *Question Sample*, *Written Copy of Verbal Instructions*, and/or *Letters of Permission*. Submit the required number of full sets (1 set for Expedited, 5 sets for Full) and 2 sets for Full Review to Andrews University, Office of Scholarly Research, Room 213, Administration Building, Heaton Springs, IN 47124-0355.

SUGGESTED CATEGORY OF IRB REVIEW

The investigator(s) should read carefully the *Brief Guidelines for Human Subjects Research* and discuss with his/her/their advisor and/or department chair the relationship of the present research project to the policies and procedures contained in the above document. After this consultation the investigator(s) should request that the research project be considered by the IRB under one of the categories listed below. Final assignment of the review category is made by the IRB. The frequency of IRB review action is noted by the respective review category.

<p><input type="checkbox"/> X <input type="checkbox"/> Exempt from Full IRB Review [Weekly Review] No risk/minimal risk research fit out <i>Exempt Category Checklist on page 2.</i></p>	<p><input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> Expedited IRB Review [Monthly Review]</p>	<p><input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> Full IRB Review [Quarterly Review] Submit for appropriate documentation two weeks prior to the next scheduled meeting of the IRB</p>
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DESCRIPTION OF RESEARCH PROJECT

Project Title: *The Impact of Exemplary Upward Bound Programs in Indiana*

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Academic Department of Researcher: Education

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Beginning and Ending Dates of Human Subjects Involvement in Research: Friday, July 7, 2006 to Sunday, July 9, 2006

Place/Location of Human Subject Involvement in Research: Upward Bound Office at the University of Notre Dame

Target Population (Description and Age Range): Administrators, tutors and teachers between 18 and above.

.....

INVESTIGATOR(S) AGREEMENT

I (we) hereby agree to abide by the terms and methodology as outlined in the attached research protocol. I (we) also agree to begin the implementation of this project—if not approved under the exempt category—only after written notification of our approval (valid for one year) has been received. Furthermore, I (we) agree that in cases involving research to be conducted at non-university sites, such research will commence only after written notification has been received from an officer of the organization at each site involved and filed with our Office of Scholarly Research. Notification of any alterations to the attached protocol will be submitted to the Director of the Office of Scholarly Research.

Name: *Alyssia Coates* Name: Name:

.....

E-mail: *acoates@nd.edu* E-mail: E-mail:

.....

Address: *14636 Northampton Court, Greengarden, IN 46530* Address: Address:

.....

.....

Fax: 579-091-9911 Tel: Tel:
 (Principal Investigator's Signature) (Date) (Principal Investigator's Signature) (Date) (Principal Investigator's Signature) (Date)

SUPPORTING NAME AND SIGNATURE

"I have reviewed the above project with the investigator(s) and concur in the requested category of IRB review."

..... *[Signature]* 7/6/06
 Name of Advisor—Block Letters Signature of Advisor Supervising Research Date

—ABSTRACT OF PROJECT—

Please attach a separate sheet with the heading: **Abstract**

— EXEMPT CATEGORY CHECKLIST —

If your proposed research project does not place the subjects at **more** than minimal risk and is included in one of six categories of research which are exempt from full review under the provisions of the Code of Federal Regulations for the protection of human subjects from research risk, indicate the category(s) that apply to the proposed project placing a check in the appropriate box below.

Even if exempt from full IRB review, all research projects must make provision for compliance with published guidelines for obtaining informed consent and maintaining confidentiality. Some research listed below, if involving prisoners and/or directed toward pregnant women or other vulnerable populations groups, is not exempt.


1	Research conducted in established or commonly accepted educational settings, involving normal educational practices such as: (a) Research on regular and special education instruction strategies, (or) (b) Research on the effectiveness of, or the comparison among, instructional techniques, curricula, or management only.
2	Research involving the use of educational tests (cognitive, diagnostic, aptitude, achievement), survey or interview procedures, or observation of public behavior UNLESS ALL of the following conditions exist: (a) Responses are recorded in such a manner that the subjects can be identified directly or through identifying links, and— (b) The responses, if they become known outside the research, could reasonably place the subject at risk of criminal or civil liability, or be damaging to the subject's financial standing, employability, or reputation. Note: The following types of Category 2 Exemptions do NOT apply to research where children (minors) are subjects: Survey Research, Interview Research, Observation of Public Behavior in which an investigator is a participant.
3	Research of the type listed in Category 2 which under the above provisions is not exempt but qualifies for exemption if: (a) The human subjects are elected or appointed public officials or candidates for public office, or (b) Federal statute(s) require(s) without exception that the confidentiality of the personally identifiable information will be maintained throughout the research and thereafter.
4	Research involving the collection or study of existing data, documents, records, pathological specimens, or diagnostic specimens and these sources are publicly available, or if the information is recorded by the investigator in such a way that the subjects CANNOT be identified directly or through identifiers linked to the subjects.
5	Research and demonstration projects which are conducted by or subject to the approval of federal department or

agency heads, and which are designed to study, evaluate, or otherwise examine:

- (a) Public Benefit or Service Programs
- (b) Procedures for obtaining benefits or services under those programs
- (c) Possible changes in or alternatives to those programs or procedures
- (d) Possible changes in methods or levels of payment for benefits or services under those programs.

6 Taste and food quality evaluation and consumer acceptance studies if wholesome foods without additives are consumed, or if a food is consumed that contains a food ingredient at or below the level and for a use found to be safe or agricultural, chemical, or environmental contaminant at or below the level found to be safe by FDA or EPA or USDA determination.

"In signing this form requesting exempt status, I (we) assure the Institutional Review Board that the only involvement of human subjects will comply fully with the criteria for one of the above exemption categories."

 7/7/06
.....
Principal Investigator's Signature Date Co-Principal Investigator's Signature Date Co-Principal Investigator's Signature Date

Andrews University

March 10, 2010

Alyssia Coates
14056 Northampton Court
Granger
IN 46530

**RE: APPLICATION FOR APPROVAL OF RESEARCH INVOLVING
HUMAN SUBJECTS**

IRB # 07-051

Approval date: 05/24/07

Application Type: Original
Dept: Leadership

Review Category: Exempt

Action Taken: Approved

Advisor: Shirley Freed

Title: The Impact of Exemplary Upward Bound Program in Indiana

This letter is to advise you that the Institutional Review Board (IRB) has reviewed and approved your proposal for research. You have been given clearance to proceed with your research plans.

All changes made to the study design and/or consent form, after initiation of the project, require prior approval from the IRB before such changes can be implemented. Feel free to contact our office if you have any questions. In all communications with our office, please be sure to identify your research by its IRB Protocol number.

The duration of the present approval is for one year. If your research is going to take more than one year, you must apply for an extension of your approval in order to be authorized to continue with this project.

Some proposal and research design designs may be of such a nature that participation in the project may involve certain risks to human subjects. If your project is one of this nature and in the implementation of your project an incidence occurs which results in a research-related adverse reaction and/or physical injury, such an occurrence must be reported immediately in writing to the Institutional Review Board. Any project-related physical injury must also be reported immediately to University Medical Specialties, by calling (269) 473-2222.

We wish you success as you implement the research project as outlined in the approved protocol.

Sincerely,

x

Administrative Coordinator
Institutional Review Board

Institutional Review Board
(269) 471-6360 Fax: (269) 471-6246 E-mail: irb@andrews.edu
Andrews University, Berrien Springs, MI 49104-0355

APPENDIX D
RESEARCH PROTOCOL

The Research Protocol

The purpose of this study is to determine the best practices, methods and strategies used by Upward Bound programs in Indiana. These programs are successfully graduating students who are low-income and first-generation. The study will utilize qualitative methods using focus groups and interview questions. Upward Bound programs students' ages eighteen (18) and above, administrators, instructors and tutors will be interviewed in small groups.

The time frame of the research will be 6 months.

This research study will use Student Success Model (SSM) a qualitative technique to portray successful student methods capturing the perceived reality by the particular students being studied.

The data collection instrument used in SSM is an unfolding matrix. The unfolding matrix consists of rows and columns that are empty at the start except for column headings, called cover terms. According to Padilla (1994), this technique allows for efficient and effective data gathering when the researcher is attempting the difficult task of collecting qualitative data.

There are 10 UB programs in the state of Indiana. I sent a letter to the directors of the 10 UB programs explaining my research and requested their program's retention, graduation, and college enrollment data. I completed an analysis of the retention, graduation and college enrollment data to determine the three most successful UB programs of the ten (Oakland City University, Indiana University-Purdue University Fort Wayne, and Purdue Calumet). The qualitative study will focus on these three UB Programs.

APPENDIX E

LETTERS OF AGREEMENT TO PARTICIPATE



2101 E. Coliseum Blvd., Fort Wayne, IN 46805-1489
260-481-4188

Upward Bound is a TRIO program funded by the U.S. Department of Education.

May 21, 2007

Dear Alyssia Coates,

Indiana University – Purdue University Fort Wayne Upward Bound would like to participate in your research study entitled "The Impact of Exemplary Upward Bound Programs in Indiana." We understand that the study will require the participation of our students who are 18 years and older and our staff.

We look forward to working with you and contributing to your research.

Sincerely,

A. Roxanne Gregg
Director of Upward Bound

Realize your college dreams.



Oakland City University

May 21, 2007

Dear Alyssa Coates,

Oakland City University would like to participate in your research study entitled "The Impact of Exemplary Upward Bound Programs in Indiana." We understand that the study will require the participation of our student participants who are 18 years and older and our Upward Bound staff.

We look forward to working with you and contributing to your research.

Sincerely,

Cathy Gonzalez

Director Upward Bound

Oakland City University

Telephone 812-749-1518

Cell 812-779-8171

138 N. Lucretia Street, Oakland City, TN 47660-1038
(812) 749-4781

PURDUE
UNIVERSITY
CALUMET

UPWARD BOUND

May 21, 2007

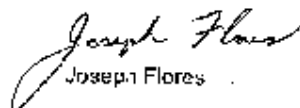
Alyssia Coates
Director, Upward Bound
University of Notre Dame
120 Brownson Hall
Notre Dame, IN 46556

Dear Alyssia,

The Purdue University Calumet Upward Bound Program would like to participate in your research study entitled "The Impact of Exemplary Upward Bound Programs in Indiana." We understand that the study will require reasonable participation of our students who are 18 years and older and our staff. Your contact person will be Miss Sandra Peterson, the Assistant Director. Please forward all details and preparation requirements to her at 219-989-2392.

We look forward to working with you and contributing to your research.

Sincerely,


Joseph Flores

Director

CC: Sandra Peterson

Plan for success with Purdue University Calumet

2200 1959 Street ■ Hammond, IN 46323-2194 ■ (219) 389-2392 ■ Fax: (219) 289-2030 ■ www.calumet.purdue.edu



APPENDIX F
INFORMED CONSENT FORM

**ANDREWS UNIVERSITY
DEPARTMENT OF LEADERSHIP
173 Bell Hall
Berrien Springs, MI**

**Informed Consent Form
“The Impact of Exemplary Upward Bound Programs in Indiana”**

The purpose of this study is to determine the barriers perceived by successful high school Upward Bound students and the knowledge and actions they perceive to be effective in overcoming those barriers. In addition, perceptions of student success by the Upward Bound staff (director, advisors/counselors and instructors/tutors) will also be explored to determine if they are consistent with the barriers perceived and articulated by the students themselves. The research will take place at the offices of the Upward Bound Programs in Indiana.

This study utilizes qualitative research methods. A Program Success Model will be used to portray successful program methods. Focus groups of students, counselors/advisors and instructors/tutors will be interviewed to determine the program's success.

I am requesting you to be part of this research study. While there may be no direct benefit to you at this time for participating in the project, we are hopeful together we will learn something that will help other Upward Bound Administrators and High School Educators implement new strategies to increase the graduation rate of first-generation and low-income high school students.

All information collected will be held in strictest confidence. While this information may be published, at no time will your name be used. In addition, you are free to terminate this consent at any time and withdraw from this research study without prejudice. If you have any questions concerning this study or this consent, please call Alyssia Coates at 574-631-9004 or Dr. Shirley Freed at 269-471-6163.

I, _____, hereby consent to participate in the research study described above. I have read and understand this statement and I have had all my questions answered.

Signature: _____
Witness: _____

Date: _____

APPENDIX G
INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

Interview Questions for the Research Study: The Impact of Exemplary Upward Bound Programs in the State of Indiana

Research Participants: Upward Bound Students and Administrators

The questions UB students and administrators will be responding to is for the completion of the matrix. Participants are primed using the following statement and questions:

Think of a successful high school student, one who gets promoted and is preparing to graduate.

1. What barriers does such a student have to overcome to be successful, to get promoted?
2. What does a successful student know that helps him or her overcome each barrier?
3. What does a successful student actually do to overcome each barrier?
4. What changes could the program make to eliminate or lessen each barrier?
5. What problems might result if the changes were actually made?

As these questions are answered, the matrix is completed and analysis begins.

Upward Bound Administrators will be asked the same question as the students', but the responses will be based on their perceptions of what they believe the students perceive as barriers and what they as administrators perceive as barriers.

1. What do UB students perceive to be the barriers to successful completion of high school?
2. How do UB students overcome these perceived barriers? Specifically, what does a successful UB student know and do to overcome each barrier?

3. What do UB counselors/advisors and instructors/teachers perceive to be barriers to successful completion of high school? Specifically, what do these individuals believe are the knowledge base and action repertoire of successful students?

Below are questions the researcher will consider as she interviews the directors. The purpose of interviewing the director individually is to get his/her assistance in deciphering the data and explaining statements that may not be understood or viewed differently because of the culture within the program.

1. What are the implications of the similarities and dissimilarities between the perceptions of students and UB program staff?

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REFERENCE LIST

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VITA

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SENIOR DIRECTOR OF TRIO COLLEGE PREPARATORY PROGRAMS

Over 10 years of success in strategic planning, grant management, and organizational leadership, leading to the transformation of Notre Dame's Upward Bound program into a national model with sponsorships and endorsements from major corporations.

PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

University of Notre Dame – Notre Dame, IN

03/97 – Present

Senior Director of Trio Programs ♦ 09/09 – Present

Upward Bound and Educational Talent Search College Preparatory Programs

Director of Upward Bound ♦ 06/01 – Present

Notable Accomplishments:

- ♦ Exceeded all Department of Education Assessment and program objectives with 72% in math, 70% in composition, 88% in retention and participation, 100% college enrollment, and 75% post secondary persistence against 60%, 60%, 70%, 70%, and 60% DOE objectives, respectively.
- ♦ Surpassed local population outcomes by 100% on math, nearly 100% on English, 25% on high school testing scores, 40% in postsecondary enrollment, and nearly 150% on college persistency rates.
- ♦ Achieved and maintained highest college acceptance, enrollment, and attrition rates among all Upward Bound programs in Indiana with 90% enrollment rate in 2007 and 100% enrollment in 2008, with 100% of program graduates receiving financial aid and 66% winning scholarships.
- ♦ Led 12% of all Upward Bound graduates to enroll in, secure acceptance, and attend University of Notre Dame.
- ♦ Secured \$500K in annual Department of Education grant funding, plus additional \$144K from foundations and corporations.

Assistant Director of Upward Bound ♦ 04/00 – 05/01

Advisor, Educational Talent Search ♦ 03/97 – 12/9

EDUCATION

PhD in Leadership ♦ Andrews University in Berrien Springs, MI ♦ Expected May 2010
Specialist in Educational Leadership/Doctoral Fellow ♦ Eastern Michigan University in Ypsilanti, MI ♦ 2003

Master of Arts in Education and Counseling ♦ SUNY Binghamton in Binghamton, NY ♦ 1992
Bachelor of Arts in Rhetoric and Literature ♦ SUNY Binghamton in Binghamton, NY ♦ 1990