

ATLANTA UNIVERSITY

BLACK PARENTS: AN ANALYSIS OF THEIR EXPECTATIONS OF THE
ROLES AND FUNCTIONS OF THE PUBLIC SCHOOL SYSTEM

A DISSERTATION ABSTRACT SUBMITTED TO
THE FACULTY OF THE DEPARTMENT OF ADMINISTRATION AND SUPERVISION
IN CANDIDACY FOR THE DEGREE OF
DOCTOR OF EDUCATION

SCHOOL OF EDUCATION

BY
REJOHNNA BELLE RISBY BROWN

ATLANTA, GEORGIA

AUGUST 1975

ABSTRACT OF DISSERTATION

Introduction

This study investigated Black parents' expectations of public schools as it relates to the education of their children. Parents' expectations were operationally derived from statements made by parents in tape-recorded interviews which focused on specific questions about schools and the education received by their children.

Significance of the Study

The significance of this study lies in its possible provision of some empirical information which will assist school personnel in reassessing long held values of appropriate classroom behavior and parent involvement; (2) Provide some input from parents for consideration in curriculum planning in school settings whose populations are predominately Black and of low income families; (3) Establish a body of knowledge from which hypotheses can be formulated and tested scientifically relative to various aspects of the behavior under study; and (4) Provide a basis for better understanding between school personnel and parents in establishing desired educational outcomes. It may demonstrate the critical necessity for involving parents in determining the educational goals and objectives of the school system.

Population

Thirteen Black parents from the population of 8,000 citizens of

Leland, Mississippi, were selected. This population was selected because they were involved in the 1967 signing of a retainer on behalf of themselves and their forty-seven children, petitioning the Federal Courts of that district to enjoin the City of Leland for quality education.

The Study's Hypotheses

The study's hypotheses were:

- Number 1: Black parents will continue to view education through the public schools, as the primary solution to their escape from poverty.
- Number 2: Schools are negligent in their responsibility to Black parents.
- Number 3: Institutional racism leads to both overt and covert discouragement of Black parents' participation in their children's education.

Conclusions and Recommendations

Instructional time has to be couched in a meaningful curriculum, one that is consistent in substance and application with the child's life. The parent involvement and curriculum models presented in this study attempt to set forth guidelines for this consistency. It must be understood, however, in accordance with the precepts of mutual accountability presented, it is the responsibility of these groups to alter and change the guidelines according to the needs of the children associated with these environments.

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

LIST OF TABLES	iv
DEDICATION	v
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS	vi
PRESIDENT'S CHARGE	vii
Chapter	
I. INTRODUCTION	1
Systemic Perspective	4
Statement of the Problem	6
Significance of the Study	7
Scope and Limitations.	7
Hypothesis 1	8
Hypothesis 2	8
Hypothesis 3	8
II. DISCUSSION OF RELATED LITERATURE	10
Summary	17
III. METHODOLOGY	19
Population	19
Interview	20
Interview Guide Construction	20
Data Collection	20
IV. ANALYSIS OF DATA	22
Hypothesis 1	22
Hypothesis 2	24
Hypothesis 3	26
Contextual Summary of the Research Findings	29
V. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS	33
Parent Involvement Model	34
Goals and Objectives	34
Parents Structure	34

Functions	35
Grievance Committee	36
Personnel Committee	36
Educational Committee	37
Volunteer Committee	37
Public Relations Committee	37
Model Curriculum	38
Summary	43

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APPENDICES:

A. Evolution of the Problem	45
B. Sample Interview Guide	49
C. Complete Interview Session Number 1	52
D. Complete Interview Session Number 2	63
E. Complete Interview Session Number 3	75

SELECTED BIBLIOGRAPHY	83
---------------------------------	----

LIST OF TABLES

1. Income and Number of Children for Respondents	21
2. Number of Responses and Percent of Agreement with Categories Identified for Hypothesis 1	22
3. Number of Responses and Percents for Hypothesis 2	24
4. Number of Responses and Percents for Hypothesis 3	27

DEDICATION

To my husband, William, of twenty-three years, without whose love, patience, and assistance this research would not have been possible, and to my son, William Arthur, and my daughters, Jannas Etheldra, ReJohnna Belle, and Vivian Louise, who I hope will never know the agony of being seen as Black first and only incidentally as human beings.

ReJohnna Belle Risby Brown
August 1, 1975

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

It becomes extremely difficult to isolate and thank the numerous persons who have contributed in one way or another to what I have achieved and accomplished. However, nothing would have been possible were it not for my mother, Mrs. Mary Brooks, without whom there would be no ReJohnna. So to mother, who dared to bring three children, Joseph Clifton, Jessie Louise, and me, into a world still struggling with basic human equality, I owe you my dearest thanks and appreciation.

To Dr. Sidney Estes, who pushed for my admission to the doctoral program, thank you for believing in me.

A special expression of gratitude is extended to Dr. Ronald Kilpatrick, Committee Chairman, Dr. Robert Hatch and Dr. Clark Carnal, committee members, for the humanism, guidance and direction during the times that I needed it most. Dr. Ronald Kilpatrick was extremely helpful in the final writing of this study.

To Dr. Barbara Jackson, Director of the Doctoral Program in Education Administration and committee member, I am deeply indebted for her suggestions and encouragement in the research that leads to this study.

It was Dr. Creigs Beverly and Dr. Ricardo Millet, of the School of Social Work, Professor Dan Young, of the Department of Political Science, and committee member, who spent quite a bit of their time helping me accomplish such a gigantic task.

I owe my deepest gratitude to Barbara I. Whitaker, committee member and personal friend, who constantly reminds me that the greatest work is yet undone, "that of providing quality education for Black children" and who refuses to accept the theory of the inherent inferiority of Blacks. Her assistance, encouragement and guidance in all aspects, while here at Atlanta University, cannot be expressed in the space provided.

And finally, I wish to thank Dean Laurie Johnson, Dean of Students, my colleagues: Carroll Frances Hardy, Lillie Hopkins, Natilon Hunter, Robert (Bob) Jones, and Selena Bell, who stuck with me to the end.

PRESIDENT'S CHARGE

"You cannot cop out by letting society go its way, while you go your way. You must be concerned, committed and prepared to forge new paths, and you must remember, that before one becomes a lawyer, a doctor, a business executive, a teacher, a social worker, or a librarian, one needs to be a man or a woman who knows himself or herself".

Dr. Thomas D. Jarrett, President
Atlanta University
Summer Commencement Exercises
August 2, 1974

TO HATE ONE'S SELF AND ONE'S PEOPLE

IS NOT NORMAL

TO PERPETUALLY WISH TO BE LIKE OTHER PEOPLE

IS NOT NORMAL

TO ACT AGAINST ONE'S SELF AND ONE'S COMMUNITY

IS NOT NORMAL

THAT WHICH IS NORMAL FOR US

WILL NEVER BE NORMAL FOR US

- - - - - AS LONG AS THE ABNORMAL DEFINE WHAT NORMALITY IS

The Black World
June 1972
Don L. Lee

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

This study is concerned with an analysis of the expectations of Black parents toward schools and the education of their children. Because so much of the analysis of Black children's performance in school has been directed at the parents, this study is of utmost importance to the writer. There are a number of arguments advanced, some will be presented here, which suggest that one of the reasons Black children do poorly in school is largely because the parents are unable or unwilling to provide the necessary support.

Hunt views the problem of poor academic performance of Black children to be associated with the language style of parents. He makes this obvious when writing about the Black parent

These parents themselves have often failed to utilize prepositional relationship with precision, and their syntax is confused. Thus, they serve as poor models for their young children.¹

Deutsch, writing on the same subject, states:

In observation of lower-class homes, it appears that speech sequence seems to be temporarily very limited and poorly structured syntactically. It is thus not deficit in the children's language development, it is syntactical organization and subject continuity.²

¹J. McV. Toueale Hunt, "The Prevention of Incompetence," Research Contributions from Psychology to Community Health (October 1969), p. 201.

²C. Deutsch, "The Disadvantaged Child and the Learning Process,"

The study of Hess, Shipman, Brophy and Bear propose that Black children suffer from restricted codes of language while the advantaged have an elaborate code of language. The problem, as they see it, is caused by inadequate verbal interaction between mother and child.³ Bernstein who established the term "restricted code" for the low income children also concludes that parent model is the most significant cause of the problem of the poor child.⁴ Ausbel stresses two undesirable features of child-rearing which they assume to be typical of low income Black families. One is harsh authoritarianism of parents who emphasize punitive forms of control while placing considerable social and emotional distance between themselves and their children. The other feature is the early relaxation of parental supervision which makes the child precariously independent of adult involvement while exposing him to the exaggerated socializing influences of the peer groups. In combination with the child's growing awareness of the stigma attached to being Black in a white-dominated society, these conditions, as they see them, are supposed to create a personality marked by feelings of unworthiness, lack of self controlling mechanisms, and hostile rejection of adult values.⁵

Education in Depressed Areas, 2nd ed. (New York: University Teachers College Press, 1968), p. 70.

³R. Hess, V. Shipman, J. Brophy, and R. Bear, The Cognitive Environments of Urban Preschool Children (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1968), p. 101.

⁴B. Bernstein, "Linguistic Codes, Hesitation, Phenomena and Intelligence," American Anthropologist 66 (April 1964): 28.

⁵B. Ausbel, "How Reversible are the Cognitive and Motivational Effects of Cultural Deprivation? Implications for Teaching the Culturally Deprived Child," Urban Education 40 (December 1964): 16.

Similarly, Bettelheim believes that human personality is shaped in infancy, and that the early characteristics are extremely resistant to change. In the case of Black children, he claims that the earliest experience of life often conditions a life-long distrust of others (including one's teachers and what they teach) and one's self. He further claims that mistrust, shame, and doubt become the dominant characteristics in children from culturally deprived homes or disadvantaged ones. He concludes that Black children's academic failure is determined before he enters kindergarten or first grade.⁶ Another writer who postulates inadequate socialization in the Black home is McClelland. Blacks as a group, he maintains, are lacking the achievement motive because of the matricentric structure of the Black family, and the persistence of child rearing practices that originated in slavery.⁷ Family structure is emphasized by Moynihan who points to the relatively high incidence of father absence in lower class families as a major cause of academic indifference and failure on the part of the Black child, particularly males. Presumably, father deprived boys, lacking a masculine role model with which to identify, develop personalities marked by impulsivity, effeminacy, and immature dependency.⁸

Oscar Lewis proposed that nothing can be done for the Black child

⁶B. Bettelheim, "Teaching the Disadvantaged," NEA Journal 54 (September 1965): 12.

⁷D. C. McClelland, The Achieving Society (New York: Van Nostrand Press, 1961), p. 207.

⁸D. P. Moynihan, The Negro Family: The Case for National Action (Washington: United States Department of Labor, 1965), p. 14.

until the culture from which he comes is changed.⁹

If one is to accept these reports, he must be willing to deny the language, culture, and styles of others unlike himself. Research with a clinical bias concludes that the Black child can only benefit and become a part of the educational system when he becomes white-middle class. The implications drawn from this research is that there is only one language. If a child does not speak that language, he has no language. This type of research provides justification for the school's refusal to deal in depth with the problems of the Black child. Such research also serves to legalize and legitimize institutional racism. The assumptions are seemingly, that our educational institutions are essentially sound and if Black children have problems, it must be due to intellectual, cultural or social inferiority of them and their parents.

Systemic Perspective

This approach maintains that the schools fail to educate Blacks and other socially and economically denied youth. The schools offer inequitable education and destroy the dignity of minorities and other denied youth through subtle discriminations such as its evaluation system (how student performances are evaluated) which is either by objective tests, which aren't standardized to treat effectively and intelligently the problems of the disadvantaged, or by subjective opinions of teachers who are essentially drawn from a white-oriented background with elitist orientation and race class biases. Because of the lack of pluralism in the

⁹O. Lewis, Preschool Breakthrough (New York: Public Relations Association, 1970), p. 87.

selection of teachers, this selection can only lead to the perpetuation of miseducation of Blacks. It can also perpetuate myths from the past that, even though untrue, shape people's perception of who and what are problems and what ought to be done about them.¹⁰

The relevance of the curriculum (whether the curriculum relates in any way to the children) is very important if the school is to meet the needs of Black children.

Lack of perceptual power of people from different backgrounds and holding decision making positions in the schools (superintendents, Boards of Education, etc.) are factors that must be understood when approaching school problems. These factors never appear to be really articulated and explored. One of the reasons they are not articulated and explored is because those in charge of the inequitable systems are the ones that are being evaluated by themselves as to whether they are fair or unfair and consistently prove themselves free of bias.

How the school selects its staff, evaluates student performance, and develops curriculum are very important aspects of the school's function. The school is guilty of institutional racism when it refuses to (1) evaluate Black students as being intellectually competent, (2) engage in affirmative action so that persons from different backgrounds can truly function at every level of the school, (3) integrate its curriculum by building in respect for language, art, music, and history, as well as respect in the areas of politics, interpersonal relationships, and work for the contribution of a Black society. Pearl, analyzing the

¹⁰ Arthur Pearl, The Atrocity of Education (New York: New Critics Press, 1971), p. 170.

systemic approach for its implications for educational commitment and parental involvement states that, the goal of education in a technically advanced society is to enable every citizen to exercise autonomy in an inter-dependent world. In analyzing the systemic approach, he maintains that the school now has the responsibility for:

- (1) The consideration or choice of life career. Everyone regardless of background of circumstance, should have the opportunity to compete equally for desirable employment.
- (2) The ability to exercise intelligent choice in democratic discrimination.
- (3) The acumen to make intelligent choice in cultural matters. Everyone must not only be able to exercise choice in enjoyment of general cultures but must be able to appreciate the contribution of the variety of cultures and sub-cultures that make up a pluralistic society.
- (4) The ability to develop oneself and live harmoniously with one's neighbors. Everyone must be provided the 'know how' to choose among the myriad social roles available to him, those personality characteristics which provide him the greatest gratification. He must also develop those skills and sensitivities that will keep him from impinging on the growth and enjoyment of others in a world where man is thrust in ever-more crowded and complicated relations with his neighbors.¹¹

Statement of the Problem

As previously stated in the introduction, this study is concerned with an analysis of the expectations of Black parents of the functions and roles of the public schools, in a rural school setting. The population of the community is predominantly Black and composed of low income families.

¹¹Ibid., p. 174.

Significance of the Study

The significance of this study lies in its possible provision of some empirical information which will assist school personnel in reassessing long held values of appropriate classroom behavior and parent involvement; (2) Provide some input from parents for consideration in curriculum planning in school settings whose populations are predominantly Black and composed of low income families; (3) Establish a body of knowledge from which hypotheses can be formulated and tested scientifically relative to various aspects of the behavior under study; and (4) Provide a basis for better understanding between school personnel and parents in establishing desired educational outcomes. It may demonstrate the critical necessity for involving parents in determining the educational goals and objectives of the school system.

Scope and Limitations

This study is limited to thirteen parents who have children in the Leland Public Schools of Leland, Mississippi and in 1967 signed retainers, on behalf of themselves and their children, enjoining the City of Leland to provide "quality education" for their children. (See Appendix A) No attempt was made to determine if the school or home had the greatest influence on the child's behavior; only the responses each group had to certain behaviors in the school system were examined.

Since there had been little or no previous Black parent involvement in the schools in Leland prior to 1967, no comparisons were made with other parents, students, teachers or other community persons relative to this study, with the exception of those studies which appear in the review of the literature.

This study is concerned only with parent expectations not in comparing their views with the past or with school people.

Against a background of theory and logic generated by the systemic perspective, this study investigated the following propositions. Because the school will continue to be perceived by Black parents as a means by which one can escape the ravages of injustice and poverty, rather than institutions which assure opportunity, they will continue to want their children to be educated through the public school systems. Barring other kinds of support and sponsorship systems, parents perceive the primary solution to their way out of poverty as the public schools.

Hypothesis 1. Black parents will continue to view education through the public schools, as the primary solution to their escape from poverty.

Hypothesis 2. Schools are negligent in their responsibility to Black parents.

The school makes no effort to explain to Black parents what their roles are or to negotiate their roles from a vantage point of mutual respect; the parents really do not know what to do to help their children.

It is the writer's assumption that the school is essentially unable to examine itself and because it is riddled with a kind of elitist bias and has not systematically analyzed how racism intrudes into all programs, there is both subtle and non-subtle discouragement of parents participating in their children's education.

Hypothesis 3. Institutional racism leads to both overt and covert discouragement of Black parents' participation in their children's education.

Chapter II contains: (a) discussion of related literature and (b) summary.

Chapter III contains: (a) methodology, (b) population, (c) interview, (d) interview guide construction and (e) data collection.

Chapter IV contains: (a) analysis of data, (b) hypothesis 1, (c) hypothesis 2, (d) hypothesis 3, and (e) contextual summary of research findings.

Chapter V contains: (a) conclusions and recommendations, (b) parent involvement model, (c) curriculum model and (d) summary.

CHAPTER II

DISCUSSION OF RELATED LITERATURE

It is necessary to examine to some extent the preceding theories in Chapter I and their implications for Black families and school programs which attribute failure in school to deficits in Black children and their families.

Arthur R. Jensen's recent report, which suggests that Blacks, on the average, are genetically inferior to whites blithely dismissed the consequences of white racism.¹ That he had a need to produce such evidence was much more consonant with white America's need to continue to justify inhumane actions against Black people. Whether the writers of this caliber intend them or not, their statements clearly imply that improving schools is a waste of time since education has little effect on later achievement.

When one talks about any form of human behavior, it has to be discussed and analyzed in accordance with the life experience. This is true both in terms of individual experiences and those which are a function of the person's reference group. Further, how that reference group is viewed and responded to by the broader society is important. This is necessary not only from the standpoint of understanding the immediate

¹A. R. Jensen, "How Much Can We Boost I.Q. and Scholastic Achievement," Harvard Education Review 39 (March 1972): 35-36.

behavior of Black families but also in terms of the historical progression of circumstances and events which may lend explanatory significance to and for the behavior.

The character of the Black family during the various stages of its development has been affected by the social isolation of Blacks in American society, Schultz states:

The lack of opportunity for the Black male to participate freely in the economic organization and his subordination to whites as well as the general exclusion of Blacks from political activities have all affected the organization and the functioning of the Black family. It represents in a sense the price the Black man has been forced to pay in order to survive in the American society. Yet, this has not been the survival of a biological group but of a sociologically defined group, and it has been the family which has assured the survival of the Black man in America.²

As a result of new developments in the environment of the Black family, mainly urbanization, the Black man will face even greater stresses in his personal life and in his dealings with outside institutions. During these changes and even crises, the Black family will continue to play an important role in helping its members develop and further enhance their own identity as it relates to their growth and development in American society.

In trying to understand the situation of Blacks in America, the role of the Black family in this total complex process cannot be overlooked. The Black family is imbedded in a network of mutually interdependent relationships with the Black community and with the wider society.

²David Schultz, "Variations in the Father Role in Complete Families," The Black Family (Belmont: Woodsworth Publishing Co., 1971), p. 216.

The Black family includes within itself several subsystems: that of husband-wife, those of father-son, father-daughter, mother-son, brother-brother, sister-sister, etc. The Black community includes within itself a number of institutions which may also be viewed as subsystems. These institutions may include the educational systems, the health system, the legal system, and the economic system. Blacks have been systematically excluded from active and equal participation in each of these major subsystems of the larger society, yet all the while have been heavily influenced by them. These associations and institutions that Black children encounter in their community are an indispensable part of their socialization process. Billingsley, states:

It is this network of social complexity which makes it difficult for us to blame individuals or families for the problems Black people face in this society. It is an urgent necessity for us to struggle at both the individual and the family level to help fortify Black children, ourselves and the communities against the forces of racism and evil and to help in waging the struggle for survival.³

Billingsley, writing on the same subject, further states

It seems as though most institutions in our communities do not grow out of our own culture but are designed by others out of their own culture and needs and then imposed on us.⁴

Scanzoni continues

It is very clear that whatever others may do on our behalf, we must accept the responsibility for defining our situation, developing our own programs, prescribing the role others must play in the process and monitoring the programs designed to aid us in the struggle toward liberation as a people and toward self-fulfillment as individuals.⁵

³Andrew Billingsley, Black Families and Their Struggle for Survival (New York: Harper and Row, 1974), p. 70.

⁴Ibid.

⁵John Scanzoni, The Black Family in Modern Society (Boston:

Black children in particular need to receive the kind of nurture, care, love and physical and emotional support which will fortify them to run the race in later years as they begin to encounter the formal institutions of society.

In terms of serving as models for their children, parents display roles which are important in the socialization process. Occasionally, in viewing lower class socialization patterns, two factors are usually attributed in understanding the family situation. One is that the situation is the result of some incipient "weakness" in the Black family system per se; the other is that there is a distinctive lower class culture that inevitably produces those circumstances. The Black family may be less functional than white families partly due to its being excluded from the dominant society. At every level, particularly the economic, the larger society has effectively excluded Blacks from participation in the total process. In essence, it is suggested that low income families are inadequately socialized. When viewing the overall situation, it would seem as though low income problems in general do have a viable and functional affect on the socialization process in terms of adequately preparing the Black family with certain survival skills in order to deal with society and its oppressive institutions. If this were the case, however, then Black families would be totally disintegrating and perhaps non-existing at this time. The point being that the Black family does and is continuing to provide for its members—socially, economically, emotionally, in whatever way it can.

Black Americans are sharply overrepresented among the impoverished and socially disadvantaged. However, statistics relating

to 'problem families' or 'lower class' families as has so often been ignored in the literature. Indeed, about 75 percent of all Black families are stable and perhaps as many as 90 percent are self-supporting.⁶

Even though Blacks have been excluded from the total system, in particular the economic system, they still are entitled to gain assimilation into one aspect of our society--the opportunity structure. Assimilation in this sense means first-rate schools, equality in job-hiring, equality in pay and advancement. This in turn does have some impact upon the socialization of Black children since economics play an important role in family functioning. As a result of separation, in many cases, from the opportunity structure, many Blacks have become part of the lower economic class. Thus, many families have had to function in such a way that would enable their children to operate effectively in an impersonal, complex, achievement-oriented setting such as American society. It is in part because of the opportunity structure, both historical and contemporary, that studies of Black and white behavior, even when they control for social class, are not comparing comparable experiences.

Consider, for example, the lower class:

The American caste-class system has served, over the years, to concentrate the Black population in the low sector of the economy. In 1971, six out of every ten Black families had an income of less than \$6,000 per year. This situation among whites was just the reverse; six out of every ten white families had over \$6,000 a year at their disposal. This is the income gap. Discrimination in employment creates a job ceiling, most Blacks being in blue-collar jobs.⁷

Phillips writing on the same subject, states:

At all levels of the Black community, there are obstacles which are associated with the color bar which restrict their

⁶Andrew Billingsley, Black Families in White America, p. 206.

⁷St. Claire Drake, "Folkways and Classways Within the Black Ghetto,"

resources, opportunities, and choices and consequently their ability to survive, to conform if they wish to, and to reach the level of social achievement of which they are capable. Yet the low income Black family faces three insidious problems. One is poverty, the other is prejudice, and the third is historical subjugation in his own country because of his race.⁸

There are a great many things we can do to fortify the sense of somebodyness in Black children. As they grow in consciousness, they develop a more positive conception of themselves and the world. As Black children grow older their needs, like the needs of most children, become more complex and their demands more pressing. There are several things which may be done in this area.

The best and most lasting means of transmitting to our children a sense of worth, dignity, and somebodyness is first to love and accept ourselves as we are. Then, to love and accept the children as they are.⁹

Also we can teach songs of our heritage—religious songs, spirituals, gospels, etc. Music as well as forms of dances are means of transmitting our culture. Dancing is an important means of expression which enables children to think well of themselves, to master something and enjoy it and contribute to the enjoyment of others.

Books are a major source of child development. Despite television, children still like to read and to be read to, especially in their early years. Our talk is to capture their fascination for reading and help them develop a sustained interest in it, and to help expose them to reading material which depicts Black people in a positive light.¹⁰

The Making of Black America (New York: Athenum, 1969), p. 448.

⁸Billingsley, Black Families and Their Struggle for Survival, p. 50.

⁹Elizabeth Herzog, "Is There a Breakdown of the Negro Family?" The Family Life of Black People (New York: Athenum, 1969), p. 331.

¹⁰Carol Stack, All Our Kin (New York: Harper and Row, 1974), p. 127.

Some of these talks will be individual, others will center around the family, still others in the Black community, and still others must be carried out in the larger society. In essence, Billingsley states that the goal of Black family life is to produce competent individuals, people able to be, to know, to do, and above all, to think, to produce competent individuals able to conquer some major aspects of their inner and outer environments in order to survive, to perpetuate the race and make some contributions to the larger society.

Much has been said about the various controversial issues in regards to the Black family.

The controversy centers mainly around the following points: (1) whether the Black family is crumbling at a disastrous rate, (2) whether the amount of breakdown that exists is primarily due to poverty or to cultural inheritance or to a cycle of self-perpetuation, (3) whether the remedy is to be sought primarily through conducting a remedial campaign aimed directly at the Black family.¹¹

In viewing the situation of the Black family; it seems as though several patterns in the family should be reiterated and connected to the conclusions. One issue which continually seems to face the Black family is the job situation. The problem of joblessness is, of course, linked primarily to the plight of the Black family. It is one basic issue which needs to be resolved if the hopelessness of those involved is to be alleviated. In all facets of American life, the future course of the Black family in America is tied to the capability of Black society to participate fully in the decisions that affect its own destiny, plus the destiny of the society as a whole.

¹¹Ibid., p. 132.

Many people—politicians, social workers, urban planners, and social scientists have suggested remedies within the existing social system designed to alleviate poverty, and to provide the opportunity to share in the economic benefits of our affluent society.¹²

Summary

The problem historically associated with research on Black families has been the inability of the contemporary and often quoted studies on the education of the poor, in general, and Blacks in particular, to transcend Western standards or normalcy (Euro-Americans). This inability or unwillingness to comply and meet Western standards of normalcy has resulted in the classification of any behavior antithetical to such standards as pathological.

What this chapter has attempted to do then is to provide an analytical framework for the transcendency process. If viewed and understood in light of significance and importance, the information provided herein, should assist future research in coming to grips with alternate realities for differential groupings and in their response patterns to such groupings.

The most unique thing about the contemporary studies presented is that they blame the problem of Black children's low performance in school on the inadequacies of the Black family.

When placed in a white research perspective of educational involvement of Black parents, one can only generate the following conclusions:

1. Black parents are incapable of participating in their children's education.

¹²Op. cit., p. 314.

2. Chaotic Black families do not allow the children to develop intellectually.
3. The child should be taken away from the family as soon as possible; preferably at age six months.
4. If the child is not to be taken away from the Black home, the family must be reorganized.
5. Cognitive growth only occurs when "Standard English" is the language spoken.

However, based upon the works of Black researchers as evidenced by the works of Billingsley, Drake, Stack, Hill, etc., it can be concluded in essence then, the various patterns which have evolved from the Black family in the ghetto can be regarded as an adaptive and functional mechanism which insures its survival. The Black urban family, embedded in cooperative domestic exchange, proves to be an organized tenacious, active, lifelong network. In summary then, it seems quite remarkable that in spite of the limited avenues and opportunities open to Blacks that they have, in many instances, maintained a viable, functional and efficient family system.

CHAPTER III

METHODOLOGY

This study investigated selected Black parents and their expectations of public schools as they relate to the education of their children. Parents' expectations were operationally derived from statements made by parents in tape-recorded interviews which focused on specific questions about the role of schools and the education received by their children.

The following procedures were used to study this problem and report the findings: (1) The population was selected; (2) An instrument was constructed; (3) Data were collected through group interviews and (4) An analysis of that data was carried out and then conclusions were drawn from that analysis.

Population

Thirteen Black parents from the population of 8,000 citizens in Leland, Mississippi, were selected. This population was selected because they were involved in the 1967 signing of a retainer on behalf of themselves and their forty-seven children, as previously stated in the first chapter, petitioning the Federal courts of that district to enjoin the city of Leland for quality education.

The family income of the parents ranged from a low of \$3,000.00 to a high of \$6,000.00. (See Table 1, page 21)

Interview

The group interview was used to develop a spirit of informality and trust. This was considered to be an important innovation in this study. Questions and responses from each parent were typed exactly as stated. Because of previous experiences in working with parents in this area, as pointed out in Appendix A, the writer felt that an attempt to collect data through a questionnaire would have been much less effective.

The group interviews in this study ran a minimum of two and one half hours. There were three interview sessions. It was expected that considerable small talk and important informal discussions would transpire before the subjects "got down to business".

Interview Guide Construction

An interview guide was constructed and utilized to generate conversation around specific issues concerning Black parents' expectations of the schools in relation to the role and functions of the public school system in relation to their children's education.

Data Collection

To analyze the data and test the hypotheses, a content analysis procedure¹ was used. The systematic procedures utilized were as follows:

1. The tape and typescripts of the tapes were reviewed and the writer placed the contents in categories relating to the hypotheses;
2. Categories were identified, by the writer, and the

¹C. V. Good and D. E. Scates, Methods of Research: Educational, Psychological, Sociological (New York: Appleton-Century-Crofts, Inc., 1954), p. 670.

number and percent of agreements were placed in their identified categories.

TABLE 1
INCOME AND NUMBER OF CHILDREN FOR RESPONDENTS

Respondent	Income	Number of Children
1	\$ 5,500	8
2	5,500	6
3	6,000	1
4	3,500	1
5	4,000	3
6	5,600	5
7	3,000	4
8	5,600	6
9	3,300	2
10	5,500	2
11	3,600	2
12	5,600	3
13	5,600	4

CHAPTER IV

ANALYSIS OF DATA

Utilizing the research procedures stated in Chapter three, the three hypotheses as stated originally were accepted. This chapter will present the findings for each hypothesis that was tested.

Hypothesis 1: Black parents will continue to view education through the public schools as the primary solution to their escape from poverty.

A content analysis generated five categories relating to Hypothesis 1. The results were overwhelming in the direction of this hypothesis. The results are shown in Table 2.

TABLE 2

NUMBER OF RESPONSES AND PERCENT OF AGREEMENT WITH
CATEGORIES IDENTIFIED FOR HYPOTHESIS 1

Response	Number	Percent
Education is important because we live in a credential society.	13	100.0
Education is especially important because it is a passport to society's jobs.	13	100.0
Without education there will be nothing for a Black child to do. Because with education the Black child will still have a lot of problems.	12	92.31
With growing technology, education is essential for Black children in order just for them to survive.	13	100.0

Therefore, based on the writer's analysis, Hypothesis 1 was supported.

The following are some typical statements the researcher felt supported Hypothesis 1:

You can't do nothing worthwhile unless you have an education.

In this day and age you are lost without an education.

I think it's the most important thing a person can have to get ahead.

Education is very important. I feel that a child without education now is really going to be left out of things because even educated Black people are having problems now.

It's vital for them to learn everything they possibly can. I am working trying to finish and I tell my children that if I feel the importance as old as I am, they will really need even more education when they get grown.

I feel the same way. You have to have an education, there is no getting around it. I didn't have the chance but I want to see them with it.

Well, I have learned from the Head Start that if you don't have a top education you are limited. I am a teacher-aide because I didn't finish school, but I can do more with the children than the teacher. The parents look for me when they come to the center, because I have been knowing them all my life and we don't have no problems talking and understanding each other. I can't work in the schools because I don't have the GED (General Education Development) test. That's the catch to it, I am limited. If I had the GED, I could work other places but I am happy where I am. Sometimes I want to get in the schools to straighten them out. (all laugh).

Whites can get jobs as soon as they finish high school. They tell the Blacks they can't hire them because they don't have experience. How can they get experience unless they work. To get a decent job, when the kids do finish high school they have to leave here and go up north anyway.

In conclusion, Black parents' responses revealed that they not only felt that education was important but vital for their children's survival.

Hypothesis 2: Schools are negligent in their responsibility to Black parents.

This hypothesis dealt specifically with Black parents' perceptions of how the school responded to involvement of Black parents in their children's education. The findings are presented in Table 3.

TABLE 3
NUMBER OF RESPONSES AND PERCENTS
FOR HYPOTHESIS 2

Response	Number	Percent
The school does not appreciate suggestions made by Black parents.	12	92.31
The school only tries to involve parents when it is convenient to the administration.	11	84.67
Most times when Black parents are invited to the school, it is for negative reasons.	11	84.67
The school does not recognize Black parents as being able to make a contribution to their children's education.	11	84.67
The school does not inform Black parents of their children's poor performance until it's too late to do anything about it.	12	92.31

Analysis of the data related to Hypothesis 2 resulted in the writer accepting the Hypothesis 2 as stated. A content analysis revealed five dominant categories related to Hypothesis 2. In every category, the results indicated strong agreement with the response categories identi-

fied by the writer.

The following are statements of the Black parents' supporting Hypothesis 2.

They always say our children are dumb because they don't have any home training. They never have anything hardly good to say about them. It's mostly always bad.

The least thing happen the Blacks are blamed. You have to go up there and let your hair down with them.

I went to sit in on a class one day and I thought the man was going to have a heart attack, so I left.

We never know when anything is going on in school. The school won't tell you anything. I know everything that happen in Head Start but nothing from the school.

I had to ask about the PTA when I took my child to sign for books the first day. I paid \$1.00 for dues and ain't hear nothing about it yet.

If we would offer suggestions they would say we are trying to run the school.

When my child does something wrong they let me know. When he does something good however small, I have a helluva time finding out unless the child tells me. They have never tried to involve me as a parent. They do send literature home about potlucks, PTA meetings are just to eat and talk about little or nothing.

I haven't been involved since my child was in Head Start. That's where they really show concern for everyone in the household.

I am up there all the time. They don't invite me, I just go. It's a warm cunning, smooth kind of thing and it's cold. I don't go up there grinning when I am not tickled and scratching when I don't itch.

I'll tell the truth, I ain't been up there. I'm gonna tell it like it is. They haven't sent for me, so I don't see any need to go. They called about some kind of coffee sip, I told her that I don't have time for that.

I am never comfortable, I could tell that I wasn't wanted.

They act as if you might bite. They won't talk to you unless they are at school. When you see them out they ignore you.

You have to meet them on their grounds.

If we all get together and go it might make a difference but they wouldn't listen to us by ourself. They would laugh at us.

They might listen and promise to make changes but deep within they would know they aren't going to do anything.

In conclusion, the findings of this investigation revealed that the school is negligent in its responsibility to parents.

Hypothesis 3: Institutional racism leads to both overt and covert discouragement of Black parents' participation in their children's education.

The third hypothesis dealt with the effect of the school's unwillingness, as perceived by the Black parents, to systematically analyze how racism intrudes all phases of school activities and the resultant effect on Black parents' expectations. The results were extremely consistent with Hypothesis 3.

A content analysis of the data revealed four categories relating to Hypothesis 3. In all categories, the data indicated that Hypothesis 3 was true. (See Table 4).

TABLE 4
 NUMBER OF RESPONSES AND PERCENTS
 FOR HYPOTHESIS 3

Response	Number	Percent
The school personnel are hostile toward Black parents.	12	92.31
If Black parents made suggestions to the schools, in spite of the fact that the school did not want them to, their children would be mistreated by the school.	13	100.0
White teachers, from middle-class backgrounds cannot understand or identify with Black children's problems.	13	100.0
The school only tries to involve Black parents for disciplinary reasons.	12	92.31.

The following are statements, of Black parents, supporting Hypothesis 3:

They would think we were crazy and wouldn't even talk to us because we don't count.

They would say we are trying to run the school.

They would be meaner than they are to the child.

Yes, I have talked with them. They told me my child is unusually bad and he behaves when they spank him. They also told me he talks all the time in the room and never wants to sit down and listen.

They would pressure them in some way . . .

I feel they would always feel that if it wasn't for the parent of the child maybe trouble would not have started. That's the way they think.

No, because you see you have to understand that the whites are still in control of the school. They would just label me a rabble rouser as they did back in 1955 when we were marching. What we need to do is try to get some Black

people in control of the school. The job that needs to be done cannot be done by a precious few.

Yes, they often have problems understanding the white teacher's way of talking, what she is saying, and what she wants them to do.

The need for more Black teachers in the schools especially in lower grades. If a Black child asked a white teacher, "Where are you coming from" she would know the child doesn't understand him. If he said this to a white teacher she wouldn't know what he is talking about.

Take for an example, if you go to a white church you don't enjoy it because you don't know what they are doing or talking about. You just sitting up there looking silly. Because if you say Amen. . . everybody looking at you. (Everyone laughs) So that's just like school, in all these schools, they should at least have one Black teacher in each room.

The schools where my children attended before moving here had to have mostly Black teachers. The community demanded it because they found Black kids didn't feel like telling their problems to the whites, whereas, they could go and talk with the sister, no problem. They had a class here one day talking about foods and my little boy, the teacher asked what kinds of food do different kinds of people eat? So my little boy jumped and said we like chitterlings. When I went to talk to the teacher she wanted to know what chitterlings were. I mean that kind of thing you know that would stand out in somebody's mind when you're different.

My daughter got into a fight at the school. While she was fighting a white guy poured some Nair, Neet, or whatever it is in my child's hair and left a large bald spot. My daughter said she saw the teacher looking out the window and she knew she saw it. The next day I went to the school and this white chick swore she knew nothing about it.

The white teachers don't want to get involved. I think they are scared of Black kids.

The school's teacher-aides are different from Head Start. They use the Black aides to talk with Black parents. In Head Start they help teach, which is a more better job than being a go-between person.

Well, they say you are welcome anytime but they don't mean it. I don't see much good in talking after the child gets his report card no way. The damage is done then.

You don't hear nothing if your child is being good.

I told you, you never know until you get the report card or they send the child home for something else.

In conclusion, the responses of the Black parents in this investigation revealed how institutional racism tends to discourage them from participating in the education of their children.

Contextual Summary of the Research Findings

The findings from the empirical analysis are summarized here, with the specific regard to areas from which answers to major questions of this study can be drawn. It must be made clear to the reader, that because of the limitations inherent in this study, the generalizability of the findings must be subject to common sense appraisal. The findings do, however, have credibility since they were not derived from typical survey research. The unique contribution of this study was the use of the tape recorder for live group interviews and the recording of verbatim responses of Black parents.

The findings reported in summary, in respect to the questions, are as follows:

- a. Contrary to the belief of many researchers, Black parents do view education in a logical perspective and put a great deal of emphasis on their children being educated, even though in many instances, they lack, social, political, educational, and economic power of the white middle-class.
- b. Very few statements made by parents indicated that the school tried to involve them in their children's education and in many cases they believed they were overtly discouraged from participating. Statements were made to the

effect that Black parents felt that the school did not recognize them as being able to make a contribution to their children's education; the school personnel were hostile toward them; and if they insisted that they be involved in school activities, the school personnel would retaliate by mistreating their children.

- c. Based on these findings, the school does not involve the parents in their children's education but tries to use the parents only to control the child. In many instances, the parents are never encouraged to help their children nor do they know when their children are having problems in a specific area. The Black parents are only called when the school feels the child is misbehaving, at that time the school tries to employ the cooperation of parents. Not, however, are parents asked to plan and work out solutions to the problems but used only as authoritarians to extinguish that behavior. Many times when Black parents are called and invited to visit the school, it is only for negative reasons which make the parents feel very uncomfortable.
- d. Organizations of the school also serve to prevent parents from having input in their children's education, as indicated in this research, many parents work and their work hours are the same as their children's school hours. When conferences are set up, they are usually during work hours and in order to participate in such activities, the parents must take a day from work.

The school must begin to think in terms of more effectively serving

the community which may, in terms of time, mean organizing meetings and conferences with parents around school and work hours.

- e. Lack of Blacks in all positions related to the school makes it very awkward for parents as well as the children.

In view of relationships between the Black and white population, it becomes very difficult for the two groups to relate to each other. Schools having predominately white staff and administrators precludes not only parents from participating in their children's education but denies the right of self determination. Black parents not only don't have the opportunity to participate in their children's education, but neither do they have input in the school system as a whole.

- f. It is evidently clear from the findings that it is necessary for the school to institute programs where the poor can be involved in all phases of the school. Such programs may be where people are brought in at a lower level with options for upward mobility.

Although originally, school curriculum was not an area of inquiry in this investigation, its repeated surfacing in the interviews warrants some observation for it becomes evident that school curriculum is another area that serves to disenfranchise Black parents as well as Black children. The curriculum of the school in many instances is totally irrelevant and often time serves to maintain and promote myths. The historical, social, and political realities are ignored as well as the language and the culture of the school. In many instances, it is not the fact that the language is different, but that no effort is made on the part of the school to learn about or to accept languages and

styles of others that are different from the mainstream of the school. Black parents as well as Black children are viewed as lacking something in that they may be different. Therefore, all efforts are aimed at correcting that which is lacking in the Black family.

It therefore becomes evident that the school needs to examine its curriculum for its accuracy and relevance.

The research data derived from this study clearly indicate a need for a different approach to the problem of involving Black parents in educational activities related to their children. The major focus of the traditional researches have blamed Black children's poor classroom performance on Black parents. However, these findings indicate that Black parents are, and want to be involved in the school system, planning, if only on a limited basis. Many of the researchers fail to analyze the behavior of the school and to determine how this behavior is related to the attitudes and behavior of the parents, as the writer here has tried to do. Nor is there any effort to research and analyze the school for its dysfunctions; rather, the Black students are analyzed and not the school itself.

In any situation, be it laboratory or field study, as long as the Black students and their parents are the focus of the research, their behavior will be interpreted as the cause of the problem, and without including the schools, and their staffs as contributors to the dilemma, we will continue to have the same type educational problems.

CHAPTER V

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This study's data have provided evidence to indicate that it is necessary for school systems to institute programs so that Black parents can be effectively involved in all phases of their children's education.

It appears, then, that a critical point is determining what type of parent model and curriculum considerations would best aggregate and implement the feelings, ideas, and expectations of Black parents.

Because the writer believes that the gains made by the child in school must be understood by and built upon the family, and the family structure in order to achieve this goal, an attempt has been made here to develop and present a model for the involvement of the child's parents in the experience their children receives in school.

Lawrence Hawkins, quoting from an article in the 1968 issue of Phi Delta Kappan by James Kint makes the following statement:

Whatever divergent views men like Coleman, Moynihan, and Bowles may have relative to the means by which equality of education is to be achieved, they would all stress the unique importance of people—students, teachers, parents and the community.¹

¹Lawrence Hawkins, "Urban School Teaching: The Personal Touch," in What Black Educators Are Saying. ed. Nathan Wright, Jr. (New York: Hawthorn Books, Inc., 1970), p. 43.

Parent Involvement Model

This plan proposes a Parent Involvement staff, on the top administrative level, whose job description will be centered around working closely with parent groups to improve the school program quality.

The staff's major concern will be to give assistance in helping parents, so that they will have a wide scale of understanding of how to secure information in alleviating some of the problems that this study revealed.

Through surveys and working experiences, parent involvement staff will gain certain kinds of information that will serve as a base for future projects, conferences, and workshops which will bring parents together to share ideas and experiences which will benefit the group as a whole.

The Parent Involvement Staff will intensify their efforts to help parents organize classroom activities on classroom levels to execute parent participation on a Policy Advisory and policy making level.

Goals and Objectives

1. To develop a harmonious relationship with parents to assure them someone cares about their problems.
2. To coordinate activities of the school parent groups.
3. To encourage parents to become more interested in the school and community that affects the lives of their children.
4. To involve parents in the implementation of the curriculum and the decision making process of the entire school system.

Parents Structure

The formal structure by which parents can participate in curriculum

implementation and policy making of the school program in this model will be represented in the following ways:

1. Parent Class Committee. This committee will be set up at the classroom level and will form an organization to work with the principal and his immediate staff for the purpose of improving the entire school.
2. Parent Policy Committee. This committee will be composed of parents only that have been elected by parents of the Classroom Committee organization.

Functions

The Parent Classroom Committee shall carry out at least the following minimum responsibilities:

- (a) Assist teachers, principals, and all other persons responsible for the development of the education program.
- (b) Work closely with classroom teachers and all other competent staff to carry out the daily activities of the school program.
- (c) Plans, conducts, and participates in informal as well as formal programs and activities for school parents and staff.
- (d) Work closely with parent representatives on the Parent Policy Committee in coordinating activities of the school.

The Parent Policy Committee will assist in the development of, and submit recommendations on applications for all school personnel that are approved by the Board of Education. This committee is charged with the responsibility of maintaining a constant observation of the curriculum. This committee shall from time to time, as its members see fit, make recommendations to the Board of Education concerning goals, policies, and procedures in all aspects of the school program being conducted. It is intended that the committee will have a significant role in the formulation of the school policy.

This committee will also have authority to ratify the Board of Education's choice for superintendent and principals at the end of a contract period. The choice of superintendent and principal will in all cases, represent a consent of the members of the Board of Education and the Parent Policy Committee. In cases where the Board and the Policy Committee cannot reach an agreement, the Board and Policy Committee will appoint a committee to arbitrate. The ruling of the arbitrator shall be considered final.

In addition to those listed functions, the Parent Policy Committee shall:

- (a) Serve as a link between public and private organizations, the Board of Education, and the community it serves.
- (b) Have the opportunity to initiate suggestions and ideas for program improvements from classroom committees and submit a report of action to the Board of Education.
- (c) Plan, coordinate and organize county and city-wide activities for parents with the assistance of staff.
- (d) Distribute parent activity funds to classroom committee officers.

Grievance Committee

To establish the smoothest possible working relationship among the school, superintendent, Board of Education, and parents, a permanent grievance committee shall be established to settle all grievances. This committee shall be composed of representatives of the Board of Education and the Parent Policy Committee, with the committee having two members in the majority.

Personnel Committee

The Personnel Committee will be composed of representatives of the

Board of Education and the Parent Policy Committee.

The principal/superintendent shall interview all persons applying for employment. The Parent Policy Committee shall have the power to veto recommendations of the principal/superintendent on all teaching personnel.

Educational Committee

The Educational Committee shall be responsible for acquiring information from the principal/superintendent concerning federal funds and the writing of proposals for parent activities.

This committee also has the responsibility of reviewing reports of classroom parents and monitoring school programs when necessary. It should make suggestions for improvements when reporting its findings.

Volunteer Committee

The Volunteer Committee shall be responsible for recruiting parent volunteers to assist in everyday classroom work and assist the superintendent in securing funds to compensate them for their services.

Public Relations Committee

The Public Relations Committee shall be responsible for establishing communication channels among agencies on local, state, and national levels, and to release news articles to various news media. When called upon this committee shall make oral reports on behalf of parent involvement activities to agencies so requesting.

This model was designed to enhance the growth and development of parents and their children in every segment of the school. It provides staff, parents, and communities with the opportunity to work as teams to

insure their children's most precise development.

Model Curriculum

The primary premise upon which this model is based that while Black school age children do not as a whole fully participate in the broader white controlled society, they nonetheless are exposed to its influences and social ordering processes. As such, they must be able to negotiate their environment, be it their home, their community or the school they attend.

The necessary ability of Blacks to negotiate successfully the different environments to which they are exposed is closely aligned to what Charles A. Valentine calls Bi-Cultural Models for Afro-American Behavior. Valentine proposes a bi-cultural educational model recognizing that many Blacks are simultaneously committed to both Black culture and mainstream culture, and that the two are mutually exclusive as generally assumed.²

Where there are some least common denominators among the diverse ideologies represented in the Black communities of this nation, the model presented here takes into account the present fourway platforms which exist among Black people today. First, there are those who advocate integration, defined here to mean the accessibility of Blacks to all of the rights, privileges, and services available to whites, but wherein such accesses are not dependent upon one's willingness to lose his identity as a Black person. Second, there are others who advocate assimi-

²Charles A. Valentine, "Deficit, Difference, and Bi-Cultural Models of Afro-American Behavior," Harvard Educational Review, May 1971, pp. 134-157.

lation, defined here to mean the process of being totally absorbed in the ways of white Americans with no regard for one's racial identity. Still others, third, are those who advocate separation, defined here to mean the severance of all ties to, or with, white America, and the establishment of a Black-run controlled nation. And, finally, there are those who advocate community control, defined here to mean the ability of an aggregate of people living within certain geographically definable boundaries to decide their own destiny--determining what happens to, in and for their community.

The most recent example of these diverse ideologies manifesting themselves was at the Black political Caucus held in Gary, Indiana, in March of 1972. Many different positions were being advocated and many different methods were suggested to obtain the goals of varied positions. Nevertheless, while methodology varied, goals were pretty much the same, i.e., the right to have influence over one's own destiny and so on.

Given the multifarious makeup of the Black communities with subsequent multifarious experience exposures on the part of Black children, the first major curriculum consideration must be one of determining the ground upon which each group position finds similarity or likeness with other group positions.

The idea here is that there are some least common denominators among all groups regardless of position and ones which can form the basis for a global or super curriculum outline. The use of the phrase "global/super curriculum" is purposeful so as to emphasize the magnitude of possible avenues for attaining these goals. In this way no value is placed on the rightness or wrongness of a particular group's methods for

achieving its individualized objectives, yet it does provide a basis for cross positional communication. Further, this procedure eliminates unilateral decisions on the part of school systems as to what the finished product ought to be, positions which may or may not coincide with the true wants and wishes of different groupings.

As pointed out by Fantini, in a large sense, the school curriculum is a sequence of activities—an environment—through which the learner passes. It is hoped that when the learner passes through this sequence he will acquire certain facts, skills, and attitudes which are appropriate for his role as a mature adult in our society. In this way, the school curriculum is actually a deliberate attempt to transmit to the learner those cultural aspects which will reflect the dominant culture of the society, and yield the most benefit to the society as a whole.³

With the input of parents, children, teachers and other community persons into what constitutes "of most benefit to society," the definition will in all probability become more elastic. If not more elastic, then sub-defined by particular groupings and eclecticised for cross positional communication.

The next important consideration is that learning activities be so arranged that a child does not have to divorce his life experiences in order to comply with, appreciate, or understand experiences different from his own. This point, for example, is supported in the Supreme Court decision which guarantees that a child reared in religious prac-

³Mario D. Fantini and Gerald Weinstein, The Disadvantaged Challenge to Education (New York: Harper and Row Publishers, 1968), p. 42.

tices contrary to those exercised by the school he attends cannot be compelled to participate in said practices. This is not to suggest that such a child not be exposed to religious practices different from his own, but it does clearly indicate that the imposition of these practices upon the child without benefit of free choice is prohibited.

Perhaps a better example of this point can be found by looking at the language many Black school age children speak. Dr. Richard Davis in a speech on student unrest in high schools states: "A Black child who can communicate quite adequately with his friends and family in a language which his white teacher cannot understand is treated in school for a language deficiency; his skill at home becomes a liability at school."⁴

A third consideration is that the learning environment be expanded to mean more than the school house as it has traditionally been known. Such a definition expands to include the child's world, whether it is represented by the neighborhood block, the community at large, city, state, or whatever. Inherent in this third consideration is that a child learns from his total surroundings, and those surroundings thus become the classroom. The significance of community input looms even more importantly in this situation because the degree of a child's learning continuity is heavily dependent upon the degree community persons and schools assist in implementing the educational goals which they help to formulate.

⁴Richard H. Davis, "Causes of Student Unrest in High Schools," (Milwaukee, Wisconsin: The Lake Shore Curriculum Study Council, March 11, 1970).

A fourth consideration is that the role of parents be moved away from one of an advisory nature to a role of true decision making on a continuous basis. Having indicated the importance of continuity for learning experiences, it is also crucial that the learning experiences be arranged so that children exposed to them find practical application for that which is being learned.

What has been presented here as suggested curriculum considerations can be summarized into six phases accompanied by six purposes. They are as follows:

Phase I-- Determination of desired educational outcomes by children, parents, school, and community persons.

Purpose-- To find the least common denominators of each grouping as a base upon which to build the curriculum.

Phase II-- Establish a meaningful curriculum which recognizes and appreciates diversity and one which facilitates the regular and meaningful input of all principals.

Purpose-- To insure that the positions and ideas of parents have proper representation, and that it is intricately involved in carrying out plans leading to the desired outcomes.

Phase III-- Utilize the child's total environment as the source for learning experiences.

Purpose-- To minimize contradictions and frustrations by building upon the rich experiences Black children bring with them to the learning situation.

Phase IV-- Show the practical application of learning experiences to real life situations, and move to future application.

Purpose—To answer the question most children ask themselves, "What does it have to do with me?"

Phase V— Evaluate the total process relative to having or not having reached the desired educational outcomes.

Purpose— To determine the effectiveness of approach; to use as a barometer against which continued use or nonuse of particular methodology is decided.

Phase VI— Feed the results of Phase V back into Phase I.

Purpose— To complete the cycle and serve as a basis for redetermining desired educational outcomes if the evidence indicates such a necessity.

Summary

Nearly every study, report, or book on the problems facing Black children in schools points out that, by and large, Black children are far behind the national average in various aspects of academic performance and achievement. The list of reasons for this situation range from parent, racial oppression, to ill-prepared teachers. Nevertheless, the fact remains that too many Black children fail to realize their maximum growth potential.

Kenneth Clark believes that Black children do not learn because they are not taught.⁵ This problem is obviously critical, so critical that explanations and understandings are incomplete unless coupled with recommendations for improvement.

⁵Kenneth Clark, Dark Ghetto (New York: Harper and Row Publishers, 1965), p. 431.

The extent to which this research has generated usable information relative to Black parents and their expectations of the roles and functions of the public school system, and the extent to which such information finds applicability in a parent involvement and curriculum development model, will determine the integrity and usefulness of this endeavor.

Instructional time has to be couched in a meaningful curriculum, one that is consistent in substance and application with the child's life. The parent involvement and curriculum models presented herein attempt to set forth guidelines for this consistency. It should be emphasized, however, that guidelines are meaningless without actions. It is the responsibility of the parents, school, and the community to act on these suggestions. And, in accordance with the precepts of mutual accountability presented in this research, it is the responsibility of these groups to alter and change the guidelines according to the needs of the children associated with these environments.

APPENDIX A
EVOLUTION OF THE PROBLEM

EVOLUTION OF THE PROBLEM

In 1965, the writer was responsible for writing a Head Start proposal to the Office of Economic Opportunity. After weeks of meeting in the local communities of Washington County, Mississippi, the fundamental outline of the program and structure of the organization were developed for the final approval of the appointed Board of Directors.

Accepting their obligation to serve those impoverished families who had yet to derive the benefits of the poverty program, the Board of Directors approved the submission of a 1.5 million dollar proposal calculated to fulfill these expressed needs. Although this request would serve less than ten percent of the total number of eligible children in the Washington County area, the Office of Economic Opportunity funded the proposal in less than two months.

The Child Development Group of Washington County grew into a program which in 1966-67 involved more than 1,000 children. It was a poverty program governed by the poor, for the poor. Because of the self respect gained by doing for themselves rather than being done for, poor Black parents responded with overwhelming enthusiasm. From the beginning they organized committees, planned for the centers' operations, served on staff, acted as members of the community committees governing the centers, and exercised responsibility in all levels of the Head Start program.

The Black parents, who were actively involved in Head Start centers, never before had any voice in how their children were educated. Many had never been in their children's schools, because they were encouraged not to or because they refused to submit to the humiliating treatment of school authorities. This was the first opportunity they had to work to give their own children the Head Start of which they were deprived in a society which had offered them little more than degradation and fear. Because they felt that the centers were really "their own"; they faced the challenge of providing an education for their children with extraordinary dedication, hard work, and willingness to learn.

It was felt, by the Office of Economic Opportunity, that the dedication demonstrated by Black parents, in this community, reflected a sacrifice and a commitment to overcoming their impoverished conditions that could not be ignored. Consequently, the program is still being funded.

This was the beginning of a creative and stimulating pre-school program in a state which lacks both public kindergartens and compulsory education laws.

As the program grew, Black parent awareness increased. Parents began to stimulate critical dialogue with public school administrators and attempted, with no avail, to implement procedures for involvement in issues affecting their children in the local school system. With no mutual effort on the part of administrators to involve these parents in their children's education in a coherent and orderly fashion, thirteen of these Black parents signed re-

tainers enjoining the district court of their area, on behalf of themselves and their children, for quality education as they had known it in Project Head Start.

On the basis of this experience, the writer believed that it would be helpful while studying Education Administration at Atlanta University to conduct this study.

APPENDIX B
SAMPLE INTERVIEW GUIDE

SAMPLE INTERVIEW GUIDE

- I. What is going on in the school as you understand it?
2. How do you feel about what is happening in the school?
 - a. Are you satisfied with what is happening in the school? Why?
 - b. Give examples of some of the things you are satisfied with?
 - c. Give examples of some of the things you are not satisfied with.
3. What do you think your child should be able to do when he finishes school? Why?
4. Do you feel that the teacher understands your child?
5. Do you think there are special problems that minorities face in school?
6. What kinds of problems do Black children have in school?
7. What role do you play in your child's education?
8. How important is education to you?
9. What kind of education do you think is important?
10. Do you think education is an important thing for your child? Why?
11. What kind of education do you think is unimportant?
12. How does the school fit in those things that are important?
13. To what extent does the school involve you in the education of your child?

- I4. Have they discussed with you what you want for your child?
- I5. Have they asked you to participate in your child's education?
- I6. If you were asked to participate, did you feel comfortable with what you were asked to do?
- I7. Do you feel that the school is receptive to your coming in and making suggestions?
- I8. Does the school ask to see you other than when your child is having problems?
- I9. Do you feel that if you became involved in the education of your child that it might cause problems for the child in school? If so, what kind?
20. When was the last time you went to a school meeting?
 - a. How were you treated?
 - b. Did you comment at the meeting? Why?
 - c. How did they respond to you?

APPENDIX C
COMPLETE INTERVIEW SESSION NUMBER I

- Interviewer: What's going on in the school as you understand it?
- Respondent 2: I'm going to let someone else answer that question.
- Respondent 1: Well, the only thing I know is what my children tell me and that ain't much. I work all the time and I don't get a chance to really find out if what they say is true or not.
- Respondent 3: As far as I can see it is different from what it was before we went to court. Some things are good and some things are bad.
- Interviewer: What things are good and what things are bad?
- Respondent 2: Well, my children say the food is better and they give them more to eat. They have a lady over that now. The principal was running it and they never had well balanced meals. They just served anything he went to town and bought. Now they get a chance to take music in class rather than be in the band or choir.
- (There is a long period of silence)
- Interviewer: What are some of the programs you don't think are good?
- Respondent 2: I don't like them sending the children home so much for little or nothing.
- Interviewer: They do.
- Respondent 2: See, they keep a file on the children and when they get so many marks against them they send them home.
- Interviewer: What are some of the things they are sent home for?
- Respondent 2: Fighting, being late, chewing gum, not having paper or pencil, anything.
- Respondent 3: Right, they sent my boy home last week cause he didn't have on no socks. He had to stay at home for three days.

- Respondent 4: I don't feel the way they do. I have one that goes to school and I think they have a good set up. When I was going to school they didn't have the kind of things they have now. I sent my boy to school the other day and the teacher called me and asked me where he was. I told her he was at school. Bless my Jesus he had been in the pool room all day. I asked him why he didn't go to school and he said school is boring to him. What I put on him I bet he will go from now on.
- Interviewer: What are some of the things that your child will be able to do when he gets out of school?
- Respondent 4: I think it is up to the child hisself.
- Ieterviewer: What do you think the school should be preparing the child to do?
- Respondent 4: Whatever he learns he will be able to do. If he don't try to learn nothing and don't do nothing then he won't be able to do nothing when he gets out. If he learns then he can take care of hisself.
- Respondent 3: My girl wants to be a nurse. She don't learn any of that in school.
- Interviewer: In order to be a nurse there are certain courses she will have to take, are they preparing her for these?
- Respondent 3: I know but she is just IOth grade now and they won't start that until she is in the I2th I think.
- Respondent I: They have certain courses they have to take in junior and senior high and they get only two or three electives. I think they should have more electives because jobs are so scarce now. They should have more subjects to teach jobs.
- Respondent 3: The children choose what they want to study.
- Interviewer: Do you feel the school should tell the

children what they should take?

- Respondent 3: That's their job to tell the children what to do. They are getting paid for that.
- Interviewer: What do you think? (Referring to respondents 2 and 4).
- Respondent 4: I agree that's the school's responsibility.
- Respondent 2: Me too.
- Interviewer: If the school should be responsive to the needs of the child, then why do you feel the school should tell the child what to take?
- Respondent 3: The child is not grown. If a child likes a thing he wants to do it all the time and in that way he won't learn nothing but what he likes. The teacher is there to see that he learns everything whether he likes it or not.
- Interviewer: How do you feel about it? (Referring to respondent D).
- Respondent D: (Nods approval)
- Respondent I: (Continues): You know like my children if they start off making "C's" in their studies they continue to make "C's". They don't go down or come up. They always make "A's" in gym. Their lowest grade is in health habits.
- Respondent 3: Mine make good grades in music all the time. Every teacher show the same grade as the other one. It looks like they get together on it.
- Interviewer: Do you have any idea as to why they come out this way?
- Respondent 2: Mine too. The teacher say they don't talk right.
- Interviewer: What about your child? (Indicating respondent 3).

- Respondent 3: My child is in a special class in reading. I don't understand this. He can read funny books. Sometimes I test him by asking him to read my letters and he can do it. He gives the report in Sunday School every Sunday and brings back groceries off the shelves but yet the teacher say he can't read. If you listen to them teachers up there you would think your child don't have any sense. He is 14 years old and she got him reading with the children that are about 7.
- Interviewer: What about your children? (Indicating respondent 4).
- Respondent 4: Mine is doing alright I guess I don't have no problems.
- Interviewer: Do you feel that the school understands your children?
- Respondent 3: No, they are not there to understand the children. They will tell the children they don't love them. Oee teacher said the parents might but she didn't. They are just there to get their checks so they can buy a home and ride around in their fine big cars and won't even speak to the children and their mothers. They are something.
- Respondent I: My son was swinging on the playground and a white girl wanted the swing. She came up and pushed him out and they started to fighting. The teacher put him in another class. I went up there and asked why was they taking him out of his room. They told me it was to solve the problem. I asked why they didn't put the white child in another class. She started the problem. I asked why? They said, "Well, I don't know what kind of home life your son is having. I said, "I know you don't because you don't visit me. I told them to leave him in that room or they would find out everything they wanted to know about his home life real quick. They left him

in there. I told my son if any of the kids mess with him to fight. Ain't no sense in letting the other children beat up your child all the time. The principal hit my other daughter on the legs in the hall with a strap. She came home. I didn't make her go back because he didn't have that to do. I went up there myself. He told me he was hitting white legs, brown legs, black legs and all and he didn't know or care whose child it was. I told him the next time he hit my child's black legs he had better look up, or I would see to it that he not be able to look at all. I meant that. He was keeping the children standing in the hall while the teachers had a meeting and if they got out of line he hit them. What you think of that?

- Respondent 3: I don't understand why the teachers won't let you know before they send the report card home that your child is failing? It is too late to do anything about it then. If you know before the end maybe something could be done.
- Interviewer: Do you think there are special problems that Black children have in school?
- Respondent 1 and 3: Yeah.
- Interviewer: What are some of these problems?
- Respondent 3: It ain't but a hand full of white children over there but they are always first in everything. When the courts said integrate the schools closed down for two weeks and threw away all of the old books and repainted the entire school. They thought the white children would not leave (all laugh) but when the school term was up most of them left anyway.
- Respondent 2: Yes, that's true. Now, my youngest daughter is in the band and she can really lead but she has to go behind the white girl.

Everything is one white and one Black. If the children choose two Black representatives from their class the teacher will tell them that one will have to be Black and one white-with the white in front all the time. If a Black child raises his hand first the teacher will always call on the white one first. Even Black teachers do this.

- Respondent 3: They always say our children are dumb because they don't have any home training. They never have anything hardly good to say about them. It's mostly always bad.
- Respondent 1: I have a different problem. My child is in a class with most white children. The few they have is in the rooms together mostly. She does anything she wants to do. The teacher don't say nothing. It is just like she is not there. This is the only one in a room like that.
- Respondent 2: The least thing happen the Blacks are blamed. You really have to go up there and let your hair down with them. The counselor is a drag. He can't counsel a cat. (All laugh)
- Interviewer: What about you? (Indicating respondent 4)
- Respondent 4: They do get blamed for a lot of things.
- Interviewer: Do you feel the teachers understand these problems?
- Respondent 3: Sure, they just don't give a damn and they tell the children that.
- Interviewer: What role do you play in the education of your child? As a parent, how do you see yourself?
- Respondent 4: I believe in them learning. I don't want my child to be dumb. I really don't. I work all the time but I want them to learn so they won't have the

hard time I had.

- Respondent 2: I see myself trying to help them get out of school. I want them to get something up here. (Points to head)
- Respondent 1: My children help each other. I have so many. They can teach each other better than I can. I constantly tell them I don't want them to quit. I want them to stay in school.
- Interviewer: How important is education to you?
- Respondent 1: I didn't finish and I regret it every-day of my life. I am trying to make it up through them by telling them to hang in there.
- Respondent 2: I hope and pray to God that they will get a good education.
- Respondent 4: I feel the same way. I didn't finish either and I feel so bad when they ask me a question that I can't answer. I feel really bad. I wish I could go back and work right beside them.
- Interviewer: Why do you think education is so important for your children?
- Respondent 1: Because you can't do nothing worthwhile if you don't have it.
- Respondent 2: In this day and time you are lost without an education.
- Respondent 3: I feel it is the most important thing that a person can have.
- Interviewer: What are some things that you see that you feel are not important that school officials feel are educational?
- Respondent 3: I don't feel that art is important.
- Interviewer: Why not?
- Respondent 3: Because they can draw anytime. I don't think music is so important either

anybody can bang on a piano. They can learn that after school. They think all Black kids can sing. None of my children can carry a straight tune.

- Interviewer: How do you feel about that?
- Respondent 4: To me everything they tell them to take is important.
- Respondent 2: I don't think they should tell all Blacks to take music because he is Black but if he wants to be a musician, when he grows up, then they should take music.
- Respondent 1: They could keep the children in school longer. They have too many holidays and vacations. The teachers should teach more and go to workshops less.
- Respondent 4: There are too many movies entirely. They can look at TV at home. I think they are right about showing them about dope and venereal diseases. The health movies are good for the children but I don't know about the other stuff.
- Interviewer: To what extent does the school try to involve you as parents?
- Respondent 3: None! (Respondents 1 and 3 also respond with none).
- Respondent 2: I will have to agree because I went to sit in on a class one day and I thought the man was going to have a heart attack.
- Respondent 1: We never know when anything is going on in school. The school won't tell you anything. I know everything that happened in Head Start but nothing from the school.
- Respondent 3: I had to ask about the PTA when I went to take my child to sign for books the first day. I paid a dollar for dues for the PTA and ain't heard nothing about it yet. When they first started they sent a note about a room mother, I signed up for it. I ain't heard from

That chick yet.

Interviewer: What about you? (Indicating others)

Respondent 4: No, they haven't contacted me.

Respondent 2: I have been living here a long time and haven't ever been invited to do anything.

Interviewer: What about you? (Indicating Respondent 1)
I indicates "no".

Interviewer: Have they discussed with you lately what your child wants or what you want for your child in anyway?

(All respondents answer negatively)

Interviewer: Do you feel that the school would appreciate your coming and making suggestions and trying to get involved in the education of your child?
Example: If you go in and say this is something that I feel is important for my child to have, and this is something I feel the schools should offer, do you think they would be appreciative of that?

(All respondents respond negatively)

Respondent 3: They would think we were crazy and wouldn't even talk to us because we don't count.

Respondent 4: They would say we are trying to run the school.

Interviewer: Do you think your children would feel the effects of this?

(All respondents respond with: "They would").

Interviewer: What kind of problems do you think they would have?

Respondent 3: They would be meaner than they are to the child.

- Interviewer: Does the school ever ask you to come in other than when the child is having problems?
- Respondent 3: I told you, you never know until you get the report card or they send the child home for something else.
- Interviewer: When is the last time you have been to a school meeting?
- Respondent 3: They sent me a note on the day of the meeting. I went and jumped all over them for that.
- Respondent 2: I don't go. I just be too tired.
- Respondent 4: I went with 3 once.
- Interviewer: How were you treated?
- Respondent 4: One or two teachers spoke the rest of them didn't say anything. I don't know about 3 but I didn't know what they were talking about part of the time.
- Respondent 3: They looked at us like we were mud.
- Interviewer: When you went to the meeting, did you say anything?
- Respondent 3 and 4: No, because they had guest speakers (laughs) talking about nothing.
- Interviewer: They don't give you a chance to say anything?
- Respondent 1: I just sit there like a dummy.
- Respondent 3: Everything that I volunteered for they ain't called me yet. I am pretty sure that I could go up there and do just as good as some of these little teenagers trying to teach first grade.

.. APPENDIX D
COMPLETE INTERVIEW SESSION NUMBER 2

- Interviewer: What is happening in the schools as you understand it?
- Respondent 5: I wonder about this myself. When I get a chance I talk to my children about school. I don't like the curriculum.
- Interviewer: What about the curriculum don't you like?
- Respondent 5: I don't like them discipling my child so much. They use the strap entirely too much.
- Interviewer: Do you talk to the principal about this?
- Respondent 5: Yes, I have talked with them. They told me my child is bad and he behaves the time they spank him only. They also told me he talks all the time in the room and never wants to sit down and listen.
- Respondent 5: My boy says he gets tired of doing nothing. He says the teachers just want him to sit and be quiet all day. He either have to take the spanking or come home. If they send him home, I have to take off to get him back in. I went for a conference last week, it took me all the morning.
- Respondent 8: The children are bored because the teacher is not making their work interesting.
- Respondent 5: They are always talking about my child is hypertensive and needs to be in a special class.
- Interviewer: Why do they say your child needs a special teacher?
- Respondent 5: Because he won't keep still. I told her that ain't enough reason for me to let her transfer him.

You see, he tells them just what's on his mind and she ain't used to Blacks talking up.

Respondent 8: Did they test him?

Respondent 5: Yes, when he first entered. That's why I know something is wrong. She ain't doing her job. She say she don't force him that's why he is not doing his work. She don't push the Black kids at all. If they do, it is alright, and if they don't, it is even better.

Interviewer: What about you? How do you feel about what's happening in the schools?
(Indicating respondent 9)

Respondent 9: That's why I haven't said anything, because I have not had those kind of problems. You see, I work there as a teacher's aide and I am in and out all the time. I know what is coming down. One thing I learned while in Head Start is that I have the right to go in when I have time, they know I know my rights. All parents should just come on in and volunteer like they did in Head Start. They don't want you in there-but come anyway.

Respondent 7: None.

Interviewer: You don't have to talk just about the problems, how do you see the school as a whole? How do you understand what's going on there?

Respondent 7: I work all the time. When I am off on Saturday and Sunday, school is closed. I only know what I hear my kids saying, naturally they don't like it. It's just like respondent 5 said, they don't push the Black kids at all. They just flunk them if they don't do the work. They call this disciplining the child. The way I see it, they have a job to do and they should do it. Whenever the whites

and Blacks have a fight they send the Blacks home for defending themselves. I teach my children to fight, I told them I would be in for a conference on Saturday, I guess you know they let me know real quick that they don't get paid for Saturday. I told them the Head Start teachers didn't either but they came to see me at my convenience. She let me know quick the school ain't the Head Start (They all laugh). I took a day off to go and see her about the problem. She told me the kid is a good reader but fights blah, blah, blah. I asked why they sent my kid home and the white one was still sitting up in there. Was it because she is Black? She said, Oh no! we don't have no prejudice in here, and I said I'm sure you don't right quick. Then she comes out with my child is a good leader blah, blah, blah. I think they can get better organized rather than sending them home and hollering so much. I told her my kid said the white one called her a 'nigger' and she slapped him. And I told her if she call me a nigger I'd slap her too. (All laugh)

Respondent 8: I have had so many problems. They not only don't want the kids there and mistreat them they mistreat parents. My child tells me how teachers ignore his hands when he has raised them to answer a question and how she calls on him when he is unsure. I went up there and told her about it, of course, she wouldn't let it touch her and said my attitude was nasty. I asked about Black History along with American History, the Black man, the Indian and so on. They said they were going to start so I haven't had conflicts with them because I don't bite my tongue. I keep asking them about Black History and parent meetings. When a parent goes to the school she is interested in her child, or she wouldn't go.

Respondent 9: I don't have any problems.

- Interviewer: How do you see the school as a whole?
- Respondent 9: My daughter has been going to school since she was three. She went to Head Start. I just never had any problems really with any of my kids that went to school. (Note: The respondent has two older children (girls) who attended school here, however, neither one graduated from high school). She seems to enjoy school. She is up early and if she thinks she will be late or not going she cries. She has always had nice teachers. I feel if there were problems, I would know it.
- Interviewer: What about the school programs? Do you understand what is it they are teaching your child?
- Respondent 9: Some I do. Some I don't.
- Interviewer: Do they ever explain to you what is happening at school?
- Respondent 9: Some do, most don't.
- Respondent 5: I think it's the way they go at doing what the policy says. (Everyone agrees) They have all kinds of things to offer the kids, but it's what the kids have to go through to get that.
- Respondent 5: They have some wonderful classes, that they offer the kids but they just
.
- Note: I believe part of the conversation was lost here because of changes in the tape.
- Respondent 8: When the child turns in a problem and it is wrong, the teacher just always mark it up with a red pencil and never explain why it is wrong or what needs to be done to get it right.
- Respondent 5: It is a rotten system.
- Respondent 6: It seems to be a more teacher type thing. Are they all that way?

- Respondent 5: All my children get the same treatment.
- Respondent 7: Mine too.
- Interviewer: What do you think your child will be able to do when he completes high school?
- Respondent 5: I don't know how to answer that because I don't know what my kid will want to do.
- Interviewer: Do you think the school should be preparing him for whatever he wants to do?
- Respondent 5: Sure, that's why we have a school system. There should be someone in the school to help you reach your goal.
- Interviewer: O.K., do you think that the school is preparing your child to do those things?
- Respondent 5: With some major corrections, as I have stated, it could be doing that.
- Interviewer: Taking into consideration that in order to work in meaningful jobs, in order to work in the best jobs, there are certain academic requirements, do you think that the school is now preparing your child to meet those academic requirements?
- Respondent 7: I think so.
- Interviewer: The next question is how?
- Respondent 8: I think the school is preparing them by making them complete their tasks.
- Interviewer: O.K., now the next question would be a lot of the child's success depends on how the child feels about himself as a person. So I guess my question would be then, do you feel that it is the

function of the school to prepare your child to feel good about himself as a person?

Respondent 8:

Oh! definitely-without that I don't think the child could succeed in the school.

Interviewer:

Do you feel this is happening with your child?

Respondent 8:

The school and the parents have to have a sharing plan for this to work. I work with mine when I can at home. I often tell them they are "somebody" and they can do whatever they want to. If the school does the very same thing then the child will succeed. It is a two way street.

Respondent 9:

I may be wrong but I feel like this. The child is whatever his home life is. The school has to build on the home life. If the child leaves home happy, he is happy at school. If he leaves home upset, he is upset in school. I try to see that mine are happy, he is happy at school. If he leaves home upset, he is upset in school. I try to see that mine are happy, as best I can. I tell them how important it is for them to get something up here (points to head). We get along pretty good.

Interviewer:

Do you think there are special problems that minority children have in schools? That there are problems different from the white kids?

Respondent 5:

Yes, they often have problems understanding the white teacher's way of talking, what she is saying and what she wants them to do.

Respondent 7:

They need more Black teachers in the schools especially in lower grades. If a Black child asked a white teacher, "Where are you coming from"? She would know the child doesn't understand him. If he asked this to a white teacher, she wouldn't know

know what she is talking about. I hear them say, I want to learn about Black culture and about what's happening with my people and they are not finding out, not in the schools. So the best thing is to try to inform your children at home.

- Respondent 9: They have a Mr. _____, he is a together cat. All the kids love him.
- Respondent 5: The kids can identify with him and they look up to him.
- Respondent 8: The schools where my children attended before moving here had to have mostly Black teachers. The community demanded it because they found Black kids didn't feel like telling their problems to the whites, whereas, they could go and talk with the sister. They had a class here one day talking about foods. My little boy, the teacher asked what kinds of foods do different kinds of people eat? So my little boy jumped up and said we like chitterlings; my mom likes them but we don't really care for them. So when I went to talk to the teacher, she asked me what chitterlings were. I mean that kind of thing, you know that would really stand out in somebody's mind when you're different and your culture is different so, therefore, you eat different kinds of foods and you react a certain kind of way.
- Respondent 5: The children that are going to school now don't think about this town. They talk about far away places, they say they are tired of this place and want to get away when they get their education.
- Interviewer: Do you think the teachers understand their problem?
- Respondents: All respond with "no".
- Respondent 6: My daughter got in a fight at the school,

while she was fighting a white guy poured some Nair, Neet, or whatever it is, in my child's hair and left a large bald spot. My daughter said she saw the teacher looking out the window and she knew she was looking. The next day I went to the school and this white chick swore she knew nothing about it.

- Respondent 5: They know things are going on but they pretend they don't.
- Respondent 9: I will be so glad when my older daughter gets out of school. I am not going to send her to a college where there are all white folks, I want her to learn some Black stuff, because all of this here is jive. The private school is next door here to the public school, I tell my children that the white folks here sure didn't try to hide that they didn't want to be bothered with Blacks.
- Respondent 8: The white teachers don't want to get involved. I think they are scared of Black kids.
- Respondent 9: They are scared of the white kids too, especially their parents. White parents feel their children should always be first and the white teachers try to see that they are. The administration does whatever white parents tell them to do.
- Interviewer: How important is an education for your child?
- Respondent 5: Very important, I feel that a child without education now is really going to be left out of things. Even educated Black people are having problems now.
- Respondent 8: It is vital for them to learn everything they possibly can. I am working trying to finish and I tell my children that if

I feel the importance, as old as I am, they will need even more education when they grow up. We are learning together.

Respondent 9: I feel the same way. You have to have an education, there is no getting around it. I didn't have the chance but I want to see them with it.

Interviewer: To what extent does the school try to involve you in education?

Respondent 5: As far as I can see, the school does a great deal to involve parents. Like they send bulletins home and messages and they let parents know when they want them to participate in things.

Interviewer: What about academic participation, do they try to involve you in that? Do they ever sit down with you and discuss the school's goals and what the school is trying to do?

Respondent 5: I have had three conferences, and they have sent me pamphlets and bulletins to let me know what they will be doing next year.

Respondent 8: Well, when my child does something wrong they let me know. When the child does something good, however, small, I have had a helluva time finding out; until the child tells me. They have never tried to involve me as a parent. They do send literature home about pot-lucks, PTA meetings, just to eat and talk about little or nothing.

Respondent 6: I haven't done that since my child was in Head Start. That's where they show concern for everyone in the household. (Other respondents indicate approval).

Interviewer: If you were asked to participate at all were you comfortable.

Respondent 9: Yes, I feel comfortable in anything I do. I get right with them. If they

act right, I act right, if they don't act right, I can act wrong. If you treat them that way they respect you. If you shy away they will take advantage of you. Most of the time they will take advantage of you. Most of the time they are talking above me and I act like I know what they are talking about, even though I don't. They think I got a good education and I be laughing inside all the time. I can mix in with any of them, the big ones, the little ones, the medium size ones and all. If I'm in with the big shots, I act like them, and if it's down to earth class, I act like them, anywhere I go, in school, or anywhere else. Some time I have to scratch my head. When I get home and I think about it, I tell my children and we just laugh. Before I go, I ask the Lord to help me understand what they talking about. I don't have that much education, but I got a lot of common sense and I think that means a lot.

- Respondent 6: I agree, regardless of what you know, what you don't know, if you play your cards right, you can accomplish a lot. I went to the school to see a film on drugs, after it was over they were asking ignorant questions like: How do you know if your child is on drugs? I took it as long as I could. I got up and told them that's what's wrong with your children, you people (I made sure I said 'you people'). You think your children are above others and when they ask you questions you figure they are asking because of what they see Black children do and they be talking about themselves. They got quiet as a mouse.
- Interviewer: Do you feel that the school is receptive to your coming and making suggestions?
- Respondent 6: No, no, no.
- Respondent 5: I would have to say yes. They have written me notes asking if I had any

suggestions and I think it was appreciated. At least they made me think so.

- Respondent 8: This school is not receptive.
- Interviewer: Does the school ask to see you other than when your child is having problems?
- Respondent 8: No.
- Respondent 5: Yes.
- Respondent 6: I guess so.
- Respondent 9: I have not been invited to make suggestions.
- Interviewer: Do you feel if you force yourself into the school and begin to demand that your child have certain things that it would cause problems for him/her?
- Respondent 5: Sure.
- Respondent 8: They would pressure them in some way.
- Respondent 5: I feel they would always feel that if it wasn't for the parent of the child maybe trouble would have not started. That's the way they think.
- Interviewer: When you went to the last PTA meeting and asked questions how were you treated?
- Respondent 5: They treated me fine three weeks ago. They were polite as always.
- Respondent 6: Seems that I am always saying something different. The last time I went and spoke up no other Black parents backed it up. They just looked at me but I kept on getting my point across.
- Respondent 5: What they were saying verbally, I don't think they meant it at all.
- Respondent 8: I am up there all the time, they don't invite me, I just go. It's very cold but I don't go up there grinning if I am not tickled, and scratching when I don't itch.

APPENDIX E
COMPLETE INTERVIEW SESSION NUMBER 3

- Interviewer: Just what is happening in the schools?
- Respondent I0: Well, the kids have certain classes that I don't like because none of them teach anything about our race. The white teachers don't understand the Black children which makes it mighty bad.
- Respondent II: They have just built a vocational school and their plans are to put all the Black children in vocational classes and then the whites will come back to the schools in the regular classes. The board is all white, mostly farmers, and there is only one Black woman on it. Most of the white board members are farmers and control just about everything in the small town. They have never been satisfied over integration and they have never stopped working on getting the whites back that left. They just want a school for the whites anyway. They don't want the Blacks in that school. It was not built for Blacks and they are not teaching to the Blacks at all. That's my belief of what's happening in the school.
- Respondent I2: I agree with respondent II, they are just marking time.
- Respondent II: They care less if the kids learn or not.
- Respondent I2: They just passing them on from one grade to another.
- Respondent I3: I don't know what they are involved in because I work all the time. I get bits and pieces of information from the kids, but I have not had the time to go over and see what they are teaching them.
- Interviewer: If you were not working and had a chance to go over, do you think you would be able to affect any changes in the school.
- Respondent I3: No, because you see you have to understand that the whites are still in control

of the school. They would just label me a rabble-rouser as they did back in 65 when we were marching. What we need to do is try to get some Black parents in control of the school. The job that needs to be done cannot be done by one or a precious few.

Interviewer:

What do you think your child should be able to do when he finishes going through the educational system?

Respondent I0:

They are not teaching them to think for themselves. They are being spoon fed. They tell them everything to do. I don't think this is good because when they get out in the world they will have to stand on their own two feet.

Respondent II:

I agree with respondent I0, they need to be independent. The whole thing needs to be torn up and started from scratch. They need to have more good teachers in subjects like math., because the children always flunk that class. Did I answer your question? (Interviewer replies "yes").

Interviewer:

Do you think the school is giving your child the necessary foundation so he/she can go out and get experience and relate it to something to bridge the gap between high school and college?

Respondent I3:

Let me see if I can get you to understand what way I am coming from. (All laugh) I just don't see no way they are going to be able to bridge no gaps with the kind of training they are getting. The whites can come out and get jobs but Blacks can't and they are suppose to be getting the same training?

Respondent II:

The Blacks are caught in the vocational classes while the whites are in the main classes.

Respondent I3:

Yeah, well o.k., you said what I was thinking.

- Respondent II: All of these tests and stuff should be thrown out and use something else. They tell us that is what is being used everywhere else but my sister's children that don't live here don't know nothing about it. They have some kind of levels in the school and if you are white you are right in the top level.
- Respondent I3: In order for a Black to get in that top level he got to know his books.
- Respondent II: You got to be Superman.
- Interviewer: Do you think there are special problems that minority kids have in school?
- Respondent I0: Yes, because they come from different homes and the books don't deal with the Black's background. They have a few Black boys and girls in the readers but most of the reading and pictures are white.
- Respondent I3: They don't serve hot breakfast like they did in Head Start and a lot of these children are used to eating. They can't learn hungry. OEO needs to see that the Head Start continues in the public schools.
- Respondent II: I wish Oleo (all laugh) well, whatever the Head Start is, they need to take charge of the school here. The white teachers don't know how to teach Black kids. How can you take white teachers who don't know nothing about Black kids and tell them to teach? They can't even communicate. It's a sad situation.
- Respondent I2: This town is really dull for the kids. They can't have socials anymore because they are afraid the Blacks will get with the whites. They don't have a prom or nothing since they put the schools together.
- Respondent I0: Most of the Black kids just don't have

money and the white ones do. That makes a difference. When anybody has a little money to buy some of the things they want they are happy.

- Interviewer: Do you think the school administration understands these problems and are able to help these students with them?
- Respondent IO: They don't understand at all and they don't try to understand.
- Respondent I3: If they understand they don't care and one is not any good without the other.
- Respondent II: They think Black children are handicapped. They have read this in books and take it for granted. They believe all Black children have reading and spelling problems and it's just because they read it somewhere.
- Respondent I3: The school's teacher-aides are different from Head Start. They use the Black aides to talk with Black parents. In Head Start they help teach which is a more better job than being a go-between person.
- Interviewer: How important is education to you?
- Respondent IO: Well, I have learned from working in Head Start that if you don't have a high school education you are limited. I am a teacher-aide and I can do more with the children than the teacher. The parents look for me when they come to the center because I have been knowing them all my life, we don't have any problems talking and understanding each other. Now, I can't work in the schools because I don't have the high school education and that's the catch to it. You see, I am limited. If I had the high school education, I could work other places but I am happy where I am. Sometimes I want to get in the school just to straighten it out.

- Respondent I2: The education the Black kids are getting is nothing. My boy finished and he couldn't even pass the army test. (All laugh)
- Respondent II: Whites can get jobs as soon as they finish high school, they tell Blacks they can't hire them because they don't have experience. How can they get experience unless they work. To get a decent job when they do finish they have to leave here and go north anyway.
- Interviewer: To what extent does the school try and involve you in the education of your child?
- Respondent I0: None.
- Respondent II: There's a few conferences during the year. (Respondents nod heads of approval).
- Respondent I0: They ain't worth going to. You don't do anything but sit and eat.
- Respondent I2: Sometimes I pay dues and sometimes I get hell in me and won't do that.
- Respondent I3: Have you noticed how the children act now? Before they went to school over there together, they would come in and worry you to death to go to PTA, now they just bring the letter home. They don't even ask if you're going. The only time you have to go is when the child has done something.
- Interviewer: Whenever you did go to the schools, were you comfortable?
- Respondent I2: I am never comfortable there. I could tell that I wasn't wanted.
- Respondent I3: They act so scared as if you might bite. They won't talk at all. When you see them out they ignore you.
- Respondent II: You have to meet them on their grounds.

- Respondent I0: Sometimes I don't believe the report is right. Some of the things don't sound like my children.
- Respondent I3: They just doing something.
- Respondent II: They send them notices out because they have to.
- Interviewer: Do you feel the school would appreciate any suggestions you might want to make?
- Respondent I3: If we all get together and go it might make a difference but they wouldn't even listen to us by our self. They would laugh us out.
- Respondent I2: They would listen and promise to make changes but deep within they would know they aren't going to do anything.
- Respondent I3: They wouldn't appreciate it.
- Interviewer: What would happen if you did it anyway?
- Respondent II: If I made suggestions anyway, I feel they would take it out on my child.
- Interviewer: In what way?
- Respondent II: By picking on them. There are a whole bunch of things white people can do that we don't know about.
- Interviewer: Does the school ever ask to see you other than when your kids are having problems?
- Respondent I0: Well, they say you are welcome anytime but they don't mean it though. I don't see much good in talking after the child gets his report card no way. The damage is done then.
- Respondent II: You don't hear nothing if your child is being good.
- Respondent I2: I forgot the question.
- Interviewer: (Repeats question) Respondent answered

negative.

- Interviewer: What are some of the subjects your children make good grades in?
- Respondent I0: I never understand how they grade.
- Respondent I2: When you look on some of their report cards where they have comments, and they have to put little checks like (satisfactory" on the first report card or the first time, well the second time you can just flip the pages and the marks are exactly the same all the time.
- Respondent II: One of my children is as uncoordinated as he can be, but yet and still, he is marked high in music.
- Interviewer: In summary, how do you feel when you have to go to the school, how do you feel they respond to you?
- Respondent I3: I know it's something wrong and I am usually so up tight that I just don't know
- Respondent II: You are asking yourself all the time, just what is it now.
- Respondent I3: You have to go in there mean, it's just like a war, you have to let them know how you feel about your child, because afterall, all parents have feelings for their children.

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