ABSTRACT

PRICE, CHARLES EDWIN. “I ain’t in it to win it” Why the Educational System does not Compare to the Allure of Gang Life. (Under the direction of Bonnie Fusarelli).

There is a growing intrigue of gang involvement amongst school-aged students, and educators, traditionally from very different cultural and socio-economic backgrounds, are poorly trained to address these deviant interests. School completion data indicate that increasing numbers of students are becoming disengaged with the educational system. This is particularly true for those students participating in deviant behaviors. The value systems of educators and the authoritarian organizational structure from which schools typically operate are often at odds with the micro-culture of gang-involved youth and may actually serve as a factor in the failure to educate this group. The purpose of this ethnographic study is to investigate the experiences of schooling from the perspective of gang members in an effort to find a more suitable educational presentation for these deviant youth. Using a critical social justice perspective, this study will suggest that an awareness of gang intrigue and gang life with an emphasis on personal relationships will improve the success of all students, regardless of deviant interests, race, socio-economic status, or aptitudes.
“I ain’t in it to win it”: Why the Educational System Does Not Compare to the Allure of Gang Life

by
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BIOGRAPHY

I am the son of farming parents. My father did not finish high school, and he and my mother married one month after her high-school graduation. My parents were the products of farmers with little formal education as well. In fact, the need to get an education was not emphasized. It was rarely discussed in our immediate family setting. My father raised me as he was raised. There was no talk of education but much of hard work. Men farmed and were without emotions. His volatile nature and poor farming skills persuaded me that I did not want to follow in his shoes. There were many nights I fell asleep listening to fighting parents and the clicking of the adding machine that just would not give the right answers to my father. Usually these “incorrect answers” resulted in the fighting between my parents to intensify.

When I graduated high school, attending college was not a difficult decision for me to make. I attended college in order to escape my home life. It certainly wasn’t because I loved the college life. I had been to a college campus only one time previously in my life! I had not excelled academically in high school, and there was no reason for me to enroll other than flight from a dysfunctional family life. I had a need to belong, to fit in somewhere. Although the decision to leave was not difficult, I knew there would be financial issues associated with my need to belong to something. It was clear to me that my family did not have the money or interest to pay for post-secondary education, so I worked a job and borrowed money to pay the tuition cost. Working while attending college was not difficult as for much of my life, my parents worked a second job along with farming. They referred to this job as a “public job.” I
am not sure that I ever discovered the derivation of this term other than anything away from
the farm must have been “public.”

I was the first person in my family to earn a four-year college degree, and I am the
only person in my family with a master’s degree. Presently, I am in the process of acquiring
an EdD in Educational Leadership. I have been employed as a public school educator for
twenty-one years.

As I reflect on a childhood marred with a void of a male role model, coaches and
male teachers often took the place of an often missing or inadequate father-figure in my life.
It was at school I found a sense of need and belonging, and also where I found a haven from
a volatile home life. My eleven years of teaching and ten years of administration have
provided me with immeasurable reward as I can only imagine that, in these years, I have
provided that same safety and belonging to other students in need.

As a teacher, I influenced only those students I taught. It became my objective to
influence all teachers and students. As an assistant principal and principal, I have had the
ability to change the climate and culture of an entire building instead of one classroom. I
have used the school improvement process to change educational philosophies to be more
student-oriented.

Looking at professional goals and interests, it is apparent to me that I desired to affect
large numbers of educators and students. I want to be more than a change agent for a
classroom or a school. I desire to be a change agent for a system. My pursuit of a doctorate in
education stems from this desire to impact educational systems. It is my hope that upon
completed of my doctoral work, I will be better equipped to research, propose, and publish educational literature that will serve to provide educational districts with innovative and research-based programs and ideas.

Many of the educators at my school come from white, middle-class lives. They were taught by white, middle-class educators, and they have raised or are raising white middle-class children. There is nothing wrong with this perspective, but if you consider the demographics of most schools, it is clear that a sizable percentage of the school populations do not come from this background. At the high school where I am the principal, there are a number of faculty members who are compassionate and work to understand a student’s background; creating relationships as a part of teaching. However, there are a large number of teachers who do not recognize the background of their students, do not develop relationships, and fail in their attempt to properly socialize and educate their students.

Because of my background, I want to learn more about the relationship between student background and student achievement and the affect that instruction from those with different values and cultures has on outlier subgroups and/or deviant youth. I want to determine individual student needs based on background factors all in an effort to create effective and customized programs. These programs would hopefully lead to higher student achievement and success in the “outlier” groups of students. In addition and in relation to my interest with student background and need, I wish to research the growing gang intrigue prevalent in students today. I want to determine student needs and provide programs that align the students with positive and nurturing associations to school.
On a small scale during my career in education, I have attempted to create programs that provide a sense of belonging for the students who have social needs. I have sponsored a program for the male at-risk population called Men of Distinction. As a result of this club, I have seen potential drop-outs become involved in school, a pay-off more valuable than any other in this occupation. A smaller, less important product of my sponsorship of this club is recognition that I received. I was voted Administrator of the Year for my district in 2006-2007 and in 2010-2011, where my ability and desire to create relationships with faculty, staff, and students was referenced a number of times. Also in 2006, I was featured in The News and Observer’s Spotlight on Education section. I was selected the Wells Fargo Principal of the Year in my district in 2013-2014.

If my concern to develop relationships with students fuels my ability to impact greater numbers, I wish to take advantage of the opportunity! I desire to become the most effective educator I can become, not in hopes of receiving personal accolades, but in hopes of benefiting students.

In regards to my personal life, I am happily married with three children – Elijah, Bailey, and Charley. My wife, Kathy, and I constantly read and complete school assignments or conduct Bible lessons so that our children will realize the value of education; however, I have never worked two jobs at one time, I do not own an adding machine, and my children have seen me cry when happy and when sad.

I am not ashamed of my past nor do I consider myself unfortunate. My wife and children are the benefactors of my experiences, and hopefully, my career will afford me
many opportunities to address the needs of disenfranchised subgroups. Thus, it is my primary

desire to use my position to afford all students the opportunity to learn. It is my moral

obligation as a public school administrator to improve the public educational system so that

the disenfranchised, as well as those found within the societal norm, have equitable

opportunities to be successful in life. For if not, those found within deviant youth groups

known as gangs will perpetuate and multiple, creating generational gang membership that

erodes not only the educational system but society as well. I must impact instructional

practices at the building-level while emphasizing educator relationships with students. I am

certain that my scrutiny of the educational setting in regards to the service provided to all

students, including the disenfranchised, will be tempered by the fact that I am a life-long

educator who believes in the benefits of public education. In other words, I do not plan to

ride my desire to influence educational service to the degree of blaming any of society’s ills

on the educational system. I am searching not for the Holy Grail, but for a formula and

balance between schools, community, and society that will provide all micro-cultures an

opportunity to learn and pursue the same opportunities afforded me throughout my adult life.
ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

There is no doubt that faith and perseverance are staples in writing a dissertation. For me at least, I give credit to Jesus Christ who made all things possible in my life. From a more worldly perspective, I thank my parents who instilled a work ethic that I often interpret as unhealthy. My father’s problem solving ability and my mother’s dogged determination are evidenced in my daily life. I know no other individual who works like my mother. She has battled cancer for nearly three years while continuing her life’s endeavors without resting. I thank my sister and brother-in-law for modeling the meaning of family and the walk of faith that we all should follow. I thank my loving wife, Kathy, who has endured for several years with a stressed husband or one who is absent from family events. My three children Eli, Bailey, and Charley are truly adorable. I am a blessed man.

Additionally, I thank Dr. Bonnie Fusarelli for being the most inspiring professor I have ever met. I always want to thank her for having faith in a less than polished country boy who wasn’t certain that he could complete a doctoral program. To you I owe everything! Finally, I would like to thank several educators who had a lasting impact on my career in some way: Jeff Adams, Gary Fowler, Daryl Barnes, and Debbie Woodruff. Mr. Adams, I am grateful that you illustrated the importance of self-discipline. Coach Fowler, I thank you for being a father to me in years that I struggled to make decisions. Coach Barnes, I will always be thankful that you taught me the importance of being prepared and organized. To Mrs. Woodruff, my administrative career may not have been possible had you not taken a chance on me. And lastly, I must thank Dr. Fran Riddick for reminding me daily that “a good
dissertation is a completed dissertation.” I owe many people as my journey has been one of great length and trials. It is my hope that one day I make an impact on the educational profession that has afforded me the opportunity to provide for my family and to influence so many of the youth in our community.
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CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

Background of the Study

In August 2013, the city of Chicago set a new all-time record for the number of gun-related homicides at 506. Likewise, in the same year in Detroit, there were 2,137 violent crimes per 100,000 people (“The 10 Most Dangerous U.S. Cities,” 2013). Detroit’s violent crimes actually are five times greater than the national average. Violent criminal activity in Chicago and Detroit has been attributed primarily to gang activity. These numbers are shocking even for cities with a long history of gang violence and may thrust the issue of criminal gangs once again into the national spotlight, with widespread coverage on network newscasts. National newscasts reports are on the uptick of gang violence in urban centers, but they fail to expose the exponential growth of gangs and gang-affiliated suburban and rural communities. Once seen as a malady of high-poverty urban centers, criminal gangs have established a multigenerational foothold in all types of communities across the U.S. Consequently, gang-affiliated youth are active in high schools and many educators feel unprepared to serve this student population.

While not a new phenomenon, the gang presence in educational settings has become more alarming in the last decade due to the number of violent incidents that have been attributed to gang activity. At the 12th Annual Gangs Across the Carolinas Conference in Greensboro, North Carolina in August 2013, Sarah Newell Williamson reported Crime Commission data that revealed there are more than 40 gangs operating in Guilford and Forsyth Counties; as many as 20 gangs in Rockingham, Davidson, and Randolph Counties;
and, approximately 40 gangs in Alamance County (para. 4). Jon Paul Guarino, a gang management analyst with the NC Government Crime Commission, recounted a variety of gang-related stories but none as disturbing as a story of a seventh grader who was severely beaten because he unknowingly sat in a gang member’s desk at school (Williamson, para. 2).

The physical location chosen as a focus of this research is neither historically known for violence or an urban area. However, in the last five years, there has been a drive-by shooting on a school campus, multiple drive-by shootings that have resulted in serious injuries, and one assassination of a gang member – all students in public schools or of school age who chose to drop out. These violent crimes that are unresolved in the community usually linger into the school setting. Educators are unprepared as education is predominantly dependent on relationship building. How does an educator relate to a subculture of gang activity and violence? It was not in the teacher preparation program, and very few teachers have lived a life even remotely similar to that of student gang members. Gang members do not find the authoritarian setting of educational settings palatable, nor do they respect the unwillingness of educators to recognize them as students with acceptable behaviors. The result of this mal-alignment – frustrated educators, violence in schools, frustrated students, and an increase in dropouts.

In the 2005 State of the Union Address, President George Bush issued a commitment to addressing adolescent gang involvement in the United States.

Now we need to focus on giving young people, especially young men in our cities, better options than apathy, or gangs, or jail. Tonight I propose a three-
year initiative to help organizations keep young people out of gangs, and show young men an ideal of manhood that respects women and rejects violence. Taking on gang life will be one part of a broader outreach to at-risk youth, which involves parents and pastors, coaches and community leaders, in programs ranging from literacy to sports.

President Bush championed transforming the environment of at-risk youth. Although his State of the Union Address vowed national attention to the gang issue, there has been little progress made in regards to the number of gang members and the amount of gang-related crimes across the nation.

If educators continue to respond to this phenomenon without regards to underlying causal factors, the gang micro-culture will experience failure in the educational arena, perpetuating a class of poverty and violence. During a conversation with a self-proclaimed gang member, the student explained that he was not “in it to win it” in regards to school. He further explained that he was completely committed to gang life, or in other words, “in it to win it.” If educators do not address the increase in gang activity in schools, individuals will grow more disengaged with school activities and become more interested in activities traditionally considered at-risk.

Adolescent intrigue with gang affiliation has grown dramatically in recent years, and adults, especially educators, have ignored this epidemic for a variety of reasons. In fact, in the 2013 Governor’s Crime Commission analysis of N.C. GangNET data, there were approximately “982 gangs reported in 55 counties across the state” (p. 3). Many educators,
communities, and parents are either unaware, in denial, or afraid of the issue. As a result of proactive policy-making, school systems that introduce gang policy fear that the schools will be perceived as unsafe. Community leaders fear that recognizing and addressing gang presence will result in hysteria and have a damaging effect on community growth. Parents denounce gang presence because school leaders and community leaders have not advertised the phenomenon as a problem. With such a fear of gang recognition producing a fragmented network of adults, how can gang presence be addressed? In addition, with policy implementation focused on elimination of deviant students as a suppression tactic, how can educational systems ignore the possibility of interventions? There have been few studies conducted with the intent of identifying gang members’ definitions and perceptions of basic needs in order to reconstruct the school setting in a way to provide a more positive experience for deviant or misguided youths.

The issue of gang activity includes a battle of semantics. With the emergence of gang members in the community and schools, many officials argue over whether or not we have “gang representation,” “gang presence,” “gang intrigue,” a “gang problem,” or just “deviant juvenile behavior.” However defined, there is a void in the research for educators who are interested in providing services for these youth.

**Scale of the Problem**

The recent high media profile for gangs has generated debate and conversation about the numbers of youth involved with gangs. It has been reported that “even in highly impacted areas, the degree of participation has rarely exceeded 10 percent” (Bodinger-
In a more recent survey, a similar determination was made as “randomly selected people in eleven cities throughout the United States were administered questionnaires to determine just how rampant gangs have become” (Matusitz & Breen, 2007, p. 7). From this survey, it was found that “9% of the respondents reported that they were presently associated with gangs…[and] additionally, 17% reported that they had participated in a gang at some point in their lives (Smith, Berg, & Langford, 2002, as cited in Matusitz & Breen, 2007, p. 7). More specifically, in the Governor’s Crime Commission’s analysis of N.C. GangNET data, gangs appear most present “along the interstate highways or drug corridors of the state” (p. 3).

Unfortunately, the numbers of gang involved youth “may camouflage the impact that the presence of gangs has on a school” (Burnett & Walz, 1994, p. 2). Students who do not feel safe in schools do not learn, which again beckons doubt in whether or not support would be given to a school that chooses to reconstruct its delivery and purpose. Is this reconstruction of school purpose any different from the fact that “the process of being a leader involves consistent reinvention of self, especially in the wake of major defeats” (English, 2008, p. 6)? Should schools continue the act of education even when all subgroups fail to be served? Communities refuse to admit gang activity as a problem, and schools are reluctant to provide interventions for youth gang members due to the fear of damaging publicity and decline in support for public education. As much an issue to identifying the problem of gang presence, inaccurate data reporting may be a problem as well. The 2012-13 school year saw the total number of reportable acts of school crime and violence, short- and
long-term suspensions and the use of corporal punishment continue their downward trend although the number of expulsions increased according to the 2012-13 Consolidated Data Report presented to State Board of Education members. The total number of acts of school crime and violence was the lowest reported since 2008-09 while the number of students in North Carolina public schools was at an all-time high - 1,492,793.

State Superintendent June Atkinson was pleased that students are more focused on academic achievement and that schools are striving hard to provide a positive learning environment. This data possibly indicates that administrators are removing unwanted students from the school system. The report does not indicate that schools are safer.

The fear of damaging publicity is not the only rationale for the refusal of gangs as a problem. Many argue that gangs are not a problem unless there is criminal activity involved. If gang criminal activity becomes the measure used to define the problem, gangs may flourish because, according to Bodinger-deUriarte (1993), “…less than 2 percent of all juvenile crime is gang related” (as cited in Burnett & Walz, 1994, p. 2). However, in 2011, the National Gang Intelligence Center reported through the National Gang Threat Assessment that nearly 48% of all violent crimes today are gang-related (Key Findings, para. 1).

Supporting criminal activity as the prufrock of gang presence, Clay and Aquila posit that a juvenile’s intent must not determine that there is a problem. They suggest that the determining factor of whether or not your community or school has a gang problem is answered not by existence of symbols or code words, but by the existence of crime. If the
measure of the problem exists merely in the amount of criminal activity present and the
criminal activity is minimally related to gangs, why place so much emphasis on juvenile
gang interest? First, gang-related crimes are difficult to define and to identify. If the
community leaders denounce the gang problem, the local police department will reluctantly
frame the crime as “gang related.” In fact, criminal activity often associated with gang
membership – theft, drive-by shootings, intimidation, assaults, and murder – cannot be
termed gang-related unless the person committing the crime proclaims gang membership and
gang motivation. Second, early gang presence indicates the arrival of an emerging epidemic
that must be addressed in the infancy stages in order to suppress widespread growth. The
evolution of gangs occurs over time, and when the deviant behavior produces felonious acts
of theft and murder, it is often too late.

In 1996, Rick Larson, a public school administrator in Arizona, detailed the arrival of
gangs in his school:

At first I denied to myself and others that my school had a gang problem.
When the nature of the campus violence began to change in the mid-1980’s, it
was hard to imagine that my school, with its reputation of being the best high
school in town, could be changing so dramatically before my eyes. Even
though I realized that campus conflicts were becoming increasingly violent
and more frequent, I tended to dismiss these incidents as exaggerated versions
of typical teen-age defiance. I later came to realize that my denial had allowed
me to unwittingly become a part of the problem, to actually contribute to the conditions that help gangs flourish. (p. 30)

Rick Larson’s initial response of denial is not unlike the response from other administrators, the community, and parents. Trump (2007) suggests a justification for this response when he explains that “the most common initial response to gangs in almost all communities and schools is denial because public officials are more focused on image for their organizations” (p. 3). Furthermore, the website declares that this “condition makes the school environment most ripe for gang activity” (Trump, 2007, p. 3). This response has proven to contribute to gang establishment in our communities and schools as “gangs thrive on anonymity, denial, and lack of awareness by school personnel” (Trump, 2007, p. 3). Denying gang existence allows for “the gang member whose notebook graffiti goes unaddressed” to become involved in “initiations, assaults, and drug sales in the near future” (Trump, 2007, p. 3). With a reported 10,651 gang members in North Carolina in 2013 according to the N.C. GangNET system, how can any community deny gang existence?

Gang members do not see schools as an educational opportunity but as a socialization field for recruitment. Schools systematically address academic learning; however, “in addition to learning about topics in the curriculum, students learn the values of the culture in which they live” (Carlie, 2009, p. 1). For this reason, schools must implement a policy that addresses all facets of deviant gang behavior to include a three-tiered approach: prevention, identification, intervention, and suppression. All too often, public schools implement a policy that is either heavily punitive (aggressively attacking gang affiliation through suppression via
consequences) or overwhelmingly passive (choosing to ignore the problem). Most policies addressing deviant behavior of the disenfranchised portray more of a desire for authorities to rid themselves of a problem instead of a mission to provide assistance to those in need. The objective should be to keep students in schools and not on the streets. Creating policy that assigns consequences without appropriate prevention and intervention stages pushes students to the streets and in effect, to gangs. Suppression overlooks the reasoning for youth membership in gangs, and choosing to ignore the reasoning behind gang presence actually compounds the problem. Schools that ignore gang presence become a part of the problem. Ironically, one obstacle that faces public schools in the fight against gang activity is itself as, according to the Gang Education and Resource Guide, “gang activity flourishes because of denial by parents, communities, school districts, and law enforcement until…a tragedy occurs” (GWC, Inc., 1997, p. 1).

**Purpose of the Study**

The purpose of this study was to gain a better, more complete understanding of gang culture through an exploration of gang member value systems in comparison to those of traditional educational settings. This study attempted to provide educators with a picture of gang life through the eyes of gang members so that the educators can understand how this deviant youth group views school, society, and themselves. It is apparent that the traditional educational setting is failing to educate and to assimilate students from deviant youth groups for success. Without understanding the gang member perspectives of the “school business,” educators cannot respond. In addition to providing necessary perspectives and attitudes
created by cultural factors, this study served to define the “youth gang” as an organization of deviant behavioral youths who are looking for respect and notoriety. The definition of “gangs” that includes “criminal activity” is relative to the setting and/or environment. As the definition of “gangs” used by the judicial system presently includes “criminal activity,” schools often struggle with school policy that does not include “criminal activity” as part of the definition. A collection of this data affords the schools the opportunity to respond to the needs of a subgroup that traditionally experiences little success in the school environment.

This study introduced the existence of discrimination in the educational setting. Discrimination, as defined by Sonia Nieto (2000), “denotes negative or destructive behaviors that can result in denying some groups life’s necessities as well as the privileges, rights, and opportunities enjoyed by other groups” (p. 35). Intent differentiates discrimination from naïve realism. According to McCurdy, Spradley, and Shandy (2005), naïve realism is defined as “culture [that] causes us to see the world in a particular way, one we come to believe is real” (p. 9). This perception or chosen culture drives curricular and policy choices, and it is quite obvious that those making these decision do not have the life experiences or the perceptions of the deviant youth who are affected by the outcomes. This hidden curriculum found in schools often has a very detrimental impact on students of marginal groups.

These messages may be positive (e.g., the expectation that all students are capable of high-quality work) or negative (e.g., that children of working-class backgrounds are not capable of aspiring to professional jobs), although the
term is generally used to refer to negative messages. (Nieto, 2000, p. 40)

In fact, there seems to be a disconnect between the intent of educators and the micro-culture classified as gangs. In response to this misinterpretation and misunderstanding, educators have created gang policies that are vague and extremely aggressive in an attempt to eliminate gang activity. These policies have attracted media attention due to the surge in public school suspensions and expulsions; however, “of even greater concern is the overrepresentation of minorities, especially African-American students, in the use of punitive school discipline” (Skiba, 2000, p. 11). With little cultural diversity among faculty and staff in educational settings, it is without surprise that “teachers who are prone to accepting stereotypes of adolescent African-American males as threatening or dangerous may react more quickly to relatively minor threats to authority, especially if such fear is paired with a misunderstanding of cultural norms of social interaction” (Skiba, 2000, p. 12). The schools’ responses are typically suppressive in nature and do no more than transfer the gang presence to the streets and community as “each new outbreak of violence seems to yield collateral increase in get-tough discipline” (Skiba, 2000, p. 1).

This study provides educators with vital insight into the perspectives of gang members’ belief systems. With this insight, the study enabled educators the ability to adjust instructional presentation to address social skills and deviant behavior, curricular design in regards to character education, and the methods of social service provisions in order to produce a more positive experience and possible interventions for these students. In addition
to a more positive experience, schools can make a more valid attempt at influencing these students to become functional citizens. The following questions frame this study:

1. What are the gang members’ perceptions of school?
2. How do these perceptions align with the organizational structure used in traditional public schools?
3. In what ways do their community and the rules of gang life contribute to their gang involvement and academic performance?

Definition of Terms

Following is a list of terms essential to understand this purpose of this research. The terms are defined by the researcher or as noted in the citations.

1. **Authoritarian Organizational Structure:** One of the best known theories of parenting styles or schooling procedures was developed by Diana Baumrind. She proposed that parents and/or teachers fall into one of three categories: authoritarian (telling their children or students exactly what to do), indulgent (allowing their children or students to do whatever they wish), or authoritative (providing rules and guidance without being

2. **Cultural Relativism:** The differing ways one learns to be human. These differences are not superior or inferior to one another. This concept also refers to the idea that cultural norms and values are derived from a specific social context. Understanding cultural relativism is most important in that, if we are aware of it, we may be less
ignorant to the values of other societies and less likely to judge others with differing values. (Banks & Banks, 2010).

3. **Cultural Themes:** In 1945, Morris Opler coined the term, cultural theme, to mean recurrent ideas that integrated parts of a culture (McCurdy, Spradley, & Shandy, 2005).

4. **Ethnography:** A description and interpretation of a social group or system. It requires an immersion into the social group being studied. As a process, ethnography requires participant observation where the researcher is involved in the daily lives of the participants (Klenke, 2008).

5. **Critical Ethnography Case Study:** Hancock and Algozzine (1996) refer to case studies as an analysis and description of a single unit bounded by space and time. Klenke (2008) adds that the critical theory is a critique of the culture, adding an advocacy perspective to the ethnography.

6. **Dean Alienation Scale:** A tool created by Dwight Dean (1961) to measure the three components of alienation: isolation, normlessness, and powerlessness. It is a 24-item, five point Likert-type scale (Soho, 1996).

7. **Deviant Youth Group:** Many people who live in low-income communities have to fight their environment to find relief from the burden it imposes. According to Sanchez-Jankowski (2003), one of the products of this battle is a deviant individualist personality.
8. **Expulsion**: A disciplinary sanction imposed for prohibited conduct committed by a student, resulting in the permanent removal of the student from the school system. This removal may be indefinite (permanent) or for a determined period of time (one year).

9. **Ethnocentrism**: This term is defined as the belief that one’s culture is best (McCurdy, Spradley, & Shandy, 2005).

10. **Gangs**: There are a variety of definitions for gangs; however, found within these definitions are common components. Gangs are most commonly defined as three or more individuals who engage in criminal activity and identify themselves with a common name or sign.

11. **Gang Suppression**: Refers to the perspective of the judicial systems’ approach to enforcing laws – arrest.

12. **Informant**: According to McCurdy, Spradley, and Shandy (2005), anthropologists refer to the people they study as informants. In this study, the researcher debated using the terminology due to the negative connotation that it has with gang members.

13. **Micro-Culture**: Smaller groups and their knowledge that exist inside of society (McCurdy, Spradley, & Shandy, 2005).

14. **Naïve Realism**: Often referred to as a blindspot, naïve realism is the unconscious belief that the way we culturally see the world is actually the way it is (McCurdy, Spradley, & Shandy, 2005).
15. **Oppositional Subculture Model:** In this model, lower class communities generate distinctive values and beliefs that endorse aggressive behavior and law violation (Kubrin & Weitzer, 2003).

16. **Pulls and Pushes:** The Push Out theory suggests that internal factors such as disciplinary actions and conflict with teachers or peers might work to push students out of school. The Pull Out theory suggests that outside factors create an internal conflict for the students (Glennie & Stearns, 2006).

17. **Response to Intervention:** Reed, Wexler, and Vaughn (2012) define RtI as a “school wide service delivery system that is multi-tiered, including all students in a core curriculum but moving them to intensive interventions in an effort to achieve success” (p. 15).

18. **Self-Fulfilling Prophesy:** As coined by Robert Merton, self-fulfilling prophecy refers to the fact that students perform in ways that teachers expect.

19. **Social Constructivism:** Creswell (2007) “compares social constructivism to interpretivism in that, in this worldview, individuals are seeking to understand the world in which they live and work” (p. 20).

20. **Social Disorganization Theory:** This theory is the inability of a community or a neighborhood to understand and realize common goals and from there to solve continuing problems or issues occurring in the area (Kubrin & Weitzer, 2003).

21. **Social Justice Framework:** A framework that gives voice to the disenfranchised, the underprivileged, the poor, and others outside the mainstream. This framework is a
way of acting against unfairness and inequity while enhancing freedom and possibility for all. It is primarily focused on how people, policies, practices, curricula, and institutions may be used to liberate rather than oppress the disenfranchised by our decision making. (Patton, 2002).

22. **Strain Theory**: Frustration is created when goals do not match opportunities for a micro-culture (Sanchez-Jankowski, 2003).

23. **Suspension**: A disciplinary action that is administered as a consequence of a student’s inappropriate behavior, requiring that a student absent him/herself from the classroom or from the school for a specified period of time.

24. **Zero Tolerance**: Intended primarily as a method of sending a message that certain behaviors will not be tolerated - punishing all offenses severely - no matter how minor (Skiba, 2000).

**Significance of the Study**

With the 2002 reauthorization of the Elementary and Secondary Act, or No Child Left Behind (NCLB), and a federal emphasis on success for all students, schools must create individualized opportunities so that each child can be portrayed as successful. Traditional schools operate from an authoritative organizational structure and there are few prevention and intervention programs for identified gang members. The authoritative approach does not allow the student to have a perspective. In other words, school becomes something done to the student and not with the student. Without care for the causal factors or the well-being of the individual student, gang policies are created to identify and eliminate the problem.
Schools must entertain alternative models in order to meet the needs of all subgroups. There are alternative models like the “open and experimental approaches to education [that] offer diverse activities to achieve diverse and individualized outcomes” (Patton, 2002, pp. 155-156).

This study provides an opportunity to measure the effectiveness of educational provisions for gang members by analyzing basic member beliefs and perceptions about their schooling experiences. This analysis of the values of typical youth gang members was done with the idea that “by describing and understanding the details and dynamics of program processes, it is possible to isolate critical elements that have contributed to program successes and failures” (Patton, 2002, p. 160). By stereotyping and categorizing youth in gangs as violent criminals, educators are beginning a process that forces this marginal group into a self-fulfilling prophecy where “student performance is based on both overt and covert messages from teachers about student’s worth, intelligence, and capability” (Nieto, 2000, p. 43). Educators must realize that they “can do nothing to change the conditions in which their students may live, but they can work to change their own biases as well as the institutional structures that act as obstacles to student learning” (Nieto, 2000, p. 49). It was the objective of this study to enlighten educators to the different values of youth gang members, bring an awareness of the gang members’ perceptions of school in comparison to family and the gang environment, and identify the potential of a self-fulfilling prophecy experienced by gang members and the extent of educator naïve realism existent in the school building. School
officials were empowered to make changes to the educational structure and provisions that improve the opportunity of success for gang and potential gang members.

**Conceptual Framework**

This study was a multi-case study conducted using an ethnographical lens. It incorporated a social constructivist critical perspective with a primary purpose of identifying issues such as power, inequality, and suppression, and to address an inequity in the educational setting for certain groups. The constructivist theory is applicable in this study as Klenke (2008) posits that “the social world cannot be described without investigating how people use language, symbols, and meaning to construct social practice” (p. 21). With regard to the study’s purpose, some researchers may argue that the conceptual framework more closely resembles “an alternative worldview, advocacy/participatory, because the postpositivist imposes structural laws and theories that do not fit marginalized individuals or groups and the constructivists do not go far enough in advocating for action to help individuals” (Creswell, 2007, p. 21). Klenke (2008) defines ethnography as “a description of a social group or system” (p. 200). With the ethnographical lens, it is paramount that the researchers, “seek to gain an emic or the native’s point of view without imposing their own conceptual framework as opposed to the etic or outsider’s view of the cultural group they are studying” (Klenke, 2008, p. 200).

Case study approaches are “different from other types [of qualitative research] in that they are intensive analyses and descriptions of a single unit or system bounded by space and time” (Hancock & Algozzine, 2006, p. 11). This multi-case study used a critical framework.
A critical social justice framework “seeks not just to study and understand society but rather to critique and change society” (Patton, 2002, p. 131). In regards to the differing value systems, one might reference the inability of the deviant youth group to function in traditional educational systems due to cultural “blind spots.” If the dysfunctional behavior can be attributed to cultural “blind spots,” there should be a socially appropriate presentation used by educational settings to acclimate the deviant youth to the expected and normal behavior patterns. According to Patton (2002), “one of the most influential orientational frameworks is ‘critical theory,’ which focuses on how injustice and subjugation shape people’s experience and understandings of the world” (p. 120). The qualitative approach better enables the researcher to “describe the nature of a belief, attitude, event, or behavior,” much less the disparity of those concepts as defined by gang members in comparison to those of the traditional educational setting (Merriam, 1988, p. 68).

**Overview of Approach**

In order to address the research questions, this study employed a qualitative methodology. More specifically, the study used a critical case study approach through the ethnographical lens with a social constructivist perspective. The critical theory in this study was necessary to focus on “how injustice and subjugation shape people’s experiences and understandings of the world” (Patton, 2002, p. 130). This theory specifically addressed the “issues of power and justice” as experienced by some micro-cultures found within public educational settings (Patton, 2002, p. 130). I chose to combine the critical perspective with the ethnographical approach in an effort to “focus on culture with the commitment to use
findings for change” (Patton, 2002, p. 131). Finally, when the constructivist perspective is combined with a social justice framework, “added weight [is given] to the perspectives of those with less power and privilege in order to ‘give voice’ to the disenfranchised, the underprivileged, the poor, and others outside the mainstream (Weiss & Greene, 1992, as cited in Patton, 2002, p. 98). Hence, the critical case study approach through the ethnographical lens with a social justice framework was necessary in order to identify cultural and value defined differences between teachers and students self-identified as gang members. I have provided intervention and prevention, and promoted possible change in the educational services for marginalized subgroups.

Organization of the Study

Chapter 1 provides an overview of the study, including background information, the study’s purpose, definitions of key terms, the study’s significance, the theoretical perspective, and a description of the approach. Chapter 2 is a presentation of the most relevant scholarly literature on gang activity and the perceptions of gangs. This chapter also revealed the theoretical frameworks that explain gang involvement and existence. Chapter 3 provides a rationale for the research methodology guiding the study.
CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW

Introduction

In the current public school system, students must attend school, but learning is optional and unfortunately, dictated to a large degree, by the students’ willingness and intrinsic motivation to learn. If a student has not been taught to value education and has few support resources outside of school, the student may not find success in the present educational system. Success in our public schools may have more to do with a student’s culture and his/her motivation and desire to learn than a teacher’s ability to teach. Since the early 20th century, American anthropologists have defined “culture” as an alternative explanation for “why people around the world differed in their actions and beliefs” (Banks & Banks, 2010, p. 34). Cultural Relativism does not suggest that one set of beliefs or behaviors is superior to another. In fact, this concept identifies differences as simply differences. With student beliefs and values differing so greatly, Hutchins (1953) suggested that society should be presented with a more complete understanding of the role of compulsory education. Are all students simply required to attend school or are they guaranteed to learn? Giving clarity to this concept, Lezotte (1997) proffered that “we are now talking about compulsory learning and will no longer settle for compulsory schooling” (p. 3).

In an effort to make possible this daunting task, Gagne suggested that “the essential task of the teacher is to arrange conditions of the learner’s environment, so that the process of learning will be activated, supported, enhanced, and maintained” (Gagne, 1972 as cited in Lezotte, 1997, p. 6). Considering Lezotte’s mantra of “learning for all” and the mandate of
NCLB, we should examine how successful modern educational systems have been in regards to successfully educating ALL students. Critics would argue 21st Century education has continued to “work to reproduce the existing social order with all of its built-in social inequalities and inequities” (Brantlinger, 2003, as cited in English, 2008, p. 204). Fenwick English (2008) continues the analysis of schooling by adding that “the inadequacy of schools is not because they don’t work as they currently exist, because they were never intended to work for some families and children anyway” (p. 204).

Goals 2000 and School Safety

Beyond educating ALL, one of the goals of America 2000 (US Department of Education, 1991) was that America’s schools will be safe, disciplined, drug-free places by the year 2000. The US Department of Education recommended no instrument to comparatively measure these objectives; however, with the rise in violent crimes over the last decade, there is little doubt that these objectives have not been achieved. There is no doubt that schools have room for improvement in regards to safety and ultimately, student achievement. Stephens (1994) describes the state of our school campuses:

Reading, writing, and retaliation have become common themes on many of the nation’s campuses. Far too often, this retaliation involves the ducking of bullets or other serious violent situations. Students are willing to risk bringing a weapon to school for protection, to show off,
or to intimidate others. Fistfights are being replaced by gunfights. Fire drills are being replaced by crisis, bullet, and drive-by shooting drills.

(p. 29)

A 1978 Safe School Study Report to Congress caused alarm within society as “approximately 282,000 students and 5,200 teachers were physically assaulted in secondary schools every month” (National Institute of Education, 1978 as cited in Elliot, Hamburg, & Williams, 1998, p. 4). Evidence that this situation is not improving can be found in a similar 1996 report that “revealed that nearly half (47%) of all teens believe their schools are becoming more violent, and one of every ten reported a fear of being shot or hurt by classmates who carry weapons to school” (Children’s Institute International, 1996 as cited in Elliot, Hamburg, & Williams, 1998, p. 4). The increased violence in schools actually mirrors that of society. In society between 1984 and 1994, “the homicide rate for adolescents doubled” and “on a typical day in 1992, seven juveniles were murdered” (Elliot, Hamburg, & Williams, 1998, pp. 4-5). Even more shocking is the fact that “in 1991, more than half (56%) of juvenile victimizations occurred at school or on school grounds” (Elliot, Hamburg, Williams, 1998, p. 6). An increase in violence beckons the question of the impact of the fear of violence on student achievement and especially the educational system’s inability to close the achievement gap within the various subgroups.

The achievement gap between socio-economic and racial lines illustrates this inability; however, there are many less advertised micro-cultures found within minority and socio-economic subgroups that go unnoticed. Gang members, or deviant youth groups, are
traditionally ignored because the group is stereotypically associated with violence and abnormal behaviors. This micro-culture is either doomed to fail or is failing due to the fact that it is not being served in today’s educational setting.

_School Violence and Gangs_

Nearly 48% of all violent crimes today are gang-related (National Gang Intelligence Center, para. 1). Griffin and Meacham (2002) highlight the growing concerns of not only violence but gangs in school systems by stating:

Small gangs, unattached to larger organizations, have proven to be a deadly problem as evidenced by school shootings and violent levels unheard of generations ago. Larger, more organized gangs may become violent threats as well, but also may be behind much of the illegal drugs, thefts, intimidation, extortion, and increases in armament in schools today. (p. 1)

A 1995 School Crime Supplements survey was analyzed by Chandler and colleagues in 1998. They found that 28% of nearly 100,000 students polled admitted that they were aware of gang activity in their schools (Howell & Lynch, 2000). With gang involvement growing among school-age adolescents, “it is imperative that teachers, counselors, administrators, and social service professionals recognize the variables which contribute to an adolescent’s decision to join a gang.” (Omizo, Omizo, & Honda, 1997, p. 39)
Culture and Micro-Culture Definitions

People learn from people. This is not different for adolescents. Adolescents’ “major source of learning is from informal groups with whom they associate at one another’s houses, at local malls, at schools, or on the streets” (Laursen, 2005, p. 138). Unfortunately for many at-risk adolescents, “what they learn from these groups is dependent on the norms of the group” (Laursen, 2005, p. 138). These groups can ultimately evolve into an adolescent’s micro-culture. There are many definitions of culture. Anthropologists have used broad and very vague definitions for culture, but for the purposes of this research, a simple but clear definition is provided by McCurdy, Spradley, and Shandy (2005) - “knowledge that is learned and shared and that people use to generate behavior and interpret experience” (p. 5). Likewise, it is important to understand that there are micro-cultures or the “cultures associated with groups that form for a variety of reasons but do not consume every hour of their members’ time” (McCurdy, Spradley, & Shandy, 2005, p. 15). It is paramount to this study to realize that “everything in education relates to culture – to its acquisition, its transmission, and its invention” (Banks & Banks, 2010, p. 35). Ethnographic researchers are well aware of the issues facing various micro-cultures. For example, McCurdy et al (2005) explain that “many of the conflicts and inefficiencies that plague government agencies and private corporations occur because of cross-cultural misunderstandings between members of different micro-cultures within such groups” (p. 16). Schools are no different in that growing diverse student demographics have seemed to disable maximum efficiency in regards to successful academic acquisition and increased behavioral issues. There may be little support
in considering gangs a micro-culture worthy of educating, especially if these individuals have
criminal backgrounds; however, there are more self-proclaimed gang members who are not
convicted criminals than those who are convicted criminals.

**Gang Definition, Data, and Intrigue**

As referenced in Dickens’ *Oliver Twist*, gang presence has been a problem in urban
areas and inner cities since the 1830’s. Recently, gangs have begun to move to the sprawling
suburbs and to rural areas. With this movement, gangs have infiltrated the school systems,
“which historically have been considered ‘neutral turf’” (Burnett & Waltz, 1994, p. 1). Gangs
have been glamorized in movies such as *Scar Face*, *Blood In – Blood Out*, *Colors*, *City of
God*, and *Boyz in the Hood*. It is the “image of the violent, anti-social gangster” that has
become “part of the American landscape, often romanticized and glamorized by popular
culture” (Ingels, 2005, Overview). Youth join gangs for a variety of reasons, “but the primary
attraction of gangs is their ability to respond to student needs that are not otherwise being
met” (Burnett & Waltz, 1994, p. 2). All too often, the gang “provide[s] youth with a sense of
family and acceptance otherwise lacking in their lives” or for immigrant populations, “a way
of maintaining strong ethnic unity” (Burnett & Waltz, 1994, p. 2). According to Gary Burnett
from the William Gladden Foundation (1992), there are four primary factors in the formation
of juvenile gangs:

First, youth experience a sense of alienation and powerlessness because of a
lack of traditional support structures, such as family and school. Second, gang
membership gives the youth a sense of belonging and becomes a major source
of identity for its members. In turn, gang membership affords a youth a sense of power and control, and gang activities become an outlet for anger. Third, the control of turf is essential to the well-being of the gang, which often will use force to control both its territory and members. Fourth, new members and expansion of territory are essential if a gang is to remain strong and powerful. Both “willing” and “unwilling” members are drawn into gangs to feed the need for more resources and gang members. (p. 2)

The reasoning for the youth intrigue in gangs has been defined by Decker and Van Winkle (1996) as “pulls” and “pushes” (as cited in Matusitz & Breen, 2007, p. 6). The “pulls” can be closely aligned to external attractions like popularity and money albeit from illicit sources. The “pushes” are outside factors that are not within the control of the individual affected. These include “social, ethnic, and financial drives that lead youths in the direction of gangs” (Segal, Pelo, & Rampa, 2001, as cited in Matusitz & Breen, 2007, p. 6). However, a much more prevalent and frustrating factor has emerged in regard to gang attraction – the influence of family. Many gang specialists argue “that some individuals are appealed to gangs because they are exposed to the gang world in early life due to where they grow up and the people in their milieu (Thornberry, 1998, as cited in Matusitz & Breen, 2007, p. 6). For this simple fact, schools and community must partner with one another to battle gang intrigue. Yet, for school officials, law enforcement, parents and other adults, defining gang characteristics has become a struggle as “gang indicators can be quite subtle” and ever-changing (Trump, 2007, p. 3).
One common gang indicator is the presence of various gang identifiers. Gang identifiers may include graffiti, tattoos, gang literature, initiations, hand-signs, and behavior. It is imperative that school personnel receive regular training from law enforcement in order to maintain up-to-date trends and behavior of gangs. “Due to the ever-evolving nature of gang identifiers, and the increasingly common trend of gang members going lower profile with fewer visible signs of gang membership to avoid detection by authorities,” training should be conducted on a regular basis and by local law enforcement agents who specialize in gang behavior (Trump, 2007, p. 3). The identification of gang members or those interested in gangs becomes extremely difficult because it seems that educators stay a step behind gang members in their local trends. Gang members are difficult to identify, which results in insufficient data for tracking gang impact on schools, but it is known that “when gangs exist in a community, they consequently impact schools using them as recruitment centers and claiming them as gang territory” (*Gang Violence Prosecution*, para. 1).

In some cases, schools work without the support of parents either because parents are in denial or surprisingly, due to the fact many parents of gang members are also gang affiliated. Without the support of the parent, identification can become litigious. Veronika Belenkaya of the New York Daily News, reported that this violent lifestyle is more often passed down from parent to child than imagined by educators. Belenkaya’s shocking 2008 news report included pictures of infants adorned in gang attire. She explained that the social media pages of some Blood gang members often depict their children as “blood drops,” blessing them into the gang and proclaiming them early members (para. 3). Bloods,
originating in California and traditionally wearing the color red, are represented under the five-pointed star and are known for their rivalry with Crips. Although gang presence is destined to increase due to, in part, the perpetual cycle of gang affiliation in the home, Jesse Katz and Elizabeth Venant report that most “gang members do not wish any of this on their children” (para. 8).

A Brief History of Gangs in the US

Research suggests that gangs appeared in the United States during one of three periods: after the American Revolution (Howell, 1998), after the Mexican migration (Redfield, 1941), or as a result of the Mexican youth acculturation in the school systems (Vigil, 1988). During the Industrial Revolution, the United States experienced a growth in street gangs comprised of Irish, Jewish, or Italian immigrants (Howell, 1997). Gangs have transitioned from fist-fights to more violent and deadly altercations involving knives and firearms (Howell, 1998). A typical gang member is an inner-city minority male (Esbensen, 2000). Gang members’ age ranges from 12-24 years old (Howell, 1998). Howell (2000) suggests that gangs are difficult adversaries because they “grow, dissolve, and disappear for reasons that are poorly understood” (p. 6).

It is difficult to project the number of gang members who are also students in public educational settings. In the National Center for Educational Statistics Report of 2006, Gary and Denise Gottfredson penned that 24% of students reported gangs in schools, up from 21% in 2003. They also claimed that Hispanic and Black students reported a higher recognition of gangs in schools than their White counterparts. Knox (1994) estimated that there were at
least 200,000 gang members in America shortly after 1990. His data did not include gang members who had not been convicted of a crime. Including these self-proclaimed gang members would dramatically increase this number. Making the epidemic more difficult to identify and resolve is the fact that the very definition of gangs has changed throughout its existence.

The definition of gangs has been disputed over time. From an educational setting perspective, “a typical gang member was defined as an adolescent with problems” (Soho, 2001, p. 4 as cited in Klein, 1971). Malcolm Klein (1998) suggests that gangs have varying unity and take different forms, making identification difficult. Currently, federal law defines the term “criminal street gang” as “an ongoing group, club, organization, or association of five or more persons

- that has as one of its primary purposes the commission of one or more of the criminal offenses described in subsection (c);
- the members of which engage, or have engaged within the past five years, in a continuing series of offenses described in subsection (c); and
- the activities of which affect interstate or foreign commerce.” 18 USC § 521(a).

The National Youth Gang Center (2006), more clearly defines gangs:

There is no single, accepted nationwide definition of youth gangs. It has been firmly established that the characteristics and behaviors of gangs are exceptionally varied within and across geographical areas and that a community’s gang problem – however affected from other areas – is primarily
and inherently homegrown. Thus, state and local jurisdictions tend to develop their own definitions. The terms youth gang and street gang are often used interchangeably, but use of the latter label can result in the confusion of youth gangs with adult criminal organizations. (para. 1)

In the last thirty years, researchers have reduced the definitions to two schools of thought: a collection of individuals with negative personal attributes and/or a collection of individuals who perform deviant acts. Sanchez-Jankowski (2003) urges that there are problems with both approaches “in their common underestimation of connections between the structural conditions of society at large and the form of collective behavior that is ‘the gang,’ and their similar (and sometimes unwitting) recycling of individualistic thought rampant in American culture” (p. 191)

The teaching pool in the United States is becoming more and more middle class and white. This teacher force will be attempting “to educate students who come from different cultural, ethnic, and socioeconomic backgrounds” (Patton, 1998, p. 49). If we are to successfully educate all students, leaving none behind, “these teachers must understand the conditions, values, and cultural heritage that molds such students – especially when those factors may be completely alien to those from the dominant culture” (Patton, 1998, p. 49). Crozier and Davies (2008) indicated that there was an issue with minority students integrating into the dominant culture of schooling. In other words, these students “do not see a place for themselves,” and “ethnocentrism together with racist harassment serves to relegate the young people to the margins” (Crozier & Davies, 2008, p. 285). Calabrese and
Noboa (1995) argue that the school’s inability to positively acclimate and serve students with multiple value structures proves to be a source for gang membership. Soho (1996) further validates this concept as he posits, “by denying the role of schools in the alienation of adolescents, educators become unconscious contributors (rather than inhibitors) to adolescent dysfunction” (p. 3).

There are many factors that lead youth to gang membership. According to youth gang members surveyed as to why they joined a gang, two answers are consistently given: social and protection (Thornberry et al., 2003). Moore (1998) suggests there are four community conditions that precede gang involvement: 1) there is a lack of adult supervision, 2) youth have considerable free time, 3) there is little opportunity for moving into a good job, and 4) gang members can congregate and operate. Thornberry (2003) and Gottfredson (2001) suggest that the perception of poor school safety has driven some youth to gravitate toward the students with deviant behavior in an effort to align themselves with the potential for safety. Finally, Prothrow-Stith and Weissman (1991) argue that gang membership stems from 1) a sense of community, 2) self-esteem, 3) recognition, 4) sexual identity, and 5) a moral code. Affecting gang intrigue and providing an often sensationalized picture of gang life, modern media and pop culture do more damage than good. Violent gang movies and modern music artists like Snoop Dog and Fifty Cents depict gang life as glamorous and gang leaders as larger than life. This type of advertisement explains the lure of gang life for adolescents.
The reasons for the allure of gangs has not changed over time. Even as recently as 2005, Rollins describes gang intrigued students as students who have failed repeatedly, who do not conform to behavioral expectations, who are in classrooms of teachers who have low expectations of them, and possibly, who are undiagnosed students with disabilities. Rollins (2005) also states that these students typically are students who have struggled but have not received the necessary interventions to become academically and behaviorally functional. This description issued in 2005 is no different from that of Juarez (1996) who explains that the cycle becomes perpetual, and as students feel worthless and experience little success, “these youngsters…become labeled by schools as failures” (p. 11). The choice between being labeled a failure in schools or a success in a gang does not take much thought for an adolescent.

**Gang Intrigue: Strain Theory and Disorganization Theory**

Cohen (1955) and Merton (1968) present research that suggests individuals join gangs as a result of the strains that “occur when goals do not match opportunities” (Sanchez-Jankowski, 2003, p. 194). This Strain Theory has been used by many gang researchers by explaining that youth “compensate for frustration that emanates from the strain between individuals’ goals and their ability to realize them” (Sanchez-Jankowski, 2003, p. 194). Rodriguez (1990) does not include a frustration of not being able to gain access to material items. But instead, a desire to have more of their basic needs met. Rodriguez (1990) explains, Gangs are not alien powers. They begin as unstructured groupings, our children, who desire the same as any young person. Respect. A sense of
belonging. Protection...Gangs flourish when there’s a lack of social recreation, decent education, and employment. (p. 250)

The Disorganization Theory, another explanation used by gang researchers, suggests that the lack of structure in poverty-stricken neighborhoods often serves as a fertile ground for gang organization. Using the Disorganization Theory developed by Shaw and McKay, researchers have focused on “the effects of kinds of places – specifically, different types of neighborhoods – in creating conditions favorable or unfavorable to crime and delinquency” (Kubrin & Weitzer, 2003, p. 374). In order to explain gang intrigue, Shaw and McKay (1969) used this theory by suggesting that “poverty, residential mobility, ethnic heterogeneity, and weak social networks decrease a neighborhood’s capacity to control the behavior of people in public, and hence increase the likelihood of crime” (as cited in Kubrin & Weitzer, 2003, p. 374). One important part of the research conducted by Shaw and McKay that did not gain momentum or popularity was the importance of culture in neighborhood organizations. With the work of Kornhauser (1978), cultures found within neighborhoods as a variable of the Disorganization Theory has been revisited. Culture as an important factor in the development of deviant behavior is validated by a number of researchers who have used the Oppositional Subculture Model to explain deviant behaviors. In this model, “lower class communities generate distinctive values and beliefs that endorse aggressive behavior and law violation” (Kubrin & Weitzer, 2003, p. 379).

Kubrin and Weitzer (2003) emphasize the fact that these “subcultures are relatively insulated from and largely contradict conventional, middle-class values, which generally
support conformity to legal norms; the values and norms supportive of crime are fairly widespread in these communities; and criminogenic subcultures are relatively independent of structural factors” (p. 379). Sanchez-Jankowski (2003) explains that “increased social disorganization precipitated increased gang activity in these and other ethnic areas” (p. 196). The Disorganization Theory has evolved into more of a Structure Theory much in part due to the work of Suttles (1968), who rationalized that “gangs were an integral part of a poor community’s structure rather than an outcome of its disorder” (Sanchez-Jankowski, 2003, p. 198). Sanchez-Jankowski urges gang researchers to consider the structure of neighborhoods when determining causes of gang affiliation. Sanchez-Jankowski (2003) defines “structure” as “the configuration of material resources in a system of allocation that establishes various opportunity parameters for each social class” (p. 201). Furthermore, Sanchez-Jankowski (2003) explains that many people who live in poverty have to “fight their environment to find relief from the burdens it imposes” resulting in “a defiant individualist personality” (p. 201). Sanchez-Jankowski (2003) adds to the multiple definitions of gangs by stating that gangs are “organized defiant individualism” (p. 202). All students have basic hierarchal needs, “which include physiological (hunger, thirst, shelter), safety (security and protection), love (affection, belonging, family, acceptance, friendship), esteem (self-esteem, achievement, status recognition, respect), and self-actualization (self-fulfillment)” (Maslow, 1943 as cited in Sharkey, Shekhtmeyster, Chavez-Lopez, Norris, & Sass, 2011, p. 49). Regardless of the rationale behind the decision to join a gang, schools must do a better job of meeting the needs and serving these deviant youth groups.
School Organizational Structure – Authoritarian

Some researchers note that a school’s inability to successfully educate students is a product of the school’s authoritarian organizational model and the inability of the teachers to authentically understand deviant youth. From the perspective of schools, considering the underlying causes of deviant behavior is relevant only because the behavior “interfere(s) with a student’s ability to profit from good instruction and from the school’s ability to provide an equal opportunity for every student to succeed” (Youth Gangs and Schools, 2007, p. 1). There is little knowledge and in some cases, little concern, with changing behaviors in an effort to produce a more complete person. Due to the fact that schools are primarily concerned with making the deviant youth successful in regards to test scores and not rehabilitated of deviant actions, Soho supports the idea that educational settings may do more to increase gang activity than not. Soho (1996) suggests that “by employing an authoritarian model to adolescent expression and behavior, educators may unwittingly contribute to the problems they attempt to minimize, in particular, adolescent alienation and its relationship to gang membership” (p. 3). Furthermore, Soho (1996) claims that “educators fail to recognize the rigidity of their school’s bureaucratic structure, especially for the adolescent” (p. 3). More importantly than curricular preparation, the social acclimation and citizenry of students has become lost in an era of high-stakes testing. Likewise, a national curriculum has side-tracked differentiated instruction and student engagement. And per Gottfredson and Gottfredson (2001), schools are best equipped to dissuade youths from poor decision-making and deviant behavior:
The school is the main secular institution aside from the family involved with the socialization of the young. Not only do young people spend a great deal of time in school, but until the ages at which chronic truancy and dropout become problems nearly all young people are actively enrolled at school. The school therefore is in a better position than any institution other than the family to influence the behavior of young people. To the extent to which schools provide successful instruction in social competencies and develop attitudes and beliefs that are not conducive to problem behavior or involvement with gangs, gang involvement may be reduced…Young people who do not like school, whose school performance is poor, and who are not committed to education are more likely than other youths to become involved in gangs. Preventive interventions in school that keep youths attached to school, committed to education, achieving, and attending school may thereby reduce the likelihood of gang participation. (as cited in Youth Gangs and Schools, para. 5)

Gottfredson and Gottfredson make a seemingly viable proposal to resolve student intrigue in gang membership; however, the proposal relies on the school setting’s understanding of deviant youth.

In an era of high stakes testing and the use of an accountability standard for teachers that is based on student performance, educators unfortunately have little time and less concern with the character flaws of students and more with the scores they generate. Test
scores and data have increased the pace of education and reduced the time educators can spend analyzing underlying causes of inappropriate behaviors, which certainly runs counter to the thoughts of schooling per Dewey (1907):

What the best and wisest parent wants for his [or her] own child, that must the community want for all children. Any other ideal for our schools is narrow and unlovely; acted upon, it destroys democracy. (p. 3)

Matthews’ research (1992) confirms that adolescents feel powerless and left out in the decision-making process of school. In fact, they feel school is an abstract concept done “to them” and not “with them.” The school establishes policy, and the student is expected to “assimilate the school’s normative structure” (Soho, 2001, p. 3). Soho (2001) further reiterates the school’s absence from compromise as he proclaims that the “school as a whole yields little to accommodate individual needs” (p. 3). As a product of this inability to feel invested in school, youth are becoming alienated. Most studies related to student alienation have magnified the idea of deviant behavior (Clark, 1992) or school organizational power structures (Strauss, 1974). Calabrese (1987) explained deviant behavior through student alienation. Due to the fact that alienation is abstract, there was difficulty in measuring its correlation to any outcome. According to Soho (2001), “one consequence of youth dysfunction is reflected in the growing numbers and spreading beyond urban boundaries of gang membership” (p. 4). Researchers explain youth dysfunction by, among other factors, school alienation. Calabrese and Noboa (1995) suggest that youth see gang membership as a counter cultural experience. Gang membership “reflects a viable alternative choice for
alienated adolescents who are dissatisfied with dominant American culture and its associating norms” (Soho, 2001, p. 4).

In 1961, Dean “defined alienation as an affective construct consisting of three components: isolation, normlessness, and powerlessness” (Soho, 1996, p. 6). The Dean Alienation Scale is a 24 item five point Likert scale which has been used to illustrate levels of alienation in regards to various school groups. There have been three empirical studies that suggest school at least contributes to student alienation; however, these studies differ in the primary cause of student alienation. Bronfenbrenner (1986) urges that family, church, and lastly, schools have the greatest effect on student alienation. Ornstein (1981), Rafky (1979), and Rafalides and Hoy (1971) proclaim that the organizational structure of public schools is the cause for student alienation. Finally, Calabrese (1987) posits that adolescent alienation is primarily a personal and/or a situational phenomenon.

Even after identifying the problem in serving deviant youth, the school systems may be no more prepared to address the inability to serve this group of students. It appears that “85% of the teachers in the country are white, while the number of minorities entering the teaching profession has declined in recent years” (Grant & Secada, 1989, as cited in Patton, 1998, p. 49). Based on this trend of teacher demographics, “many white teachers will attempt to educate students who come from different cultural, ethnic, and socioeconomic backgrounds” (Patton, 1998, p. 49). It is important that educators understand that many of their students will come from violent, unstructured backgrounds where the importance of authority is minimized. Azar (1996) argues that parents and teachers have a different
definition of “internal working models of each other’s ‘work’” (p. 79). Because of this difference, Azar (1996) claims that parent and teacher to child and student “transactions at times are marked by an adversarial tone rather than a collaborative one” (p. 79). Azar uses a social cognitive theory to emphasize “the importance of identifying differences in people’s working assumptions about relationships before collaborative efforts can occur” (Azar, 1989, as cited in Azar, 1996, p. 79).

It is ironic that schools, comprised of highly-skilled and trained professionals, struggle to control the development of gangs, while gangs, comprised of unsuccessful and belligerent youth, “are capable of producing benefits for their members and other people in society, controlling the behavior of their rank and file, and regulating leadership changes in ways that ensure these entities’ continuity” (Sanchez-Jankowski, 2003, p. 202).

A New Ecology of Schooling

Over the last two decades there has been a new and increasing appreciation for the interdependencies (a “new ecology” of schooling) between schools, families, and communities (Fusarelli & Lindle, 2011; Goodlad, 1987) and a growing recognition that actively reaching out from school to community (building “social capital”) may be a necessary step in order to strengthen communities (thus building social competency in youth), if the school is to educate children successfully (Coleman, 1994).

Implicit in the design of many coordinated services efforts are concepts drawn psychology and from Bronfenbrenner’s ecology of child development scheme, as well as concepts from Dewey, Erikson, Piaget, and others. Simply put, they are anchored in the
belief that children cannot fully develop without systems of support. When schools seek to connect the multiple systems a child encounters, they are utilizing Bronfenbrenner’s ecological systems theory that focuses on the context (and to a lesser degree, the quality of that context) of a child’s environment. The key question being: How does a child’s world help or hinder continued development?

Bronfenbrenner’s ecological systems theory explains child development within the context of the system of relationships that form their environment. These relations are similar to the layers of an onion in that each system is a separate layer of onion, which encircles, subsumes and controls the subordinate layers. This nesting imposes a social harness that provides order to society. It is important to note that these layers or controls operate independently, but within each other and their combined impact can be either positive (builds human capital and healthy stable social systems) or negative (erodes self-efficacy, lowers social competence, creates dysfunction). Bronfenbrenner delineated five types of nested systems: the microsystem (such as the family or classroom); the mesosystem (two Microsystems in interaction); the exosystem (external environments which indirectly influence development, such as parental workplace or community-based resources); the macrosystem (the larger socio-cultural context); and the chronosystem (the evolution of the external systems over time). These systems, individually and collectively, shape development. Changes or conflict in any one system will ripple throughout other systems. Therefore, multiple systems and the interactions between those systems shape a child’s development.
Bronfenbrenner’s model may help explain why traditionally, gang members find little success in schools, and more importantly, in society. For example, cultural expectations of the macrosystem (parents should not be involved in gang activity) may conflict with the real and present needs of gang-affiliated families (microsystem) or local norms. Furthermore, each gang and each school may possess their own institutional norms inconsistent with community expectations or, what Ogbu (1974) termed, discontinuities of culture. Students, living in the home with parents and other relatives who are gang associated, will be groomed to become gang members. Ultimately, as Bronfenbrenner’s model suggests, the adversarial relationships, the delinquency of social skills, and the ability to resolve conflict will transfer from home to school. Gang members will find little success in a system that they did not help create and one that has yielded little success for their parents.

**Control Theory**

Although the title of Glasser’s theory may seem to suggest a control of others, it is actually just the opposite. Glasser, as early as 1969, promoted the fact that individuals cannot be forced to do anything. The Control Theory, renamed by Glasser as the Choice Theory in 1996, postulates that an individual will only do that which satisfies him/her at that precise moment (Glasser, 1995). Hence, the objective becomes to learn the student well enough to place him/her in situations he/she find interesting and relevant.

Glasser (1995) defined five basic needs of people that must be satisfied: survival – nourishment, clothing, shelter, and need to reproduce; power – desire to feel significant, competent, and successful; belonging – feeling of being connected with others; freedom – an
individual’s right to act according to individual will; and, fun – the need to find happiness, pleasure, and enjoyment in life. With these basic needs in mind, Glasser emphasizes that it is more important to understand the underlying causal factors of an abnormal behavior than it is be able to identify the misbehavior. This is a paradigm shift for educators as most employ an authoritarian system of punitive consequences for behavior without regard to mitigating factors and rarely use positive reinforcement for exemplar behaviors.

According to Glasser (1995), educators must discover a way to create learning opportunities where all students find satisfaction in the academic assignment or in the behavioral expectation. Rollins (2005), linking Glasser’s theory to gang behavior, suggests that adolescents feel that “if you are not successful in mainstream society-in-school, on the job – and you have an opportunity to go out on a mission and your gang tells you how great you did, that’s where you’ll want to be” (p. 12).

There is little doubt that students of all ages will resist boundaries and rules; however as a way to minimize the adult to student conflict, Glasser’s emphasis on relationships and understanding a student’s individuality requires that a discussion of the teacher’s needs, the students’ needs, class rules, and overall expectations should occur at the beginning of the year. The Control Theory also mandates that all students should be given a voice in creating the class rules and that the environment should be warm and inviting as well. There is an implied importance placed on the students’ rights and responsibility. Control Theory suggests that educators utilize this theory to help students self-evaluate the effects of their own choices and behavior. Wubbolding (2007) states that educators using the Choice Theory are capable
of helping students to experience a safe and happy environment, feel a better sense of belonging, make better decisions through self-evaluation, and control their academic, behavioral, and social successes.

Ultimately, teachers must know all of their students. Glasser’s theory is based on a foundation that teachers will become familiar with students and create individual opportunities for each through established relationships. Therein lies the problem. Many educators are not relationship-builders, and even some who are may find difficulty in communicating with students from deviant youth groups. Gang members find great discomfort in following the rules created by authoritarian figures not related to gang affiliation, which makes it even more important that they have an opportunity to assist in the creation of the class rules, feel that they have a voice, and find a mutual respect among the teachers and the students.

**Pedagogy of the Oppressed – Liberation Theory**

Freire (1997) suggests that education either promotes the status quo or becomes a “practice of freedom” in which individuals learn to change their world (p. 16). In a similar presentation to that of Glasser, Freire posits that educators have an obligation to instill students with a voice in the process of creating the learning environment – whether academic or behavioral parameters. In fact, Freire (1997) proposes a Problem-Solving educational system that reduces the decision making of the adults and maximizes that of the students. Freire envisions students as teachers and teachers as students, neither more or less important to the process than the other. According to Freire (1997), “to this end, it enables teachers’
students to become Subjects of the educational process by overcoming authoritarianism and alienating intellectualism” (p. 67).

Freire (1997) also coined the term, Banking Model of Education. As a part of the oppression cycle (maintaining the status quo of marginal groups), Freire (1997) argues that education for students “extends only as far as receiving, filing, and storing the deposits” (p. 53). In opposition of Banking and supported by Freire (1997) is the Libertarian Model of Education which focuses on a reconciliation between students and teachers (p. 53). According to Freire (1997), “education must begin with the solution of the teacher-student contradiction, by reconciling the poles of contradiction so that both are simultaneously teachers and students” (p. 53).

Regardless of subculture, Freire urges an equality of opportunity through equitable power. Through this lens, gang members could essentially incorporate some elements of their decision making process on the educational system. Concepts such as respect may be redefined by gang members who do not identify with the traditional definition as defined in the school system. Gang members refuse to receive curriculum, socialization, and/or dialogue in general through the Banking Model of Education. Even more importantly for gang members in schools is the need to be engaged and the need to be an essential component in the decision making process.

**School Response to Gangs**

In the 2005 State of the Union Address, President George Bush issued a commitment to addressing adolescent gang involvement in the United States.
Now we need to focus on giving young people, especially young men in our cities, better options than apathy, or gangs, or jail. Tonight I propose a three-year initiative to help organizations keep young people out of gangs, and show young men an ideal of manhood that respects women and rejects violence. Taking on gang life will be one part of a broader outreach to at-risk youth, which involves parents and pastors, coaches and community leaders, in programs ranging from literacy to sports.

President Bush championed transforming the environment of at-risk youth. Although his State of the Union Address vowed national attention to the gang issue, there has been little progress made in regards to the number of gang members and the amount of gang-related crimes across the nation. Laursen (2005) argues that this national attention need not look for additional intervention programs to curb gang involvement, but an advocacy for the “transformation of the environments where youth love and breathe” (p. 137). Furthermore, Laursen (2005) touts positive peer relationships as he promised that “unleashing the power of young people to help create caring relationships works in schools, sports teams, after school programs, and on street corners” (p. 137). Sergiovanni (1994) suggested that, rather than implementing more additional stricter policies, “cultivating caring communities for young people will help meet their basic human needs of belonging, of continuity, of being connected to others and to ideas and values” (as cited in Laursen, 2005, p. 137).

Many school systems have “taken a band-aide approach toward addressing the issue by instituting rules and policies forbidding gang related attire, paraphernalia, and
communication” (Soho, 1996, p. 5). Crozier and Davies (2008) note that “the emphasis is on the young people themselves to change...to blend in and to stop being different” (p. 299). This rigidity, according to many, is part of the reason that students are becoming more interested in outlier groups. In other words, just when “adolescents express a desire for more freedom and control over their lives,” schools apply more boundaries (Soho, 2001, p. 3).

Obviously, the high school setting requires an element of suppression when adolescents seek out independence but are still minors. Ironically, these more constraining policies are ineffective as a deterrent of gang membership. According to Alan Soho (2001), these policies “encourage gangs to become more active in recruitment and creative in their images of identification” (p. 5). In fact, Kubrin and Weitzer (2003) identify a “code of honor or street code that shapes residents’ (of poverty stricken neighborhoods) values and behaviors, for instance, by encouraging a disputatious attitude and aggressive sanctions against individuals who show disrespect” (p. 380). This explains the deviant behavior of some students.

**Gangs: A Moving Target**

Making identification and response even more difficult, Anderson (1999) posits that the gang code used by gangs supplies a normative “rationale allowing those who are inclined to aggression to precipitate violent encounters in an approved way” (p. 33). Gangs are ever-changing and adaptable to policy. Recently, gangs have adopted cartoon characters and other family icons to identify gang affiliation. The schools are faced with the choice of banning seemingly harmless identifiers or allowing the subtle communication to continue. From the
perspective of the community, banning such icons results in scrutiny. This further validates claims of many researchers that schools are not “addressing the central problem underlying adolescent alienation and its relationship to gang participation,” instead they are responding to the “overt symptoms of it” (Soho, 2001, p. 6). Klein (1995) illustrates the mammoth task at hand for the educators as he exclaims that “street gangs are an amalgam of racism, of urban underclass poverty, of minority and youth culture, of fatalism in the face of rampant deprivation, of political insensitivity, and the gross ignorance of inner-city (and inner-town) America on the part of most of us who don’t have to survive there” (p. 234). Schools are poorly equipped to address this issue “because gang members are intelligent and competent [and] have proved stubborn adversaries to the various institutions that have attempted to eliminate them as social problems” (Sanchez-Jankowski, 2003, p. 194). Even if the schools were more equipped to address a gang presence, Moore (1991) argues that there would not be a positive outcome because “school and family do not work” for these individuals (p. 137).

**Punitive Measures**

Schools use of the progressive disciplinary process used in human resource employment situations and in the criminal justice system simply does not work to rehabilitate a problem. Grote (2010) explains that it is “an outdated, adversarial method” (p. 54). He continues by stating that “the traditional system is not a corrective process, [in fact] it breeds resentment and hostility” (p. 54). Instead of looking for a disciplinary system characterized by positive responses, school systems have gone in the opposite direction. In response to the increase in school violence across the nation, local school boards are implementing more
zero tolerance policies. The zero tolerance data is controversial in regards to the impact on school safety. In fact, the only certain product of these policies is “a dramatic surge in school suspensions and expulsions” and a “new round of controversy and charges of civil rights violations” (Skiba, 2000, p. 2). The zero tolerance policy term seems to have been coined in 1986 by Senator Peter Nunez in reference to ships carrying drugs. U.S. Attorney General Edwin Meese in 1988 adopted the model when he urged that regardless of the amount of drugs on seagoing vessels, all would be charged equally under federal law. Beginning in 1989, public school systems began using zero tolerance as it applied to drugs, gangs, and weapons. In 1994, President Bill Clinton signed the Gun-Free Schools Act into law. This law mandated a one-year expulsion from school for being in possession of any weapon on school property. Over time, school districts have evolved this policy into other areas like fighting, gang involvement, and bullying.

In a 1997 report, Violence in America’s Public Schools, The National Center on Education Statistics “found that 94% of all schools have zero tolerance policies for weapons or firearms, 87% for alcohol, while 79% report mandatory suspensions or expulsions for violence or tobacco” (Skiba, 2000, p. 3). Unfortunately, the impact of zero tolerance policies in educational settings is uncertain. According to Skiba (2000), “aside from school district testimonials, there appear to be very few empirical evaluations of the efficacy of school security measures” including zero tolerance policies (p. 7). Suspensions and expulsions have been questioned by not only researchers but also the community in general. Many
stakeholders feel that suspensions are a product of school and teacher characteristics and not student misbehavior.

One could argue from this finding that if students are interested in reducing their chances of being suspended, they will be better off by transferring to a school with a lower suspension rate than by improving their attitudes or reducing their misbehavior. (Wu et al., 1982, pp. 255-256)

As students from different subcultures are different in defining respect and adhering to school rules, so are schools different in procedures and student consequences.

**Educators and Gangsters: Two Different Subcultures**

Teacher characteristics certainly play a role in the disciplinary process. Obviously, some teachers are more tolerant of misbehavior than others. Some teachers are more skilled at developing relationships. So, is the issue with suspensions and disciplinary actions simply a relationship building deficiency or a tolerance issue, or is there a cultural “blind spot” at play? In an effort to illustrate the cultural divide in some classrooms today, Townsend (2000) “suggests that many teachers, especially those of European-American origin, may be unfamiliar with and even uncomfortable with the more active and boisterous style of interaction that characterizes African American males” (as cited in Skiba, 2000, p. 12). As many of school gang problems are found within minority groups, it is important to know that “teachers who are prone to accepting stereotypes of adolescent African-American males as threatening or dangerous may react more quickly to relatively minor threats to authority,
especially if such fear is paired with a misunderstanding of cultural norms of social interaction” (Skiba, 2000, p. 12).

With suspensions becoming the result of cultural misunderstandings, it is disconcerting to discover that “there appears to be little evidence, direct or indirect, supporting the effectiveness of suspension or expulsion for improving student behavior of contributing to overall school safety” (Skiba, 2000, p. 13). In fact, “for an adolescent at-risk for antisocial behavior, it seems unlikely that school suspension will successfully impact behavior” (Skiba, 2000, p. 14). Skiba (2000) continues by stating that “suspension may simply accelerate the course of delinquency by providing a troubled youth with little parental supervision more opportunities to socialize with deviant peers” (p. 14). In Thornson’s research (1996), a student characterized his feelings about the value of suspension:

When they suspend you, you get in more trouble, cuz you’re out in the street…And that’s what happened to me once. I got into trouble one day cause there was a party and they arrested everybody in that party…I got in trouble more than I got in trouble at school, because I got arrested and everything. (p. 9)

Suspensions result in a congregation of deviant youth without adult supervision. Some students use suspension or disciplinary action as a chance to escalate behavior. Many students feel that the consequences assigned are unfair and are a result of being singled out by the teacher (Gottfredson (1989). In essence, “unless carefully monitored and accompanied by positive consequences or alternative goals, the application of harsh
consequences appears to be as likely to lead to escape or counter-aggression as to meaningful alternative behavior” (Axelrod & Apsche, 1983 as cited in Skiba, 2000, p. 14). The objective of school systems and the general public is the same – safe and orderly schools; however, it is the method by which this objective is accomplished that has created such outcry. If the battle with the growing intrigue with gang memberships is to be won, “it is imperative that social institutions with access to at-risk youth (i.e. schools) consider their role in promoting versus preventing delinquent pathways, and ultimately, gang involvement” (Sharkey, Shekhtmeyster, Chavez-Lopez, Norris, & Sass, 2011, p. 46). Schools are the most powerful of these social institutions as the student, when present, is presented with at least six hours of either positive or negative influences.

Although most factors associated with gang involvement are not easily changed, “such as poverty, social disorganization (i.e. disadvantaged neighborhoods where delinquent behavior is acquired and approved), or poor family interactions, school factors are within the control of professionals trained to promote the learning and behavioral excellence of diverse youth” (Sharkey, Shekhtmeyster, Chavez-Lopez, Norris, & Sass, 2011, p. 46). Even if the educators are trained to deal with a diverse population, does the purpose of schooling allow for success for all? From the research of Coleman and Jencks nearly fifty years ago, Jencks argued that the “factory model” of schooling, “which assumes that the school’s outcome is the direct product of its inputs…must be abandoned” (Jencks as cited in Hodgson, 1973, p. 44). So, the questions remain – are teachers trained and prepared to address this deviant youth group and do educators even have the desire to work with these types of students?
Professional Learning Communities and a Response to Intervention

There have been a multitude of programs, instructional practices, and professional development employed to yield great student success; however, very few options have been considered for an outlier population such as gang members. Little to no success has been made in the educational field in regards to serving deviant youth groups. In the last decade, educators have been charged with finding ways to identify individual student’s academic and social needs. Furthermore, utilizing the concept of professional learning communities, teachers have also been asked to use a Response to Instruction framework to create specific interventions for all students. In the educational arena, there is a continuum of knowledge and practice when it comes to the RtI framework. Some schools have ignored this wave of school improvement reform, seeing it as “just another recommendation that I can outlast.” Other schools are working under the framework but for academic needs only. In order for students involved in gang activity to experience success, schools will need to renovate their behavioral pyramid of interventions.

DuFour, Eaker, and DuFour (2005) argue that school reform is a simple concept that revolves around the professional learning community – teachers meeting regularly as a team to identify essential and valued student learning, develop common formative assessments, analyze current levels of achievement, set achievement goals, share strategies, and then create lessons to improve upon those levels. (p. xii)

Michael Fullan (2000) adds that teachers reflect on student assessments and “change their instructional practice accordingly to get better results” (p. 582). But is this reform such a
simple concept as DuFour, Eaker, and DuFour outline? Do teachers change instructional
practices so that all students achieve success? The PLC concept presented by DuFour, Eaker,
and DuFour (2005) relies not on the mission of “raising test scores, but on schools making a
positive difference in the lives of students and thereby fulfilling a fundamentally moral
purpose” (p. 12). Unfortunately, many educators “believe they have a responsibility to give
all students the opportunity to learn, but the extent of the learning will depend on factors
outside the school’s sphere of influence, such as innate ability, students’ socioeconomic
levels, their degree of motivation, and so on” (DuFour, Eaker, & DuFour, 2005, p. 12). This
belief, of sorting and selecting the elite, was the very foundation of our early educational
system. Thomas Jefferson suggested that Virginia schools eliminate students eligible to
attend college (1782). The early high school concept was based on the fact that students
“cannot do and do not need the same education” (Leavitt, 1912, p. 2). With the working class
needing to remain on the farms instead of in the classroom, the public high school vision
became one created merely for the rich. DuFour, Eaker, and DuFour (2005) add that
“intelligence was something you were born with, not something you acquired” (p. 13).

Furthermore, DuFour, Eaker, and DuFour (2005), suggest “if the purpose of
schooling is to ensure that all students are taught, and then to assist in the sorting and
selecting process based on the initial academic success or the perceived aptitude of students,
there is no compelling reason to improve schools” (p. 14). It seems that schools have been
very effective in sorting and selecting. If on the other hand, the purpose of schooling is to
ensure that all students acquire knowledge and achieve success, we are in need of school
reform. The four questions of a functional PLC require educators to ponder what to do when a student is unsuccessful. This response can come in the form of remediation and additional time for students who are struggling, but more often, there is a need for change in the instructional delivery and presentation.

When PLCs respond to the struggling students’ needs, they are moving into the realm of the Response to Intervention, or RtI, model of education. Although the pyramid of interventions included in the RtI Framework does not specifically identify relationship-building as an intervention, it is obvious that relationships play a vital role in the academic and behavioral success of students in outlier groups. Abourjilie (2000) identifies one issue with educators as he states that they “think of themselves as teachers of a subject, thus putting that curriculum before their children” (p. 24). Abourjilie (2000) reiterates the importance of relationships as he declares that “when the climate of our class is positive, and the children feel secure, respected, confident, and safe, then real learning can take place” (p. 25). All students want to be successful. Abourjilie (2000) goes one step further by stating that “every child wants to be successful and will seek out something – positive or negative – to succeed at” (p. 29). He argues that teachers must look beyond the negative actions of our students, which he referenced as the “tip of an iceberg,” and that “teachers had to be willing to look under the water and see that 90% of the child that exists beneath the surface” (p. 29).

Without changing the paradigm of educational practices so that relationships become primary in the instructional process, educators will continue to teach at a problem and not resolve the underlying issues that prohibit all students from being successful. Whether
attributed to poverty, a deficit in educational resources, insufficient parental education,
and/or involvement in deviant youth groups, educators must build relationships to identify
and appropriately address the deficiency of each student who experiences failure.

**Literature Review Chapter Summary**

This chapter presented differing definitions of compulsory schooling and compulsory
learning. With the widening achievement-gap more magnified by high-stakes accountability,
it is obvious that not all students are being successful in educational settings. One micro-
cultural group, deviant youth involved in gang activity, has experienced little to no success
within the school walls. As gang membership and intrigue grows among school-age youth,
schools and communities have failed to partner successfully to address the issue.

Communities seemingly place the responsibility of action on schools. Schools deny having a
gang presence for fear of negative publicity, and now with new private school vouchers, fear
of losing students in the transfer process. This chapter incorporated the Strain Theory and the
Disorganization Theory to explain the youth rationale for joining gangs. Likewise, Maslow’s
Hierarchy was used to identify that all students, regardless of culture and/or behavior, have
needs that must be fulfilled. With the organizational structure of the school being
predominantly authoritarian, schools have created a clear adversarial relationship with gang
members. Additionally, schools using zero tolerance policies have proven ineffective in
addressing deviant youth needs, often pushing these students further into the streets and
essentially into gangs. Using the premise of multi-cultural education, schools whose teachers
are trained and understand the various approaches to communicating with students of
different backgrounds, who recognize students’ individualistic needs, and who incorporate the tenets of professional learning communities within the RtI framework will experience far more success with outlier groups like gangs.

Chapter Three describes the research procedures to be used in this study. A description of the research design, sample selection, interview process, data collection, and data analysis are included. The guiding research questions are presented in Chapter Three as well as an explanation of the study’s limitations and the safeguards against researcher bias.
CHAPTER 3: METHODOLOGY

Introduction

The purpose of this multiple case study conducted through an ethnographical lens was to investigate the value systems of the micro-culture of gang members and to determine their impressions of the educational setting. Identification of the value system provided by gang members allowed this study to analyze the effects of the traditional educational setting. Ultimately, this study analyzed the influence of the authoritarian organizational structure as applied to various culturally diverse youth groups.

Azar (1996) explains that, from experiences and cultures, people develop the schemata necessary to navigate relationships. Unfortunately, schools, teachers, students, and parents have different internal scripts from which to choose when responding to social situations. With this difference in mind, it is not surprising that some students and parents do not typically trust school and teacher decisions, resulting in conflict and student disengagement. Bogdan and Biklen (2007) more clearly define the disparity between school and student in the following explanation of symbolic interaction:

People act, however not according to what the school is supposed to be, or what administrators say it is but, rather according to how they see it. For some students, high school is primarily a place to meet friends, or even a place to get high; for most, it is a place to get grades and amass credits so they can graduate – tasks they define as leading to college or a job. The way students define school and its components determines their actions, although the rules and the credit system may set certain
limits and impose certain costs and thus affect their behavior. Organizations vary in the extent to which they provide fixed meanings and the extent that alternative meanings are available and created. (p. 28)

Research Questions

The methodological approach of this study was an appropriate response to the questions used to frame the research. In order to ascertain the disparity between the value systems of educators and gang members in the traditional school setting, the following questions framed this study:

1. What are the gang members’ perceptions of school?
2. How do these perceptions align with the organizational structure used in traditional public schools?
3. In what ways do their community and the rules of gang life contribute to their gang involvement and academic performance?

By gathering information related to the research questions listed above, this study illustrated the disparity in the traditional instructional and social approaches used in regards to deviant youth groups. Responses to these questions informed our understanding of the conflicting value systems of gang members and the traditional educational setting.

Methodological Approach

This multiple case study conducted through an ethnographic lens was a qualitative study of young adult gang members who volunteered to participate. The study illustrated the value system of a micro-culture of gang members and their perception of the cultural and
ethnic values in the traditional authoritarian organizational structure of a school setting. This study utilized a qualitative approach as “interactions among people, for example, are difficult to capture with existing measures, and these measures may not be sensitive to issues such as gender differences, race, economic status, and individual differences” (Creswell, 2007, p. 40). The voices of the participants in this research study were far more important than the number of participants. According to Creswell (2007), “we conduct qualitative research when we want to empower individuals to share their stories, hear their voices, and minimize the power relationships that often exist between a researcher and the participants in a study” (p. 40). The data was collected from “natural settings, attempting to make sense of, or interpret, phenomena in terms of the meanings people bring to them” (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005, p. 3). By engaging in in-depth interviews with a select number of gang members, I was able to get data that yielded a rich, thick description of gang culture.

Research Design

This study was a multi-case study conducted through an ethnographical lens with a critical social justice framework. Klenke (2008) defines ethnography as “a description of a social group or system” (p. 200). With ethnographical lens, it is paramount that the researchers “seek to gain an emic or the native’s point of view without imposing their own conceptual framework as opposed to the etic or outsider’s view of the cultural group they are studying (Klenke, 2008, p. 200). Case study approaches are “different from other types [of qualitative research] in that they are intensive analyses and descriptions of a single unit or system bounded by space and time” (Hancock & Algozzine, 2006, p. 11). This multi-case
study used a critical framework. A critical social justice framework “seeks not just to study and understand society but rather to critique and change society” (Patton, 2002, p. 131). In regards to the differing value systems, one might reference the inability of the deviant youth group to function in traditional educational systems due to cultural “blind spots.” If the dysfunctional behavior can be attributed to cultural “blind spots,” there should be a socially appropriate presentation used by educational settings to acclimate the deviant youth to the expected and normal behavior patterns. According to Patton (2002), one of the most influential, orientational frameworks is ‘critical theory,’ which focuses on how injustice and subjugation shape people’s experience and understandings of the world” (p. 120). The qualitative approach better enables the researcher “describe the nature of a belief, attitude, event, or behavior,” much less the disparity of those concepts as defined by gang members in comparison to those of the traditional educational setting (Merriam, 1988, p. 68).

In order to compare the value system of gang members to that of an educational setting, there must be an “immersion in the social context being studied” (Klenke, 2008, p. 200). This ethnographic multi-case study compared differing value systems and gang member perceptions of school. As such, a qualitative research method was more appropriate than a quantitative approach. According to Lincoln and Guba (1985), studies of multiple perspectives are often more clearly portrayed by qualitative studies. The prescribed methods of quantitative research would limit the quality of expression that would be provided by the subjects. More specifically, qualitative research more clearly portrayed the voices of the participating gang members so that practitioners have a more applicable definition of gang
member needs. In regards to voice, which provided a more realistic understanding of the gang mentality and how it applies to schooling, we do not need numbers as provided by quantitative research – we need the relationships and trust created in the qualitative research process.

Casual and informal relationships over time were used to gain access to self-admitted adolescent gang members. To assist in the evolution of these relationships, the researcher utilized relationship-building skills and cultural awareness knowledge to further deepen the relationships. The gang members provided the study with definitions of basic concepts through dialogue produced by open-ended interview questions. The open-ended questions allowed the research to divulge a more “authentic understanding of people’s experiences” (Silverman, 1993, p. 10).

The answers obtained from the interviews of gang members provided insights into gang life. Additional data sources were used to provide clarity to the intricacy of gangs as an organization. These sources included a filmed gang fight, a Book of Knowledge, and various gang graffiti which was used to further identify the value system and gang member perspectives of school. A gang member’s Book of Knowledge, also referred to as Inglewood, provided the member with the history, all processes, important terminology, and ideology of the gang.

Site Selection and Participants

This comparative multi-case study with a social justice theoretical framework used open-ended interview, descriptive questions to generate dialogue between researcher and
gang member participants. There are four types of descriptive questions: grand tour, mini tour, story, and native language check (McCurdy, Spradley, & Shandy, 2005). This research employed all four types of descriptive questions. Descriptive questions are used to learn about space and action (McCurdy, Spradley, & Shandy, 2005). Initially, there were grand tour questions to identify the size and basic procedures of the gang with which each participant is involved. The mini tour questions used in this research provided the researcher with information regarding the folk terms used within gang life. McCurdy, Spradley, and Shandy (2005) posit that these questions “provide a greater detail and a fuller picture of the informant’s world” (p. 39). Also used in this research are story questions which elicited information “about actual events or places associated with their microculture” (McCurdy, Spradley, & Shandy, 2005, p. 40). Finally, the researcher utilized native language questions to identify terminology that is used solely within the gang microculture.

According to McCurdy, Spradley, and Shandy (2005), an ethnographer should choose an informant by one of the following ways: talk with someone you already know, find an informant “cold turkey,” or use a “go-between.” In this research study, familiar, former-students were selected by the researcher. In regards to the gang members chosen, “in judgment sampling, you decide the purpose you want informants (or communities) to serve, and you go out to find some” (Bernard, 2000, p. 176, as cited in Patton, 2002, p. 230). In this study, I used a combination of two types of sampling: critical case sampling and criterion sampling. Critical case sampling opines “if it’s true of this case, it’s likely true of all other cases” (Patton, 2002, p. 243). Criterion sampling establishes a criterion, like gang
participation, as a standard for all subjects chosen (Patton, 2002). Regardless of the sampling method chosen, “the underlying principle that is common to all of these strategies is selecting information-rich cases – cases from which one can learn a great deal about matters of importance and therefore worthy of in-depth study” (Patton, 2002, p. 242). According to Patton (2002), the number of the sample size is irrelevant as long as the “cases are information-rich” (p. 244).

The rural district chosen in this study has experienced a growth in gang activity and a definite increase through media coverage. The participant gang members were chosen as a result of a previous relationship with the researcher. These participants at one point in time attended one of the schools that I served as principal. None of the participants were current students in K12 public education. The sampling selection appears to be one of convenience; however, when studying gang members, it is imperative that the researcher have stable relationships with the gang participants, and as such, the criterion sampling chosen is best classified as purposive. Although these relationships were paramount, the fact that the researcher served as principal while the participants were students certainly could be a variable of concern. Yet, there is no reason to believe that they were not forthright in their answers as the researcher is no longer in a position of authority over the participants.

As an administrator in this rural district, I noticed an increase in the acceptance of the behaviors found within the deviant youth groups known as gangs. In 2010, a local high school experienced its first drive-by shooting. The local police department reiterated that the shooting could not be labeled gang related “because there is no definitive evidence
conclusively proving that either Dubose or Ray are members of a known criminal gang” (Rapp, 2009). Within the same news article, the police state that Dubose does have “dog paws” on his right arm, a tattoo claiming membership in the United Blood Nation. Several months later, the assistant district attorney declared that the suspected shooters were self-proclaimed gang members and that the shooting was gang-related (Rapp, 2009, p. 1A, 7A). Local gang detectives labeled the shooting as a “scare by” used by gangs to announce a “beef” with another gang or set. Ironically, one of the youths was removed from school for 365 days the previous year for bringing a gun on school grounds. Another example of gang presence occurred at a local middle school, where a student was beaten by an individual while onlookers counted “bloody one, bloody two, etc.” This assault was part of the student’s initiation into the gang, and it actually took place across the street from the school. Onlookers admitted to school officials that the assault was part of an initiation to the “85/95 Blood” set. Additionally, a local youth was shot in the head and left in a ditch to die. This shooting has been termed, “a drug deal gone bad,” but both men are members of rival gangs, and “there was an anonymous call made to the [local newspaper] that Pennyfeather [victim] is a member of a local gang known as the “nine Trey Scarfaces” (Rapp, 2009, 1A, 6A). In 2011, a local youth was shot in the leg while walking on a Camden street. The youth was a well-known member of a local gang. On October 27, 2011, the same youth was shot to death in Smithfield by gang members in retaliation of a previous gang beef. Ray was lured to a home and shot multiple times on the front porch while waiting to enter the home. This district is comprised of “sleepy” small towns with no historical trends of violent crimes.
Data Collection: Interviews and Documents

Creswell (2007) groups data into four categories: observations, interviews, documents, and audiovisual materials. The most common information used by ethnographic researchers comes in the form of “observations, interviewing, documents, and artifacts” (Hammersly & Atkinson, 1995; Spradley, 1980 as cited in Creswell, 2007, p. 131). Yin (2003) suggests that there are six types of data collection when conducting case studies: documents, archived records, interviews, direct observations, participant observation, and physical artifacts. This study included collection of two types of data: transcripts from interviews and document analysis of a Book of Knowledge, a videoed interview with a gang member, and a videoed gang-related act of violence.

This section describes the data I collected and how that data was analyzed. Figure 3.1 provides an overview of the items discussed in the narrative that follows.

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Figure 3.1 Data Collection and Analysis
Interviews

As the primary means of data collection, “qualitative researchers use interviews to uncover the meaning structures that participants use to organize their experiences and make sense of their worlds” (Hatch, 2002, p. 91). Spradley (1979) more clearly defines the purpose of qualitative researchers and their relationships with the participants:

I want to understand the world from your point of view. I want to know what you know in the way you know it. I want to understand the meaning of your experience, to walk in your shoes, to feel things as you feel them, to explain things as you would explain them. Will you become my teacher and help me understand. (p. 34)

Hatch (2002) identifies five products of interviewing that I intend to utilize in this study:

- Here and now constructions – participant explanations of events, activities, feelings, motivations, and concerns;
- Reconstructions – explanations of past events and experiences;
- Projections – explanations of anticipated experiences;
- Triangulation – verification or extension of information from other sources; and,
- Member checking – verification or extension of information developed by the researcher. (pp. 91-92)
Hatch (2002) categorizes interviewing into three main types: formal, informal, and standardized. For the purposes of this study, I used a “semi-structured” interview defined by Hatch (2002) as interviews that “although researchers come to the interview with guiding questions, they are open to following the leads of informants and probing into areas that arise during interview interactions” (p. 94). More specifically, I employed focused interviews where “a respondent is interviewed for a short period of time [whereas the questions] remain open-ended and assume a conversational manner” (Yin, 1994, p. 85). In the data collection process, it was vital that the interviewer realized role and purpose:

- Interviewers are not in the field to judge or change values and norms.
- Researchers are there to understand the perspectives of others. Getting valid, reliable, meaningful, and usable information in cross-cultural environments requires special sensitivity to and respect for differences. (Patton, 2002, p. 394)

Creswell (2008) outlines the consideration of eight steps when conducting an interview: identify interviewees based on purposeful sampling, determine the type of interview to be conducted (telephone, focus groups, or one-on-one), use adequate recording procedures, design interview protocol, refine the interview questions through pilot testing, determine the location of interview, obtain consent, and remain within interview script when interviewing participant.

This study is comprised of interviews of four minority males, one Hispanic and three African-American. The interviewees’ ages range from 18 to 21. Of the four
participants, none are high school graduates but none are presently incarcerated. All are former students in schools where I served as principal. Additionally, all four students are proclaimed gang members or were self-proclaimed during their years as a student. As I used the semi-structured, focused interview process, the interviews lasted from 45 minutes to approximately one hour. Each participant had a different personality and different capacity of social skills. I had predicted that two of the participants would answer the interview questions without venturing into open-ended discussion. In actuality, only one of the participants did not deter from the scripted questions. Three of the participants were extremely sociable and extended the interview process beyond the interview time of the three other participants. I had planned to interview the participants one time with the plan of an additional interview if the participant was reluctant or disengaged. I did not have to utilize this feature of the process. All four participants have been known to be temperamental, so I was uncertain if I would have to use this feature prior to the interviews. Just as non-gang affiliated members, attitudes are influenced by everyday life. Gang members are no different.

As relationships have previously been formed with the participating gang members, a consent form was given based on willingness to participate in the study. This form provided information about the study’s purpose, conditions of voluntary participation, confidentiality agreements, and researcher and IRB consent information. The consent form detailed that conversations were to be audio-recorded.
Documents

Hatch (2002) classifies documents as unobtrusive data which “provide[s] insight into the social phenomenon under investigation without interfering with the enactment of the social phenomenon” (p. 116). Hatch further clarifies the benefit of this type of data by suggesting that “they are gathered without the first involvement of research participants; they are unobtrusive because their collection does not interfere with the ongoing events of everyday life” (p. 116). In this study, I will use the obtained Book of Knowledge, or gang bible. I will also use a video of a gang initiation that involves a member attacking an innocent bystander. According to Hatch (2002), “documents are powerful indicators of the value systems operating within institutions” (p. 117). This document will be used as a source of triangulating the data collected from the participant interviews. The video will be transcribed and recorded in the appendices. The Book of Knowledge, likewise, will be included in the appendices.

Data Analysis: Interviews and Documents

Qualitative research involves the collection and analysis of considerably large volumes of narrative data until saturation is revealed. As discussed in the previous section, this study incorporates two types of data: interviews and document analysis. The constant comparative technique was used. The interpretation of the qualitative data first began with the coding and sorting process, where the researcher determines the common themes as

According to Klenke (2008), “the goal of data interpretation is to make meaning of case
Likewise, Patton (2002) suggests that “developing some manageable classification or coding scheme is the first step of analysis [and] without classifications there is chaos and confusion” (p. 463).

**Interview Analysis**

For this study, I actually started this process while conducting the interviews and discussing the gang literature with the participant gang members. Thus, analysis was an ongoing process in this ethnographic case study; yet, the analysis during the data collection process was much more preliminary and informal. Upon the completion of the data collection process, I focused on “the challenge of convergence, or categorizing by similarity, and divergence,” which according to Guba (1978), “means the analyst must ‘flesh out’ the patterns or categories” (as cited in Patton, 2002, p. 466). In other words, Patton (2002) posits, that a “first reading through the data is aimed at developing the coding categories or classification system” and the subsequent readings are “done to actually start the formal coding in a systematic way” (p. 463). I utilized first readings to establish gang member value systems. Then, I incorporated the systematic procedures advanced by McCurdy, Spradley, and Shandy (2005) to create taxonomies for the gang language used by the participants. A second reading of the data allowed the researcher to formalize interpretations of the comparative value systems of gang members and the educational system and the gang members’ perception of the authority organizational structure of schools. This process was repeated until clear themes emerged and data saturation was revealed.
Creswell (2007) proposes a more specific analysis approach for research using the ethnographical lens, recommending three aspects of data analysis established by Wolcott (1996): description, analysis, and interpretation of the culture-sharing group. Creswell suggests the researcher follow the proposal in the data analysis process. Initially, the deviant youth group and traditional educational practices were described. Next, an analysis of these educational practices, both academic and social, and the value systems of gang members were composed. Finally, Creswell advises the researcher should speculate and attempt to “raise doubts or questions for the reader” (Creswell, 2007, p. 161). I utilized recommendations from both Creswell and McCurdy, Spradley, and Shandy in regards to data analysis. An additional step of member checking will be utilized to strengthen the validity of the study. Major themes that were addressed in Chapter Four were discussed with participants to see if they agreed or were receptive of the case study as it was written. Beyond these steps in the data process, the researcher considered the advice of Karin Klenke (2008) to report the “lessons learned” in relation to case studies. Klenke (2008) recommends that in the final interpretive stage, the researcher should consider the following two aspects:

1. Agreement between the findings and the literature so that the theory is replicating, consolidating, or extending existing literature. Similar findings in different contexts lead to a stronger theory.

2. Conflict between the findings and the literature. The areas and nature of any conflict needs to be examined to provide persuasive explanations accounting for the difference. (p. 69)
The data was referenced to the analysis of the collected documents – the Book of Knowledge and the Initiation Video – to confirm language, procedures, and behavior. The data was also compared to existing literature to find similarities and differences. These comparisons were used during the interpretation stage of the study and reported in Chapter Five.

*Document Analysis*

In this research, I used the collected documents as a source of triangulation of the emerging themes discovered in the interview process. With a case study of only five participants of various gangs, it was important that I utilized these documents to verify these themes and confirm behaviors, procedures, and gang terminology. Hatch (2002) argues that documents are “an especially useful point from which to make comparisons from data from other sources such as observations and interviewing” (p. 119). Hatch (2002) further validates the importance of documents in the triangulation process by describing documents as “unobtrusive” and “nonreactive” (p. 119). In this research, the documents were not only important for triangulation purposes but also important as a response to the limitations of qualitative research because “they can tell their own story independent of the interpretations of participants” (Hatch, 2002, p. 119).

*Research Validity, Reliability, and Trustworthiness in an Ethnographic Study*

Reliability and validity are terms associated with quantitative traditions and according to Klenke (2008), they “are fundamental concerns of quantitative research” (p. 37). Hence, the value and merit of this qualitative study was measured by the credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability of the research. Guba (1981) used credibility,
transferability, dependability, and confirmability as parallels to the quantitative terminology of reliability and validity. The purpose of validity in qualitative research typically “involves determining the degree to which researchers’ claims about knowledge correspond to reality” (Eisner & Peshkin, 1990, as cited in Klenke, 2008, p. 37). Keeping this in mind, the researcher used a variety of strategies to reduce bias and produce a trustworthy study. Prolonged engagement in the field with the culture was used in this study to bolster reliability and validity. The researcher established trusting relationships with the subjects prior to the beginning of the study and has a history of interactions with the participants that will be expanded on in this study.

In regards to scrutiny of qualitative research, case study ethnographers face more resistance because they “write about another culture, [where] they act as translators” (McCurdy, Spradley, & Shandy, 2005, p. 84). Case study ethnographers are “representing cultures they have discovered to an audience with whom they already share a culture” (McCurdy, Spradley, & Shandy, 2005, p. 84). For this reason, many readers will doubt the ethnographer’s ability to eliminate personal experiences when interpreting the data of a completely different culture. This translation process is important “because it concerns the objectivity of the ethnography and, in some ways, the validity of the whole ethnographic enterprise” (McCurdy, Spradley, & Shandy, 2005, p. 84). As with other qualitative studies, ethnographic “thesis should emerge from, or at least be clearly supported by, the data you have collected” (McCurdy, Spradley, & Shandy, 2005, p. 84). In this study, the general thesis revolves around the disparity between gang member perceptions of school and the basic
philosophy of the traditional educational setting. Although there is a basic assumption that
deviant youth have different value systems than educators in regards to public education and
the distribution of assigned consequences, the assumption is unfounded until the document
analysis and interviews are completed and analyzed. Ethnographers are consciously aware of
preconceived notions; however, a larger threat to the objectivity of ethnographic studies is
the unconscious misrepresentation of the data produced by cultural “blindspots.”

It may be impossible to completely eliminate personal bias, but according to
McCurdy, Spradley, and Shandy (2005), there are a number of ways to reduce the distortions
of data due to this personal bias. First, the researcher can closely monitor and record any self-
changes to belief and value systems. The self-reflection often reveals “blindspots” that must
be addressed in an effort to eliminate researcher bias. For this study, the researcher
maintained a research journal to reflect on research process and document decision points
and the rationale behind them. Data from this journal was included in Chapters Four and
Five. Next, the researcher included a personal biography within the subjectivity statement so
readers “can judge…potential bias and impact on the presentation” (McCurdy, Spradley, &
Shandy, 2005, p. 84). And finally, I incorporated member checking to solidify interpretations
of recorded transcriptions. The reliability and validity of this study were enhanced though
prolonged engagement and relationship building, peer debriefing, member checking, and
researcher self-reflection and journaling.
Triangulation

Journaling

A variety of data sources were used in this study to help validate the information gathered in the interviews. This data included interviews, video of gang fight, book of knowledge, various pictures of graffiti, a follow up discussion with participants to review the captured responses, and researcher journaling.

I found that the journaling completed at the conclusion of each interview to be extremely important, especially in the realm of capturing the participants’ comfort with being interviewed, being in a public setting, and discussing the topic of gang membership. Two participants surprisingly portrayed a confidence and maturity. One participant illustrated an immaturity in his responses, still glamorizing the popularity coming with gang membership. This participant was least reflective of all participants. The final participant is still gang-involved. His demeanor was one of agitation, scrutiny, and calculation. He constantly looked over his shoulder and took numerous phone calls during the interview. He eyed the parking lot throughout the interview.

Another important feature of his interview was the fact that he had two other individuals with him waiting at his car. They stood sentry in the parking lot during the interview. Although I did not inquire about the identity or purpose of these individuals, it is noteworthy that this participant is the only individual still gang-involved. His multiple phone calls indicated deviant activity, and his demeanor was more rigid than the other participants. I imagine that as he has become a key player in the gang, he does not travel to public places
alone. This participant also declined a second meeting to confirm that I captured his interview responses accurately. I am certain that his acceptance of an interview was due to my relationship with him and partly borne out of curiosity. I think he wanted to know what I would say about students who were gang involved. Would I blame the students or place blame equally on student and school? This participant drifted between what appeared to be remorse and then gang pride. Other participants realized and identified the need for youth to avoid gang involvement.

I also noted in the journaling that the interview process was more difficult than imagined. I was trying to balance being completely unbiased in the process to assisting the participants become more reflective in their answers. Although all participants can be characterized as having average intelligence, none of them were skilled in the area of reflection. They had not thought about the relationship between schooling and gangs previously.

**Response Confirmation**

Of the four participants interviewed, one participant met face-to-face to review responses. Two participants chose to review the collected data by phone, and a final participant did not accept the invitation to meet or speak by phone. None of the participant responses were changed by the follow-up meeting or phone conversations.

**Safeguards Against Researcher Bias and Subjectivity Statement**

Qualitative research is dependent on the interpretation of data that has been subjectively filtered. Hatch (2007) explains this process by stating that “these inner states are
not directly observable, [so] qualitative researchers must rely on subjective judgments to bring them to light” (p. 9). It is paramount for the audience to understand the perspective of the researcher so that bias can be identified or at least so that interpretations can be better understood. Although this “filtering” of data through a subjective lens appears to be a weakness of qualitative research, “the stance of qualitative researchers is to concentrate on reflexively applying their own subjectivities in ways that make it possible to understand the tacit motives and assumptions of their participants” (Hamilton, 1994; Jacob, 1987; Lincoln & Guba, 1985 as cited in Hatch, 2007, p. 9). As a beginning researcher, it is important to know that, although not a product of gang life, I was a product of a dysfunctional childhood where education was not discussed as the equalizer of poverty or the promoter of success.

I am the son of farming parents. My father did not finish high school and he and my mother married one month after her high-school graduation. My parents were the products of farmers with little formal education as well. In fact, the need to get an education was not emphasized. It was rarely discussed in our immediate family setting. My father raised me as he was raised. There was no talk of education but much of hard work. Men farmed and were without emotions. His volatile nature and poor farming skills persuaded me that I did not want to follow in his shoes. There were many nights I fell asleep listening to fighting parents and the clicking of the adding machine that just would not give the right answers to my father. Usually these “incorrect answers” resulted in the fighting between my parents to intensify.
When I graduated high school, attending college was not a difficult decision for me to make. I attended college in order to escape my home life. It certainly wasn’t because I loved the college life. I had been to a college campus only one time previously in my life! I had not excelled academically in high school, and there was no reason for me to enroll other than flight from a dysfunctional family life. I had a need to belong, to fit in somewhere. Although the decision to leave was not difficult, I knew there would be financial issues associated with my need to belong to something. It was clear to me that my family did not have the money or interest to pay for post-secondary education, so I worked a job and borrowed money to pay the tuition cost. Working while attending college was not difficult as for much of my life, my parents worked a second job along with farming. They referred to this job as a “public job.” I am not sure that I ever discovered the derivation of this term other than anything away from the farm must have been “public.”

I was the first person in my family to earn a four-year college degree, and I am the only person in my family with a master’s degree. Presently, I am in the process of acquiring an EdD in Educational Leadership. I have been employed as a public school educator for twenty-one years.

As I reflect on a childhood marred with a void of a male role model, coaches and male teachers often took the place of an often missing or inadequate father-figure in my life. It was at school I found a sense of need and belonging, and also where I found a haven from a volatile home life. My eleven years of teaching and ten years of administration have
provided me with immeasurable reward as I can only imagine that, in these years, I have provided that same safety and belonging to other students in need.

As a teacher, I influenced only those students I taught. It became my objective to influence all teachers and students. As an assistant principal and principal, I have had the ability to change the climate and culture of an entire building instead of one classroom. I have used the school improvement process to change educational philosophies to be more student-oriented.

Looking at professional goals and interests, it is apparent to me that I desired to affect large numbers of educators and students. I want to be more than a change agent for a classroom or a school. I desire to be a change agent for a system. My pursuit of a doctorate in education stems from this desire to impact educational systems. It is my hope that upon completion of my doctoral work, I will be better equipped to research, propose, and publish educational literature that will serve to provide educational districts with innovative and research-based programs and ideas.

Many of the educators at my school come from white, middle-class lives. They were taught by white, middle-class educators, and they have raised or are raising white middle-class children. There is nothing wrong with this perspective, but if you consider the demographics of most schools, it is clear that a sizable percentage of the school populations do not come from this background. At the high school where I am the principal, there are a number of faculty members who are compassionate and work to understand a student’s background; creating relationships as a part of teaching. However, there are a large number
of teachers who do not recognize the background of their students, do not develop relationships, and fail in their attempt to properly socialize and educate their students. Because of my background, I want to learn more about the relationship between student background and student achievement and the affect that instruction from those with different values and cultures has on outlier subgroups and/or deviant youth. I want to determine individual student needs based on background factors all in an effort to create effective and customized programs. These programs would hopefully lead to higher student achievement and success in the “outlier” groups of students. In addition and in relation to my interest with student background and need, I wish to research the growing gang intrigue prevalent in students today. I want to determine student needs and provide programs that align the students with positive and nurturing associations to school.

On a small scale during my career in education, I have attempted to create programs that provide a sense of belonging for the students who have social needs. I have sponsored a program for the male at-risk population called Men of Distinction. As a result of this club, I have seen potential drop-outs become involved in school, a pay-off more valuable than any other in this occupation. A smaller, less important product of my sponsorship of this club is recognition that I received. I was voted Administrator of the Year for my district in 2006-2007 and in 2010-2011, where my ability and desire to create relationships with faculty, staff, and students was referenced a number of times. Also in 2006, I was featured in The News and Observer’s Spotlight on Education section. I was selected the Wells Fargo Principal of the Year in my district in 2013-2014.
If my concern to develop relationships with students fuels my ability to impact greater numbers, I wish to take advantage of the opportunity! I desire to become the most effective educator I can become, not in hopes of receiving personal accolades, but in hopes of benefiting students.

In regards to my personal life, I am happily married with three children – Elijah, Bailey, and Charley. My wife, Kathy, and I constantly read and complete school assignments or conduct Bible lessons so that our children will realize the value of education; however, I have never worked two jobs at one time, I do not own an adding machine, and my children have seen me cry when happy and when sad.

I am not ashamed of my past nor do I consider myself unfortunate. My wife and children are the benefactors of my experiences, and hopefully, my career will afford me many opportunities to address the needs of disenfranchised subgroups. Thus, it is my primary desire to use my position to afford all students the opportunity to learn. It is my moral obligation as a public school administrator to improve the public educational system so that the disenfranchised, as well as those found within the societal norm, have equitable opportunities to be successful in life. For if not, those found within deviant youth groups known as gangs will perpetuate and multiple, creating generational gang membership that erodes not only the educational system but society as well. I must impact instructional practices at the building-level while emphasizing educator relationships with students. I am certain that my scrutiny of the educational setting in regards to the service provided to all students, including the disenfranchised, will be tempered by the fact that I am a life-long
educator who believes in the benefits of public education. In other words, I do not plan to ride my desire to influence educational service to the degree of blaming any of society’s ills on the educational system. I am searching not for the Holy Grail, but for a formula and balance between schools, community, and society that will provide all micro-cultures an opportunity to learn and pursue the same opportunities afforded me throughout my adult life.

**Ethical Issues**

Research, whether quantitative or qualitative, strives not only to protect human subjects from harm but also to produce benefits to the population by acquiring specific new knowledge. The first ethical principle for all research is “not to harm an informant in any way” (McCurdy, Spradley, & Shandy, 2005, p. 29). There are safeguards for this protection in the form of the Human Research Committee and Informed Consent forms; however, “both of these procedures can pose problems for anthropological fieldwork because they were not designed with ethnography in mind” (McCurdy, Spradley, & Shandy, 2005, p. 29). The Institutional Review Board considers three types of participant benefits: direct, indirect, and to the academia society. This study addresses each type. This study brought attention to the instructional practices and authoritative organizational system of educational arenas and the impact that each has on the deviant youth as a subgroup. The study’s results addressed both direct and indirect participant benefits. Finally, this study produced valuable information for educators who work with deviant youth groups. Interestingly, the creation of oversight committees and paperwork were the result of medical experiments where subjects were not made aware of the possible consequences of their participation. Through the IRB process,
ethnographers face the dilemma of asking participants to sign informed consent when they “often don’t know what questions they will ask until the research is underway” (McCurdy, Spradley, & Shandy, 2005, p. 30).

To ensure that the rights of the participants were protected, I used pseudonyms for informants and people mentioned by the informants. The names of places and identifying events were altered throughout the dissertation and in the references section as well. Additionally, throughout the research, the informants were be reminded that they should not discuss information that they may feel to be too sensitive for the project. I tried to accurately capture the perspectives of the participants during member checks. Although gang members typically post inappropriate pictures on their social networking sites, I explained that the interview process and other opportunities for dialogue will not give special immunity to participate in illegal acts and that, by law, I could essentially be charges with a Level III Misdemeanor for not reporting such activities.

I felt obligated to protect the rights of the participants and also be transparent in purpose. I explained that the collected data will hopefully serve educators in their service of deviant youth groups. I informed the participants at any point in the study, they had the right to withdraw from the study.

Limitations of the Study

Critical Case Sampling and Sample Size

Although critical case sampling is heavily scrutinized, this form of selection was used in this case study of five former students who are gang members now and were during their
tenure as students in the public education system. Patton (2002) validates the use of critical
case sampling as he posits that it “permits logical generalizations and maximum application
of information to other cases because if it’s true of this one case, it’s likely to be true of all
other cases” (p. 243).

Novice Researcher

Another limitation of the study is that I was a novice researcher who was attempting
an ethnography for my first research study. Payne (1951) explains that “asking questions is
an art” (as cited in Patton, 2002, p. 353). Patton reiterates on a number of occasions that
interviews and observations, staples of qualitative research, are a matter of “art” that may not
be acquired. In fact, Patton (2002) posits that the very “quality of the information obtained
during an interview is largely dependent on the interviewer” (p. 341). Thus, according to
Patton, a novice researcher may be considered a limitation due to developing interviewing
and observing skills.

Researcher Occupation

Serving as another limitation to the study is the fact that I work as an educator in the
very field of service being critiqued. This study analyzed gang member perceptions of school
and the authoritarian organization of educational settings. I attended traditional schools and
have worked in educational settings for twenty-one years. There is a limitation common to
most ethnographies – that is – can an outsider accurately represent the culture or sub-culture
they are not a member of themselves? I addressed this limitation through the subjectivity
methods of member checking and researcher journaling.
I could not change the fact that I was a novice qualitative researcher who was conducting my first ethnographic study, one of a micro-culture extremely foreign to my value and belief system. Fortunately, Rubin and Rubin (1995) posit that:

You don’t have to be a woman to interview women, or a sumo wrestler to interview sumo wrestlers. But if you are going to cross social gaps and go where you are ignorant, you have to recognize and deal with cultural barriers to communication. And you have to accept that how you are seen by the person being interviewed will affect what is said. (p. 39, as cited in Patton, 2002, p. 392)

These limitations are traditional concerns of qualitative research; however, regardless of researcher experience, sampling selection and size, and researcher occupation, this study provided insights that are beneficial to educators.

*Immersion for Rich Data*

An ethnographical study requires that the researcher spend a great deal of time with the participants. In this study, I collected data during two, forty-five minute sessions. This limited amount of time certainly did not represent most ethnographical studies; however, it is important to know that I have been a participant observer with these five individuals since 2006. I have known and observed these participants throughout the school year and after each dropped out of school for the last six years.
Who Am I – School Administrator

I am white and from at least a middle-class background. I performed well in school and lived with my mother and father as a child. I participated in extra-curricular activities as a child. I liked school. There were many people like me at school – both adults and other students. My parents explained the importance of school and told me who to speak with at school if I was interested in being successful. My parents called the school on occasion to make sure my performance was where it needed to be. Adults at school knew my parents. They spoke at church and at the grocery store, calling each other by first name.

People in my neighborhood have jobs. Some even work in education. Many travel. People in my neighborhood get up early. My friends have nice things. If they want something, they either get it then or wait until a birthday or Christmas to receive it as a gift. My parents helped me get a job while I was in school. My parents told me I would go to college. My parents helped me investigate different career choices.

I went to college, and I met people from all over the country. I have travelled, and I have taken my family on vacations. I am an administrator in an educational setting. I help people. Some do not want to be helped. Schools are overcrowded and classrooms are too large due to budget restraints. Teachers can only help students who want to work. Many students have behavior issues that impede not only their learning but other students’ learning as well. Maybe these students do not belong in educational settings. Some students sell drugs and behave violently in school. I can’t help these students. It is too late for them. I need to
spend as much time as possible with those students who want to be successful – their parents expect this of me.

If I want to be successful at this job, I must satisfy the parents who are most involved in their students’ education. That’s my definition of hope and the purpose of schooling.

Chapter Summary

A multiple case study using an ethnographic lens approach was used to define the values and beliefs of deviant youth groups which have been labeled as “gangs. This study utilized a qualitative approach to collect data. Interviews and various documents were used to produce data for the study. As identified in Figure 3.1 and discussed throughout this chapter, the analysis of the transcribed interviews were used to formulate common themes. These themes were confirmed and validated by using several documents as a means of triangulation. The analysis provided others the ability to “see patterns, identify themes, discover relationships, develop explanations, make interpretations, mount critiques, or generate theories” (Hatch, 2002, p. 148).

Chapter Three of this study discussed the methodological approach, research design, data collection and analysis techniques, site selection of participants, and research validity and reliability. A clarifying discussion of reliability and validity as quantitative terms in regards to the parallel qualitative terms of credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability is also found in this chapter. Finally, the limitations of the study were discussed in the chapter as well.

Chapter Four of this study addresses the findings produced by the research conducted.
CHAPTER FOUR: RESULTS

Introduction

Gang presence in educational settings has become more alarming in the last decade due to the number of violent incidents that have been attributed to gang activity, and although schooling is not a cause of gang involvement, it is apparent that deviant youth are unsuccessful in the traditional educational system. This study attempted to gain a better, more complete understanding of gang culture through an exploration of gang member value systems in comparison to those found in traditional educational settings. This study portrayed gang life through the eyes of gang members so educators could understand how the deviant youth group viewed school, society, and themselves. The purpose of this multiple case study conducted through an ethnographical lens was to investigate the value systems of the micro-culture of gang members and to determine their impressions of the educational setting. Identification of the value system provided by gang members allowed this study to analyze the effects of the traditional educational setting. This study ultimately analyzed the influence of the authoritarian organizational structure as applied to various culturally diverse youth groups.

Bandura (1989) postulates “adolescents are developing by observing positive and negative outcomes” and their “success level is driven by perceived potential for positive outcomes” (p. 1178). This statement emphasizes the importance of relationships, whether in a family setting, school environment, or a gang. Mirroring many of the participant responses from this research that describe a desired educational setting, Bandura (1977) indicates that
teachers should set students up for success, play to their strengths, provide motivation for positive behavior, and be a good role model.

Bandura’s (1989) structure of learning based on relationships “recognizes that chance encounters and fortuitous events often shape one’s behavior; places more emphasis on observational learning; stresses the importance of cognitive factors in learning; suggests that human activity is a function of behavior and person variables, as well as the environment; and believes that reinforcement is mediated by cognition” (p. 1180). The relationships permeating the school environment today are not exclusively positive, nor are they embedded in observational learning. Thus, there are many at-risk youth who are searching for an adult relationship to foster this development. As schooling is a large portion of a student’s day, when these relationships are not found, the youth is looking beyond the school walls for this support.

As a beginning school administrator, I worked closely with at-risk students, attempting to strengthen their investment in the educational setting. Typically, I recorded my conversations with these students and often listened to the recordings with school counselors. It was my intent to work with all students, but more often my time was monopolized with the outlier groups of students who had no adult relationships in their lives. The following dialogue was a product of my relationship with an at-risk student who was gang involved at the time. As I grew closer to this student, making marginal progress with his decision-making, I learned more about his life – including not only the elements of poverty and violence but also the culture of gang life. I wanted to be a mentor for this deviant youth. I
wanted to establish a relationship with him that would help reduce the likelihood that he would drop out of school.

To help set the context for the data collection for this study, the section that follows is a narrative about a student who is interested in gang involvement. It describes the relationship between the principal (the author of this study) and a student who is a gang member.

It is not the type of relationship that the participants interviewed for this study had with educators. As their stories reveal, these four gang-affiliated students who did not graduate from high school, did not establish a solid relationship with an adult within the educational setting.

I have always been interested in the plight of students who are considered either deviant or have been identified as potential dropouts. Much of this intrigue is due to my own childhood which included elements of violence, poverty, dysfunctional family, and crime. Although I had no understanding of the lure of gangs, over the five years that I knew Rashieve Ray, I became the student of a gang member. I continue to be interested in learning more about the gang-involved youth enrolled in my school. I want to know how educators can help them find a better future for themselves. I want to understand how a student with great potential to be academically gifted, who could have potentially been a star athlete instead took a different path - a path that came to a violent end prior to his high school graduation.
A Time-Line of a Gang Member’s Life

- 1993 - Rashieve DaShawn Ray Born
- 1996 – Rashieve Ray’s Mother Killed at a Night Club
- 2005 - Entered 6th Grade at Barton Middle School
- 2005-2010 – Communication Between Eddie Price and Rashieve Ray
- 2006 – Rashieve Ray is “Jumped In”
- 2006 – Brought Gun On Campus/Expelled 365 Days Per N.C. G.S. 115C-39.10
- 2009 – Arrested and Charged in a Drive-By Shooting at Barton High School
- 2011 – Shot in Drive-By in Barton
- October 27, 2011 – Killed in a Set-Up in Smithfield (Gang Related)
- Graduation – June, 2012 of Rashieve Ray’s Peer Cohort

Rashieve: My Introduction to Gang Life

Rashieve Ray was a seemingly typical kindergartner. He started school as a wide-eyed, eager five-year old. However, this one-time academically-gifted student was transformed over a relatively short period of time into the street-smart gang member known as “Blaze.” His sleek physique magnified the thug persona that he carried with him. Perhaps he was simply settling into a lifestyle that many people (including educators) expected would be his path. Rashieve’s mother was gunned down at a club when he was three. His father was still young and unsettled, so he handed off his son to his grandmother. Rashieve’s probability of joining a gang should have been reduced with the care of his grandmother, an individual who offered support and continuity (Vigil, 2007; Walker-Barnes, 2001). However, these
factors did not deter Rashieve from living the life of the street gang member. Rashieve Ray had experienced success in his life and even at school. I was then and still am intrigued with what was the lure of gang life for youth. Why would this academically gifted student choose gang life over a more conventional, socially-acceptable future?

As a first-year middle-school principal, my original plan was to spend time with Rashieve as a mentor, both at school and outside of the educational environment. I talked with his grandmother, and both she and Rashieve agreed to allow me to record our conversations. I planned to use the tapes to educate myself on the life of street gangs. I wanted to help Rashieve and others like him by re-listening to and reflecting on our conversations. My plan was abruptly changed when Rashieve brought a gun to school. Per G.S. 115C-39.10, he was expelled 365 days.

Our conversations and meetings continued even after he was expelled. Outside of school, Rashieve chose to read a book that I gave him: Monster: An Autobiography of an L.A. Gang Member. My conversations with Rashieve about this book were raw, honest, open, and very enlightening. Rashieve described the difference between his life and that of Shamika Shakur, the gang member portrayed in the autobiography. Rashieve politely and sincerely explained the difference between himself and Monster Kody Scott by saying, “he’s killed somebody and I haven’t killed anybody yet.” With one word, “yet,” Rashieve confirmed his choice to be a gang member and validated my interest in gangs. How could any teenager predict that he would one day kill another human being?
Lessons Learned from Rashieve

The Process and Respect

Youth join gangs for a variety of reasons, “but the primary attraction of gangs is their ability to respond to student needs that are not otherwise being met” (Burnett & Waltz, 1994, p. 2). This is a defeating statement on the ears of educators. What are the needs that the educational setting is not meeting? The William Gladden Foundation categorizes gang interest into poor support and family structure, a desire for a sense of belonging, a need for power or control, and/or a control of territory or neighborhood turf in a struggle for safety and protection. In response to being questioned about his gang involvement, Rashieve validated his need to belong as he explained that he “wanted to be loyal to something.” Additionally, he confirmed the research by suggesting that some people join gangs “just to have somebody to hang out with that they can relate to…somebody that, like knows what they’ve been through.” I realized that Rashieve’s situation was going to be similar to many other deviant youth.

In my efforts to discover why Rashieve was pulled into gang life, I asked about his family. He explained that he did not know his mother (She was murdered when he was 3). He said that his father “was alright,” but he worked and “was away all the time.” Rashieve said that he “respected” his grandmother.

As I looked more deeply into Rashieve’s definition of respect, I realized that he defined it as a response to those who attempted to help someone or someone who sincerely cared for another person’s well-being. Ultimately, he defined respect through service to one
another. When I asked him if he respected me, he explained, “[yes] cuz you try to help me do the right thing, just like my grandmother try to show me what to do, so yea, I’d say I respect you.” Rashive’s group of those he respected included gang members, family members, and very few educators.

There had been issues between Rashive’s gang and the Hispanics in our community. So I asked Rashive about the Hispanics in his class. He explained, “we goochie man…we all good.” He added, “they show me respect and I show them the same.”

**The Gang Attraction and Gang Terminology**

Even though I had begun to realize that Rashive was drawn to gangs through his need to belong or desire to be loyal to something, I still did not understand the actual attraction to gang membership. Rashive once said that gang life was “just all around me [him].” He said, “I mean, I was young so I really see it like, probably in the neighborhood every night and on television, too.” When I asked why he chose one particular gang over another, Rashive stated, “some people in the neighborhood was Blood and some Crips, but they was all cool, like, didn’t really matter what you was long as you was real and got it like that.”

I asked Rashive to define the phrase, “got it like that.” He explained, “you don’t have to join a gang to hang out, but you have to get respect, like able to get it on your own without the gang, you know.” It was my understanding that the internet is used to encourage gang involvement (Harvey, 2009), so I talked to Rashive on a number of occasions about social media and how I felt it was being used to recruit adolescents into particular gang sets
by creating an image of bravado. Rashieve stated, however, that he does not put information and pictures online “not really anyway cuz it’s illegal stuff, you know.”

With several additional questions, I realized that “to get it like that” meant that you were self-sufficient, needing no others for protection, money, or friendship. In regards to the attraction of gang life, Rashieve’s description of the neighborhood had confirmed the “pushes” and “pulls” of the social setting defined by Segal, Pelo, and Rampa (2001, as quoted in Matusitz & Brea, 2007). Additionally, Thornberry (1998) posits “that some individuals are appealed to gangs because they are exposed to the gang world early in life due to where they grow up and the people in their milieu” (as quoted in Matusitz & Brea, 2007, p. 6). As I discussed with Rashieve in more detail the autobiography of Shamika Shakur, I learned more about the specifics of gang life and the intrigue it offers for many individuals, including many middle-class youth who live with a gang presence in the neighborhood or even in the immediate family.

During one of our conversations Rashieve described his 1“jump in” at age twelve. It was a description that I found shocking and unbelievable; he simply reported it as if it belonged to someone else. It is unimaginable that an individual would downgrade a beating at the hands of several gang members for “31” seconds in order to gain membership to a gang. For individuals seeking membership into the Bloods, 31 seconds represents the number of rules that apply to their gang life. He revealed the difference between Scarface and 85/95 Bloods. Furthermore, he described other “jump ins,” or initiations, that he participated in for those who had been representing and now wished to become little soldiers. A “soldier”
is a term used to represent gang ranking – usually a new member looking to put in work. All
gang members must “put in work” to gain gang status.

Rashieve’s elaborate description of the gang hierarchy rivaled that of Fortune 500
companies. The leader of the set was known as “Almighty.” The Almighty was followed in
rank by the “Big Homie” and the many different ranks of foot soldiers. Rashieve more
reluctantly talked about his first gang experience with the Bounty Hunters, a set from
Southeast Raleigh. He had “flipped” sets which requires another “jump in” in order to
transfer to a different set. I asked why he chose the Bounty Hunters, and he replied, “people
weren’t moving like they should.” Further discussion revealed that the Bounty Hunters not
only had little mobility or movement in rank, but they also “put in work” in ways that
Rashieve found distasteful. Rashieve explained that “putting in work,” or illegal acts, was
like paying taxes to the government. In order to gain rank in the gang, a soldier had to “put in
work.” He laughed when he said, “you have to pay to play.” I asked many questions
attempting to probe into the types of illegal acts performed by the Bounty Hunters, but
Rashieve alluded to the fact that you just don’t reveal some things about the gang, even if it
is not your own.

Rashieve and I grew close enough that he eventually gave me a copy of his gang code
of conduct. Although I referenced it as “Book of Knowledge” and “Inglewood,” he informed
me that “it’s no longer called that …and I can’t tell you the name anyway.” This information
is like the Bible to gang members (see Appendix E) and revealed important universal
language and local characteristics of gang sets.
This knowledge also listed ranking gang members, their street names, and often, specific assignments or work to be completed. It was the beginning of what I detected as some doubt about his life choices, and also what I felt to be Rashieve’s attempts to find normalcy in life. During this time, I sensed that Rashieve and I had developed enough of a relationship that he had become influenced by my values and behavior; however, I did not have enough time to pull him completely from gang life.

*You Have to Pay to Play*

My meetings with Rashieve grew less frequent over time. He discussed less and less about gangs and more personal and typical things like girlfriends, family, and leisure. I knew he was moving higher in the gang hierarchy, and I felt that he chose to tell me less in fear that I might judge him. Two years after first taping conversations with Rashieve, he was charged with a drive-by shooting that did not injure anyone. Within the same year, he was shot in the leg as he walked down a busy street in town. Tragically, he was gunned down in March, 2011 at the age of 18. I was told that he had robbed the girlfriend of another member in his gang. According to the talk on the street, he was set up by his own girlfriend and shot down by two gang members on her front steps. Allegedly, she had been given the choice of giving her baby’s life or the life of Rashieve.

After spending several years with Rashieve, I realized that there is such a disparity in the lives of some of our youth and our educators, and even more so, such a difference in the value systems of teacher and gang-affiliated student. Rashieve, an African-American looking for connections, was disinterested in our curriculum and disengaged with any lecture offered
– the result, hopelessness that could not be eliminated by a nearly all white faculty. Rashieve clearly expressed that he wanted to be loyal to something or someone, but it had to be something to which he belonged. Unfortunately and unintentionally, the school system failed Rashieve. More chilling than his comment about killing someone, Rashieve’s response to my suggestion that he go to college resonates with me even today. Rashieve simply replied, “yeah right…what am I going to do in a college, and what school would want me anyway?”

I am left to wonder whether or not an earlier intervention or adult relationship with an educator might have redirected Rashieve. His persona had become one of distance and anger by the time he entered the sixth grade. Adults had to work to gain his trust. Needless to say, white educators who seemed affluent had very little chance to accomplish this task. In fact, many educators did not try because he was an angry, deviant male who did not appear to want a relationship. Asking the faculty to reach out to at-risk youth requires a sense of love and a willingness to look beyond the behavior of the underlying cause of the misbehavior. This understanding requires a relationship. As the following case study indicates, I attempt to illustrates the importance of the relationship to all youth, especially those who are at-risk.

**Current Results: Multiple Case Study**

Due to the nature of the research topic and the potential for retaliation by other gang members, a biography of each of the four male participants was not composed; however, a compilation of similarities and differences was created. The data is presented by interview question type – Grand Tour, Story, and Native Language (*see Appendix A*). In regards to triangulation and bias, I was careful to continue journaling throughout the entire research
process, from the beginning of the data collection, through the coding and then the thematic
development.

_Grand Tour Questions_

1. Tell me about your gang.
2. Why did you join the gang?
3. How old were you when you joined?
4. Do you have a social media page (MySpace, Facebook, etc.)? Why or Why not?
   What is on this page?
5. Did you graduate from high school?
6. If not, in what grade did you drop out of school?
7. Are you employed? Why or why not?

The four male participants of this study range from 18-20 years old. Three of the
participants, although gang members during their schooling, are no longer gang involved.
One participant is currently a gang member. All four participants referenced world-wide
and/or international gang sets: Hoover, Nine Trey, and Sur 13. Of the four participants, three
are African-Americans and one is Latino.

Confirming the research of gang intrigue, all participants indicated family or a
neighborhood factor and a desire to have material possessions when describing their interest
in gang life. One participant indicated that he was “trying to be like my [his] older
brother…my cousins.” With similar justification, another participant added, “basically, I just
felt like I grew up in it so basically why not…but it ain’t like I was doing it to be a follower
but at the same time I was like why not, everybody else I love is doing it.” Another participant characterized the lure of gangs on youth by stating that “sometimes you just, you just grow into it…if you live in it…what else you going to know if that’s what you around?”

The age of initiation for the four participants ranged from 12-15 years old. The initiation practice was “beat in” for three participants and “blessed in” for one participant. A traditional initiation ritual, “beat in,” refers to the “jump in” of the new gang member by several existing gang members. This assault usually lasts for a set amount of time, typically a sacred number to the gang. One participant recounted a night when the older gang members gave him a choice. He could get “jumped in” or stop hanging out with the gang. He explained that he had been hanging out with the gang in his neighborhood. That night, he chose the “jump in,” and was beaten by three older members. He stated that “it wasn’t bad…my face was swollen and my back hurt.” The gang determines from the “jump in” how much determination and dedication is possessed by the individual. The individual being initiated must not retreat during this beating.

A gang fight captured on video illustrates the brutality and random nature of the gang attack. This video portrays the random selection of a victim to serve as a violent act necessary for a young gang member to be initiated. Some gangs opt to select victims to assault or other type of work to be allowed into the gang. The young gang member in the video did not know and did not choose his victim. This selection was made by the surrounding gang members. Ironically, the gang initiation takes place in a subdivision park beside the school.
An individual is less often “blessed in” to a gang. This ritual refers to a member being allowed into a gang based on high-ranking relatives or another high-ranking gang member’s recommendation. One participant recalled that “he knew people and they just, I’m basically involved in every occasion, you know, there wasn’t really a jump in.” Often, females are “sexed in” the gang life. This initiation also involves a number of male members who take turns having sexual intercourse with the female desiring to be in the gang.

Three participants use or have used social media to promote their gang lifestyle. All four participants dropped out of school, but there was disparity in their reasons for dropping out. One participant dropped out because he was informed that he could no longer enroll in the district’s public educational setting due to his gang involvement and behavior. One participant described the lure of money, a job, and his need to pay bills for his family. Another participant realized that he would turn 21 before receiving the necessary graduation credits, so he stopped going to school. Finally, a fourth participant admitted that his frequent visits to jail and court interrupted schooling – too many absences. One participant stated, “nah, I ain’t never went to high school.” He said he wanted to go, but “they wouldn’t let me come back.” He added, “yeah, that’s the reason, but I really didn’t want to go back to school anyway…I won’t no college type anyway.” Another participant added that going to school was no different from street life as “yeah, you know you got gangs in schools, you got the different ones in there sizing them up…a lot of stuff happen when the teachers can’t see what’s going on.” He concluded by explaining that he would rather be on the streets with his
gang members than in the school without them. Dropping out of school evidently became a survival tactic.

One participant described the possibility of getting a job as being “I mean, if it’s something that I want to do, like hands on type stuff, but I don’t want to work all day everyday either.” Only one of the participants is currently employed. He works as a cook in a restaurant. He helps his sister and mother pay the bills, and he justified dropping out by saying, “what’s the point of me going to school if I am already making money.” A final participant said that he worked with his uncle “doing a little bit of bricklaying and washing cars and stuff.”

Story Questions

1. How were you initiated into the gang?
2. Tell me about your experiences at school. How many different schools have you attended? What was your favorite school? Why? What was your favorite subject? Why? Did you have a favorite teacher? If so, why was this person a favorite?
3. Tell me about your worst teacher or worst experience in school. Why was it bad?
4. Describe your home life when you were growing up? Your family.
5. Are any members of your family associated with gang life? (Remember, do not identify these individuals by name or by relationship with you).
6. Why did you graduate/drop out of school?
7. Who is the most positive influence in your life? Why? Please do not identify these individuals by name.
8. Who is the most negative influence in your life? Why? Please do not identify these individuals by name.

9. Who do the teachers at school remind you of in your family, neighborhood, or gang? Why?

10. What does the gang give you that the school does not?

Three of the four participants moved between two counties multiple times, thus affecting consistent schooling. The opportunity to develop trust and relationships with adults was reduced due to the frequent changes produced by the moves. In addition, instructional practices, differing culture and climate of the schools, and an overall sense of being “new” had to negatively impact the continuity of learning for the students. Only one participant remained in the same school system his entire educational career. When asked about a favorite school, none of the participants had a response with explanation; however, all four participants quickly recalled a favorite individual at school. Although all four participants referenced a family member as a positive influence in life, they also followed by naming someone at school who made a positive impact on their lives. Two participants referenced teachers and two participants referenced the principal, all describing the willingness of the adult to help the participant. One participant explained that his teacher “tried to help me [him] out and I [he] respected her for that.” Another named a math teacher because “she took her time with me [him].” He added “she ain’t rush me through the class…she took her time with me.” One participant affectionately named his mother and grandma “cause they the only ones like really try, that really try, that really try to teach me and tell me to do the right things
and stuff like that.” Two other participants responded by stating that the principal was a positive influence at school “because he tried to keep me out of trouble.”

As quickly as the question about favorite educator was answered, so was the question about a least favorite educator. When naming negative influences, the answers were dissimilar. One participant claimed that “everybody could be considered a negative influence,” while another participant explained that his “younger self” had the most negative impact on his life. The two other participants named the “streets” as negative. However, all four participants referenced many educators unwilling to help them. They described the teachers as employed to teach without feelings for the students. One participant named an assistant principal who would say, “you are going to do this or get out of school, basically.” Another participant did not give a least favorite educator’s name, but explained that he did not have a least favorite “until they made him mad, but I [he] didn’t hold grudges against them though.” He added that “some teachers are there just to teach and leave.” Another participant in a similar fashion, explained that there are “plenty of them” who do not try to help students. He did not name a specific individual but did state that many teachers “tell you to go on about your business…they don’t care if you succeed or not.”

In regards to home life and a father-figure, there was even more similarities. None of the four participants had a relationship with his father. Two participants had never met their father. All four participants referenced poverty and frequent moves. One participant explained that he only moved one time, but “my [his] real dad was not in my [his] life like that.” He continued by stating that his father “come around every now and then, but not every
day or once a week or nothing like that.” Another participant indicated that he was glad his
dad was not present in his life. He explained that his “father won’t never around like
that…when he was around it wasn’t good – beaten’ on my sister and stuff.’ A third
participant stated that his step father had been in his life since he was a baby, but he lived
with his aunt instead. He said he “didn’t knock his mother cause she was going through, she
was going through some stuff, you know, so I don’t knock her for that.” A final participant
explained that he never met his father. He concluded by stating that his mother “would
always work so she wouldn’t realize what I did, you know.”

Likewise, all four lived with a family member other than a parent during his youth.
Three of the four participants followed older family members into gang life, and one
participant stated that he had no family members in a gang.

When discussing the similarities between the gang, family, and school, each
participant noted that there are very few similarities. But all recognized in each group
someone who was willing to do more for each of them. All four participants clearly defined
the interest in gangs over school by referencing fun, freedom, money, and friendships.

Native Language Questions

1. Do you have a Book of Knowledge? Why or Why not? If you do, why is that book
easier to memorize than school information?

2. What is the difference in the Book of Knowledge and the student rules at school?

3. What would you recommend that a school do to help gang affiliated students stay in
school, follow the school rules, and graduate?
When asking the participants about a Book of Knowledge, only one admitted that he had a book of this nature. The others avoided the question. However, all of the participants referenced the relevance of this book in comparison to the irrelevance of information disseminated in school. There is no doubt that it requires at least an average intelligence to memorize the codes and language found in the Book of Knowledge. This gang member’s guide to gang life is riddled with symbolism, a use of acronyms, a recall of the gang’s history, memorization of rules by numbers, a poetic pledge, and cryptic language resembling hieroglyphics (see Appendix E). Throughout the Book of Knowledge, there are references to violence toward rival gangs and loyalty to the point of death to your respective gang. Likewise, as indicated in the responses of the participants in this study, there is a “replacement” father figure in the form of the gang leadership (i.e. Big Homie, OG, etc.).

All four participants had suggestions for creating a more successful opportunity for deviant youth and/or gang members in school. They all referenced some extension of a relationship. They proposed that “the teachers should interact more with the students,” “make the students feel comfortable and welcomed,” and that “teachers should be more willing to know and understand where the students are coming from.” In regards to consistency of responses, all participants indicated a desire to have some form of control in the decision making process with an emphasis placed on the necessity of a relationship with the adult in the process. As Freire (1997) suggests in the Liberation Theory, youth must be empowered in order for them to become invested in the environment.
The Importance of Education

One participant explained that he worked 40 hours per week and closed the restaurant some nights which made it difficult to stay awake in his first period class. He also stated that he was tardy many times to first block because he was home sleeping. As he was suspended multiple times for his lack of effort and class attendance, he dropped out. He explained that he could not quit his job because of the money, but he “was thinking about trying to finish it [education] off by either Penn Foster or seeing some other option.” Another participant responded to the school system’s efforts to provide alternative graduation options by stating, “I really didn’t want to go back to school anyway…I’m not the college type.” Another participant explained that he was “immature and didn’t have a right sense of mind” when he was in school. When he realized that he could graduate if he worked hard, it was too late. Finally, one participant explained that he wanted to graduate but thought it may be easier to get his GED when he goes back to jail (prophetic statement on his part).

Gang Lifestyle

All four participants referenced the danger and/or the negative perception of gangs by society, but none suggested remorse with their choices. One participant explained, “I just feel like, like I said, it was just the right thing to do at that point and I’m not saying I regret it now because I would still do it if it was today.” Another discussed activities such as fighting and breaking out windows of rival members’ cars. He also added that he “would go smoking and drinking” with his fellow gang members because it was expected behavior. Another participant described the single parent home and the need to participate in gang life. He
explained, “you know when you got your single parent, your mother, a woman can’t raise a
man.” Furthermore, he added, “you go on to other older males and so they teach them.”
Finally, he added that the older guys help “put money in their pockets to care of their
family.”

_Disconnect With Educators: School Life and Street Life Collide_

All of the participants alluded to a difference in the streets and school and the
inability of educators to recognize these differences. What appears as art work often
represents dangerous gang activities. The pictures of gang graffiti used in this research
confirm the territorial nature of gangs. This graffiti also validates the violent nature of gang
members. This disparity in the meaning of the graffiti as gang communication and not art
work highlights the differences in the world of a gang member and an educator. During the
interview, one participant explained, “because like, you know, you coming from the streets
and you are a gang member can’t nobody really tell you what to do, but when you are in
school they tell you to walk a straight line, and do this and that – you ain’t used to following
rules like that.” Another participant confirmed the need for a relationship as he suggested that
“if they got to know you well, they were more about trying to help you out, and asking what
was wrong.” Another participant described that teachers “don’t know me like that and made
me mad but I wouldn’t hold a grudge against them though.” Finally, one participant
explained that school is not relevant to gang members’ lifestyles. He added, “like an honor
roll student care about what he is reading…in school, we ain’t really care about it.”
Each participant indicated the potential for adversarial relationships with educators who do not understand their perspectives, poverty stricken lives, and inability to control his own destiny. This conflict was magnified by the fact that the educators had expectations that the system’s rules would also apply to the gang members. As the students felt powerless in the process of creating rules and recognized the inability of the educator to understand his plight, an adversarial relationship emerged in most cases.

**Inability to Accomplish Life Goals and Monetary Influences**

One participant’s response summarized the feelings of the other participants. He explained that his mother had two jobs and he “noticed that she was working really hard you know, and I didn’t have the decent things kids had…the nice shoes, nice clothes.” He added, “there was a time where I just prefer to be with the gang because I wasn’t having a good life at home, so I just wanted something better…fun.” Sanchez-Jankowski (2003) indicates frustration is produced when “goals do not match opportunities” (p. 194).

**Unstable Home Environment**

Nearly identical to one another, the participants’ familial environments were relatively unstable and devoid of a male figure. One participant explained that he never met his father. He suggested he would like to meet him and that had his father been in his life, he “would have still been in school, he [father] wouldn’t have let me drop out. [and] he wouldn’t have worried for him to work so much.” Another participant stated that although he did not move often, his “real father was not in his life but maybe one time each three months.” Another participant described his family life as “good,” but clarification counters
that definition. He stated his “mama did the best she could” as a single parent. He added that his “father won’t never around like that, but when he was around it won’t no good…beaten’ on my sister and stuff…I seen a lot of abuse.”

*Positive Human Influences*

The participants referenced positive roles in family, gangs, and at schools. One participant explained that the gang “got some people like that try to tell you to do positive, to stay out of trouble, stay in school, get a job, get an education.” He reiterated that gang members support one another because “they understand how it’s like without an education – they’ve been through it and don’t want to see the young generation go through it.” Another participant stated that there are individuals in each gang who are all about support and helping. It was apparent in the responses about human influences that the participants felt it a clear choice of whether or not a person helped a student. This choice in their minds identified whether or not the individual cared about the participant. As one participant described most educators, they “tell you to go on about your business – they don’t care if you succeed or not.”

These four participants each contribute to a composite of the description of any at-risk youth from any town in any state. If there is ever an opportunity to accept a stereotypical narrative, it is now.

*So, Who Am I – Student and Gang Member*

I am a minority while at school, whether in ethnicity; my lifestyle; my socio-economic background; my acceptance of violence and/or crime-related activities; the
presence of alcohol or drugs in my home; or the fact that I have lived with various different relatives in several different areas. I have defined my life’s value and outcome as those in my family and neighborhood have defined their lives. I do not know anyone who has had a good experience in school. In fact, school is for other people. It has no value to my life. There is nothing relevant to my life in school, and there are no adults at school who understand me. Nobody has ever told me that the information in the books at school is about me or even that it will help me in life. I will not go to college, so I don’t need to be successful in school. People like me don’t work at schools – if so, they are custodians or work in the cafeteria at best. They don’t make the decisions in schools – rules and ways to teach.

I don’t get a lot of sleep each night because someone is always coming or going in my neighborhood. People in my neighborhood stay up late because there is no reason to get up early. School starts too early. I don’t have the things that other students have. People in my neighborhood have ways of making money. They want me to help them make money because there are lots of curious students in my school, students who have never had an existence without parameters and structure. If I want to make money so that I can buy things that others have, I will do this work. If I do this work, some students will see me as important and tougher than most. If I am important and tougher than most, people will listen to me. If people listen to me, I can be successful and possibly change my life.

That’s my definition of hope and the purpose of schooling.
### Common Themes

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**Figure 4.1 Common Themes**

The themes that emerged from the qualitative data are as follows:

- a recognition of the importance of education with a feeling of an inability to sustain the journey;
- a recognition of the high risk lifestyle and the feeling that the danger is worth the popularity of living this life;
• language and language issues translated into a cultural difference as defined by the participants causing a disconnect with educators;
• life goals and dreams and the inability to accomplish what others have done;
• a transient and/or unstable living environment and the issues this causes in schooling;
• monetary influences – the ability to make money without going to school;
• a use of coping mechanisms inappropriate for schooling but acceptable on the streets; and,
• an identification of positive human influences in gangs, family, and at school.

Summary

The semi-structured interviews provided much of the valuable information for this research. They were rich in detail, and the participants were all very cooperative and willing to discuss their lives. The Book of Knowledge, video of a gang fight, gang graffiti, and the researcher journaling validated the participants’ stories and created a richer image for the research.

From these interviews, there emerged a definite participant perception of school and school experiences. Found within this research, whether a result of the participants’ misunderstanding or skewed perception of positive relationships, the majority of the school setting does not provide the deviant youth with positive images of the teacher-student relationship. These perceptions were characterized by an irrelevance of school information to their lives and a recognition, albeit an exception and not the rule, of at least one educator who attempted to develop a relationship with the participants. The participants more clearly
described these relationships existent in gang life or at home. Few comments were made about the relationships created at school. These predominantly negative perceptions were created as a result of not only irrelevant school information but also as a product of an authoritarian school structure that emphasized rules more so than relationships.

Finally, each participant identified with gang rules as relevant and inclusively created by membership rather than the exclusion used when creating school rules. The at-risk youth’s inability to function in a setting with such an oppressive environment ultimately led to each participant’s demise in the school setting. Although each participant indicated that he felt school was important, none identified a solid plan for returning or attaining a diploma or GED. One participant mentioned the possibility of attaining his GED while in jail, but the response seemed hollow and without much serious intent.

The next chapter will discuss the findings of this study as well as provide recommendations for possible interventions when dealing with deviant youth groups, implications for educational practices, and recommendations for further research.
CHAPTER FIVE: DISCUSSION

Introduction

Tragically, many educators and stakeholders do not feel that all students deserve our attention and efforts. This philosophy, in my opinion, is quite elitist and extremely detrimental to the future of our society. Youth without guidance, adult relationships, and hope do not become productive community members.

The purpose of this study is to gain a better, more complete understanding of gang culture through an exploration of gang-member value systems in comparison to those of traditional educational settings. This study attempts to provide educators with a picture of gang life through the eyes of gang members so that the educators can understand how this deviant youth group views school, society, and themselves. It is apparent that the traditional educational setting is failing to educate and to assimilate students from deviant youth groups for success. Without understanding the gang member perspectives of the “school business,” educators cannot respond. In addition to providing necessary perspectives and attitudes created by cultural factors, this study serves to define the “youth gang” as an organization of deviant behavioral youths who are looking for respect and notoriety. The definition of “gangs” that includes “criminal activity” is relative to the setting and/or environment. As the definition of “gangs” used by the judicial system presently includes “criminal activity,” schools often struggle with school policy that does not include “criminal activity” as part of the definition. A collection of this data affords the schools the opportunity to respond to the needs of a subgroup that traditionally experiences little success in the school environment.
Summary of Results

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• a use of coping mechanisms inappropriate for schooling but acceptable on the streets; and,
• an identification of positive human influences in gangs, family, and at school.

Connection to Prior Research and Discussion of Findings

Cohen (1955) and Merton (1968) present research that suggests individuals join gangs as a result of the strains that “occur when goals do not match opportunities” (Sanchez-Jankowski, 2003, p. 194). In this study, all four participants suggested at least a desire in
having more money and social mobility. Three of the four participants responded during the interview their need to have money. The other participant never said anything about money, but as denoted in my journaling, this participant remained on the phone throughout the interview. The calls were obviously related to making money. While he talked on the phone, he turned his back so that I could not hear the conversation. One participant referenced gangs as having the ability to “put money in pockets so to take care of family.” Another stated that gang life was important because “you going to get this, yeah you going to get money, you going to get all this, you know what I’m sayin’.” A third participant explained that his mother could only afford few items for him. He characterized his childhood by saying, “I didn’t have the decent things other kids had…nice shoes, nice clothes…I just wanted something better.”

The Disorganization Theory, another explanation used by gang researchers, suggests that the lack of structure in poverty-stricken neighborhoods often serves as a fertile ground for gang organization. Using the Disorganization Theory developed by Shaw and McKay, researchers have focused on “the effects of kinds of places – specifically, different types of neighborhoods – in creating conditions favorable or unfavorable to crime and delinquency” (Kubrin & Weitzer, 2003, p. 374). The Disorganization Theory, defined as an adaptive behavior where adolescents usually act as members of adolescent peer groups in an effort to find the way toward meaningful and respected adult roles, essentially unaided by an older generation, explains why the participants took the path of delinquency to change their social status (Shaw & McKay, 1969). All four participants live in poverty areas – run-down mobile home parks with constant crime. Three of the four participants referenced a home life with no
father figure. One participant explained that he joined a gang “because when you’re out there and hanging out and that’s what’s around, that’s the only thing you get used to.” Another participant explained that youth raised by single-parent mothers “are looking like for a father to go to, so they go there [gangs].” Only one of the participants had a job, with one other saying he would not work. All four participants had been incarcerated previously, which definitely impedes the chances of attaining a job with mobility.

Some researchers note that a school’s inability to successfully educate students is a product of the school’s authoritarian organizational model and the inability of the teachers to authentically understand deviant youth. From the perspective of schools, considering the underlying causes of deviant behavior is relevant only because the behavior “interfere(s) with a student’s ability to profit from good instruction and from the school’s ability to provide an equal opportunity for every student to succeed” (Youth Gangs and Schools, 2007, p. 1). Soho (1996) suggests that “by employing an authoritarian model to adolescent expression and behavior, educators may unwittingly contribute to the problems they attempt to minimize, in particular, adolescent alienation and its relationship to gang membership” (p. 3). All four participants referenced the difference in gang rules and those from school. One participant stated that he “didn’t follow rules ‘cause I like to get on teachers’ nerves.” Another added that he “didn’t agree [with the rules of the school] so I felt like I didn’t have to do it.” A third participant explained that he did not like the assistant principal who tried to make him follow the rules. He explained that the administrator “was on me all the time.” A final participant more accurately explained the phenomena of why gang members do not follow school rules.
He said, “you coming from the streets and you are a gang member can’t nobody really tell you what to do, but when you are in school they tell you to walk in a straight line and to do this and that...you ain’t used to people telling you what to do.”

Over the last two decades there has been a new and increasing appreciation for the interdependencies (a “new ecology” of schooling) between schools, families, and communities (Fusarelli & Lindle, 2011; Goodlad, 1987) and a growing recognition that actively reaching out from school to community (building “social capital”) may be a necessary step in order to strengthen communities (thus building social competency in youth), if the school is to educate children successfully (Coleman, 1994). Simply put, they are anchored in the belief that children cannot fully develop without systems of support. In the research found on this theory, an individual’s development changes as a product of the person’s exposure to his environment and his interactions with the environment (Bronfenbrenner, 1979).

Ecological Systems Theory uses systems to explain the interactions and development of individuals. Throughout the interview process, the participants reference an influential person – whether from the gang, in the family, or at school. One participant stated that the administrators “interacted well with the students and helped you out.” He also said that his sister served as a positive influence. He explained that “she has been able to understand, talk to me peacefully without trying to say when I’ve done things wrong.” Another participant explained that a teacher “tried to help me and I respect[ed] her for that.” He noted that his mother and grandmother were the only other people who “really try to teach me and tell me
to do the right things and stuff like that.” Yet another participant identified a teacher as a positive influence. He explained that this teacher “was sort of on the sensitive side…like you can do this ‘cause I’m going to help you.” He also explained that his cousin served as a role model for him. A final participant recognized his principal as being influential. He explained that the principal “did more for me than anybody though, school-wise.” This participant also recognized a teacher as a positive influence because “she really tried to help me…she took her time with me.” This participant did not mention any family members as positive influences in his life.

Glasser, as early as 1969, promoted the fact that individuals cannot be forced to do anything. The Control Theory, renamed by Glasser as the Choice Theory in 1996, postulates that an individual will only do that which satisfies him/her at that precise moment (Glasser, 1995). Much of this theory can be analyzed through the lens of the Authoritarian Model discussed earlier. These participants did not have adult authority in their homes as many of the single-parent mothers either worked two jobs or lived with temporary boyfriends. Additionally, gang life and life on the street allowed for much more autonomy over their lives than that of school.

In a similar presentation to that of Glasser, Freire posits that educators have an obligation to instill students with a voice in the process of creating the learning environment – whether academic or behavioral parameters. In the participants’ responses about curriculum or the educational process, a general need for relevancy emerged. One participant said he “didn’t need it [education]. Another participant simply stated he “didn’t want to do it [go to
school].” A third participant said he “already had money from the gang.” A final participant explained that an “honor roll student care[s] about what they reading and the other stuff…like we [gang members] had interest in Inglewood and all that instead of school.” Although none of the participants used the word relevancy, it was apparent that schooling served no purpose for their lives.

Unfortunately, many educators “believe they have a responsibility to give all students the opportunity to learn, but the extent of the learning will depend on factors outside the school’s sphere of influence, such as innate ability, students’ socioeconomic levels, their degree of motivation, and so on” (DuFour, Eaker, & DuFour, 2005, p. 12). In order for students involved in gang activity to experience success, schools will need to renovate their behavioral pyramid of interventions. Schools will need to create counseling opportunities in addition to the already developed punitive consequences. The consequences will need to incorporate some element of relationship-building and rehabilitation in order to reduce the frequency of habitual failure to follow school directives by deviant youth.

**Implications for Policy and Practice**

*A Possible Solution: A Three-Tiered Policy.*

The Social Learning Theory can be explained as a social behavioral approach that utilizes the “reciprocal interaction between cognitive, behavioral, and environmental determinants” of human behavior (Bandura, 1977, p. vii). This emphasis on relationship-building produces both positive and negative responses. Thus, implementing relationship building components into all adult interactions, negative behaviors can be modified “to the
extent that one is able to manipulate these same processes or the environmental contingencies that impinge on them” (Akers & Sellers, 2004, p. 101). Policy-makers should invest in the development and implementation of programs that use social learning variables, or relationship-building, to change student behaviors in a positive direction. Such programs incorporate but are not limited to – mentoring, behavioral modification, delinquency prevention, peer mediation and counseling, and gang interventions. Deviant youth groups must be exposed to traditional values and norms in an effort to diminish future delinquent behavior. In order to accomplish this goal, policy-makers should consider a three-tiered approach in influencing deviant youth to adhere to more conventional behavior. This model includes three phases: identification and prevention, intervention, and suppression.

*Prevention – Mentors and the Inoculation Theory.*

The war on gangs must be waged by both community and by schools. Gang presence in communities spill over into the schools, and if there are no gang issues in schools, then there is no gang presence in the community. Without allegiance between school leaders and community leaders, the war against gangs will be lost. This allegiance requires that each group recognize and be willing to admit that gangs are present in the community and the school. Using a simple questionnaire (*see Appendix B*), communities and schools can determine the degree of gang involvement in the area. The response to gang presence “requires a balanced approach of prevention, intervention, and enforcement strategies” (Trump, 2007, p. 4). Faculty and staff members must be adequately trained by law enforcement officers who specialize in gang activity and behavior. This training should
include a consistent definition of levels of gang involvement and intrigue as noted in Appendix C. Yearly training is recommended as gang characteristics and behaviors change quickly. According to www.schoolsecurity.org, there are several practical steps that should be taken in regards to gang prevention (Trump, 2007, pp. 4-5):

- Communicate to staff, students, and parents that the schools are neutral grounds and that gang, drug, and weapon activities will receive priority response;
- Apply discipline in a timely, firm, fair, and consistent manner;
- Institute student anti-gang education and prevention programs;
- Establish a mechanism for student conflict mediation;
- Train school personnel and parents in gang identification, intervention, and prevention techniques;
- Obtain input from youth on violence-related concerns and prevention strategies;
- Establish cooperative relationships and communication networks with parents, law enforcement, and other criminal justice agencies, social services, and other community members.

The school building must become a training center for parents who wish to learn more about gangs. “Gangs are a community problem, but schools are a part of the community,” so why not use the “student congregational facility” as a meeting place for parents as well (Trump, 2007, p. 5)? As a component of the gang policy prevention stage, schools must offer monthly trainings for parents, as according to the Gang Education Training and Resource Guide (1997), “many parents are unaware that their children are involved in gang activity”
These parental educational meetings must be used to provide gang information, but also as a means to present parenting tips that relate to gang behavior (GWC, Inc., 1997, pp. 2-3):

- Be a good listener to your child and help them to develop self-esteem;
- Watch for negative influences and meet friends of your children;
- Communicate with them about their hopes and dreams as well as their fear and concerns;
- Be a role model, show your children how to deal with conflict;
- Discuss the importance of good grades;
- Establish rules and set limits;
- Demand accountability for time spent, money, and clothes; and,
- Show respect for your child’s feelings.

Not only will these meetings provide for the opportunity to present parenting skills but also to create an allegiance between community and schools. The importance of school efforts in the war against gangs is paramount as clearly outlined Spergel, Chance, Curry, Kane, Ross, Alexander, and Simons (1994):

Schools may be the best resource for gang prevention. Public schools, especially middle schools, are potentially the best community resource for the prevention of and early intervention into youth gang problems. The peak recruitment period for gang members is probably between the 5th and 8th grade, when youth are doing poorly in class and are in danger of dropping out.
Most schools, overwhelmed by other concerns, tend to ignore or deny the
problem. (p. 1 as cited in Carlie, 2009, p. 1)

Schools have an opportunity to impact gang involvement, but more
importantly, they can directly affect the dropout rate. It is important for the
community to understand that “while schools may be a good place to focus our
prevention efforts, students only spend about 12% of their time in a formal
educational setting during the school year, and this occurs only after up to five years
with no time spent in school” (Carlie, 2009, p. 1). Schools cannot be the “one-stop
repair shop” for at-risk youth. It will take a partnership with the community and
parents, and as previously stated, schools and parents, “must find ways to address
students’ feelings of powerlessness and low self-esteem” (Burnett & Walz, 1994, p.
3).

Recognizing that schools can impact student attitudes and behaviors, a first
step in the war against gangs presents itself in the form of an at-risk identification and
prevention. Mentors for at-risk students must be established by school districts. At-
risk students must be identified by using criteria such as poor academic performance,
disruptive or disrespectful disciplinary issues, intrigue with gang colors or symbols,
and poor attendance. School mentors should provide homework structure after school
at least three days per week for at-risk students. Another investment for school
systems would be a Project Liaison to research Inoculation Theory coined in 1961 by
McGuire. Inoculation Theory posits that individuals who are presented with minor
threats to their value systems will develop a defense to these threats and thus be more resistant to alter their value system when faced with more socially negative values (Matusitz & Breen, 2007). In order to monitor fidelity and program success, it is extremely important the district either commit to creating a position or assign additional responsibilities to existing personnel of at-risk students to continually research and coordinate professional development regarding the Inoculation Theory.

The system should prepare to fund professional development during the summer, during workdays, and on early release school days on Inoculation Theory in a “train the trainer” model. This professional development model allows for fewer educators to be trained in the Inoculation Theory in an effort to save funding. The selected, newly-trained group of educators return to school to train colleagues. As a component of this model, mentors will work to strengthen the student’s existing attitudes in an effort to reject persuasive communication and recruitment techniques (Miller, 2002; Petty & Cacioppo, 1986; Pfau, 1992; Pfau, Szabo, Anderson, Morrill, Zubric, & Wan, 2001, as cited in Matusitz & Breen, 2007, p. 2). Sheehan’s article, Gangs’ Reach is Growing, suggests that “without that inoculation, there are no easy cures – especially in these economic times when the after-school programs needed most are seeing their contributions wither away” (News and Observer, Feb. 23, 2009, B1). For every ten at-risk students, the school system should provide one at-risk mentor. In the intervention stage of this policy, faith-based partnerships must be utilized to create after-school programs at no cost.
In addition to community support groups, schools must create a relationship-building culture among all faculty and staff. This change requires monumental work and consensus among faculty and staff. Administration must work with school leadership to create a schedule that allows for teacher intervention in regards to both academics and behavior. Many schools are moving to an intervention block concept where students have a fifth period to eat lunch, participate in intramurals, attend academic tutorials, register for interest-level classes, complete online recovery classes, or accelerate their schedules through online AP virtual classes. This period also allows for school counselors to work through behavioral issues after returning from a suspension. The Managing My Own Behavior program allows students to work with other students in a peer mediation process. The adult school counselor facilitates this process of identifying potential triggers and creating plans so that the response to the triggers is more appropriate in the future. This period during the school day is specifically designed to create freedom of choice for students. It also allows for the much-needed time for teachers to plan lessons, work with students with academic issues, and time for teachers to develop relationships. Many teachers allow students to eat lunch with them in their classrooms. This fifth block is not as structured as the other four blocks in the high school day.

Identification: A Need for Uniform Gang Definition.

A uniform definition of gangs and gang crime is integral in creating a gang policy; however, “the definition problem is not trivial” (Langston, 2003, p. 2). The
FBI Bulletin furthermore explains that “policymakers, law enforcement personnel, social services agencies, researchers, and other groups have not been able to reach consensus on this issue over the past 25 years, and current efforts to reach this goal have thus far met with only limited success” (Langston, 2003, p. 2). Federal law does little for the local schools’ effort to capture the elusive definition of a gang member (18 USC § 521 (a)):

Currently, federal law defines the term “gang” as “an ongoing group, club, organization, or association of five or more persons: (A) that has as one of its primary purposes the commission of one or more of the criminal offenses described in subsection (c); (B) the members of which engage, or have engaged within the past five years, in a continuing series of offenses described in subsection (c); and (C) the activities of which affect interstate or foreign commerce.

In regards to state law, the definitions are nearly as useless. North Carolina does not have a definition of a gang member, but the state does provide a definition of “gang” (§ 15A-1340.16):

An organization, association, or group of three or more persons having as one of its primary activities the commission of felony or violent misdemeanor offenses, or delinquent acts that would be felonies or violent misdemeanors if committed by an adult.
So what’s poppin’? Many of our educators are ignorant to gang language and other signs. Due to the litigious nature of gang identification, many schools districts choose not to provide gang professional development. There is a fear that the more the educators know, the more often they will identify gang issues in schools.

The identification stage of the gang policy proves to be the most contentious for school personnel as parents often become offended by vaguely written policy and possible stereotyping. For these reasons, it is critical that schools and communities plan, meet, and understand all elements of the prepared gang policy. If not, school districts may find themselves in litigation as did the West High District in California in 1992. The school ordered Brianna Stephenson to remove a tattoo that represented gang affiliation. Brianna was an honor student who had worn the tattoo for two previous years; however, due to a recent growth in gang involvement, the school had implemented a zero tolerance policy for gang indicators. The student had the tattoo removed through laser surgery and then filed a lawsuit against the district. The student prevailed in her lawsuit (Street Law and The Supreme Court Historical Society).

Unfortunately, dress code is paramount in determining gang intrigue, representation, or affiliation. When schools begin to use attire as an indicator of gang association, they are often accused of violating students’ First Amendment rights. For educators developing gang policy, it is imperative to understand how a court determines if a student’s choice of attire is constitutionally protected. There are alternative tests used in determining constitutionality. Some courts use the two-tiered test taken from the Supreme Court’s flag burning cases. In
this test, “a court will ask two questions: 1) Did the student intend to convey a particularized message? [and] 2) Is that particularized message one that a reasonable observer would understand?” (Haynes, Chaltain, Ferguson, Hudson, & Thomas, 2003, p. 77). Other courts apply the *Tinker* test to dress code. School officials, under this standard, must prove that the attire has become a disruption to the mission of the school. Yet another test used by courts when determining whether dress code is constitutionally protected is the standard derived from the 1986 *Bethel v. Fraser* case. This standard bases decisions on the ability of the school system to prove that clothing connotes a negative, lewd, or vulgar message. Finally, courts often choose to use the *O’Brien* standard. Under this standard, a dress code policy will be constitutional if the policy meets the following criteria: (Haynes, Chaltain, Ferguson, Hudson, & Thomas, 2003, p. 78)

- The policy is authorized under state law;
- The policy furthers an important governmental interest;
- The policy is unrelated to the suppression of free expression; and,
- The incidental restriction on First Amendment freedoms is no more than necessary to further the governmental interest.

From these tests, school officials can deduce that the First Amendment protects the freedom of speech for citizens, including students; nevertheless, the freedom of speech is not an absolute right for students within a school building.

Creating school gang policy must clearly adhere to the First Amendment, and even so, the policy’s wording may be intensively scrutinized. In the recent case of Durham County
Schools, “the North Carolina Court of Appeals [has] struck down a lower court’s ruling that Durham Public Schools’ gang policy is specific enough to be constitutional” (Chambers, 2008). The courts determined that the Durham County gang policy needed clarifying wording in regards to what constitutes a gang affiliation violation. Defense attorney for Durham County School Board, Ann Majestic, explained that it is not easy to clarify wording in a gang policy as gang symbols and identifying factors are ever-changing (Chambers, 2008).

With the First Amendment and the necessity for “tight” wording in mind, I propose a gang policy that allows districts to maintain conditions on school property and at school-sponsored events that provide as safe and secure an environment as possible for students and staff. Most districts clearly prohibit the presence and activities of gangs on or near school property and at school-sponsored events. Gangs should be defined in policy as any non-school sponsored group, possibly secret and/or of exclusive membership, whose purposes or practices include the commission of illegal acts, the violation of school rules, the establishment of territory, or any other action which threatens the safety or welfare of others.

In accordance with the above, the following conduct is prohibited at all times on school property and at school-sponsored events, regardless of where these events are held:

- Wearing, possessing, using, distributing, displaying, or selling any clothing, jewelry, emblem, badge, symbol, sign, manner of grooming or other item that evidences of reflects membership in or affiliation with any gang.
• Engaging in any act, either verbal or nonverbal, including but not limited to, gestures or handshakes that indicate membership in or affiliation with any gang.

• Engaging in any act in furtherance of the interests of any gang activity, including but not limited to, soliciting membership or affiliation with a gang; soliciting any person to pay for “protection”; or soliciting any person to engage in physical violence against another person.

• Painting, writing, engraving, or otherwise inscribing any gang-related graffiti, messages, symbols or signs on school property.

In determining as part of the implementation of this regulation whether certain acts or conduct are gang-related, school officials will consult with local law enforcement. Schools will maintain in the office a list of potential gang indicators, including symbols/signs, hand signals, graffiti, and clothing/accessories. This list will be available to parents and students upon request and on the school websites.

If the school determines that a student has violated the prohibitions set forth in this regulation, the student will be subject to exclusion from participation in extracurricular activities, detention, suspension, and/or expulsion, dependent upon the specific circumstances and number of violations. Students may also be referred to law enforcement. Schools systems have the right to permanently prohibit any student from wearing or displaying any article of clothing or accessory which the school and law enforcement have determined to be a gang indication. The consequences for violating this policy are detailed in the intervention and suppression stages of this gang policy.
Interventions: Faith-Based Partnerships and/or Community Mentors.

When students violate the gang policy for reasons other than physical confrontations, school officials will contact the parent and/or guardian, contact local law enforcement, and issue the student a verbal warning. The student’s parent will be required to attend a conference where school officials will present local gang signs, symbols, and behavior. If a student violates the policy a second time, he/she will be assigned to a faith-based after-school program within the school community. This program will not allow for students to be “captive audiences” for religious activities. The faith-based community uses after-school programs as a ministry to the community, not for salvation messages but for role modeling and providing care for students in need. The faith-based facility will be used as a physical location for academic remediation for these students as well. During this time, students will be assigned a mentor in an effort to establish relationships between adults and troubled students. This service also allows the school settings to create a positive impact for students during “the peak hours for violent juvenile crime [which occurs] from 3:00-8:00 p.m.” (Carlie, 2009, p. 7). In addition to increased crime rate, the care provided after-school from 3:00-6:30 p.m. will create a haven for many who go home to no adult supervision. Districts should also consider partnering with local Meals on Wheels for after-school snacks and meals. According to the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention’s (OJJDP) Comprehensive Gang Model (U.S. Department of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention, 1998 & 2007), faith-based partnerships are vital in the school’s fight against deviant youth groups.
The after-school program has worked previously when I served as an administrator in the middle-school setting. The school system and faith-based communities partnered together under the philosophy that, if parents are not home to raise their children, someone else will. Providing structured and adults with positive intentions worked to re-direct many of our at-risk middle school students. However, this after-school program does not work for everyone. When a third violation occurs, we must move the student to the suppression stage of the policy.

*Suppression: Utilitarianism.*

Unfortunately, it students violate the policy for a third time, the student will receive a five-day out-of-school suspension and a mandatory parent, student, law enforcement, and school official conference must occur. During this conference, local gang behavior will be reviewed by law enforcement. School officials will review the gang policy and student gang pledge, student academic and behavioral records, student participation and success in the after-school program, and potential attendance in the monthly student/parent informational nights. Finally, the student and parent are informed that a fourth violation of the gang policy will result in a ten-day suspension and a recommendation to either an alternative school within the district or expulsion if no option exists within the district.

**Goals, Measurement, and Accountability**

The are two noticeable issues with proposing a new gang policy. When proposing a new policy, there is a political protocol to follow, whether operating under the jurisdiction of a local board of education or a more complex state board of education. Typically, both
boards of education utilize a policy review committee to process proposals. These reviews of policy can be lengthy. More specifically in this case, there exists the issue of abundant gang recognition as, upon being trained, the staff will clearly begin to recognize more gang signs in the school. This most certainly will give the public a false sense of a growing problem. Unfortunately, the analysis of gang-related offenses will not take place until the completion of one year of data collection. Therefore, a data comparison will not take place until two years of discipline reporting using gang identifiers has been completed. Open dialogue with parent advisory groups, school improvement team members, and faculty will help school leadership “avoid serious errors in determining the best indicators” of policy evaluation (Hogwood & Gunn, 1984, as quoted in Fowler, 2009, p. 325).

Enacted, the proposed gang policy should create a safe and orderly school environment, free of stress and fear. This environment will be a more conducive environment for better student attendance and greater academic performance. Stakeholders and educators should give great consideration to the following behaviors, which can be monitored through the district’s data tracking system: violent acts, fighting, disruption, violations involving gang attire, gang symbol or stacking, and acts of disrespect that involve students who have been previously identified as having gang intrigue. Each district should implement a formula for determining potential students at-risk of dropping out. “Precise national data on the number of school children and dropouts who are members of gangs is very difficult, if not impossible, to obtain,” and for this reason, each school should not look to determine gang membership, just gang intrigue (Carlie, 2007, p. 5).
Cost Analysis

The following categorical breakdown represents the approximate funding necessary to operate the Three-Tiered Gang Policy. The analysis mirrors the systems recommended by Levin and McEwan (2001, as quoted in Fowler, 2009, p. 260). If completely funded and utilized over a period of five years, this policy will reduce gang interest and gang involvement in school settings.

A portion of the funding for this policy can be transferred from existing school personnel roles and positions. Most districts allocate funding for drop-out prevention.
materials, curriculum, and personnel. Most counties also utilize at-risk coordinators for each school. Thus, the cost of the policy implementation including a district Project Liaison would mainly be a product of the after-school partnership with the faith-based community. The cost of the after-school program partnership would range from $10,800-$21,600, depending on the school’s average daily membership or ADM and a transportation cost estimated at $4,000 per school. The total cost of this program per year equals approximately $90,000. The district would be expected to either fund a county director’s position or reassign roles to existing at-risk personnel at the county level. This obviously is dependent upon the organizational structure of each district office. The additional cost to the district would be the transportation for the at-risk population after school to the faith-based partnership. This cost is an approximation as the distance between the school and faith-based partnership determines the cost of mileage and driver. The school would supply each student with AVID materials. This cost, too, is an approximation as the total number of students in the program determines the final cost. Finally, the faith-based partner would be expected to provide tutors, motivational speakers, and food. Meals on Wheels, a program designed to feed disabled or those homebound, provides meals for $5 per person. Thus the faith-based partner would contribute funding for food only if they use their congregational members as tutors and speakers. There are no other costs associated with the proposed policy implementation (see Appendix G).

**Implications for Future Research**

In the current public school system, students must attend school, but learning is optional and unfortunately, dictated to a large degree, by the students’ willingness and
intrinsic motivation to learn. If a student has not been taught to value education and has few support resources outside of school, the student may not find success in the present educational system. Success in our public schools may have more to do with a student’s culture, family dynamics, environment, and his/her motivation and desire to learn, than a teacher’s ability to teach.

In an effort to make possible this daunting task, Gagne suggested that “the essential task of the teacher is to arrange conditions of the learner’s environment, so that the process of learning will be activated, supported, enhanced, and maintained” (Gagne, 1972 as cited in Lezotte, 1997, p. 6). The present practice in regards to the deviant youth-group called gangs is to move immediately to suppression. These students are suspended until they are removed from school. There are few attempts at rehabilitation.

Considering Lezotte’s mantra of “learning for all” and No Child Left Behind, a federal mandate, we should examine how successful modern educational systems have been in regards to successfully educating ALL students. Critics would argue 21st Century education has continued to “work to reproduce the existing social order with all of its built-in social inequalities and inequities” (Brantlinger, 2003, as cited in English, 2008, p. 204). English (2008) continues the analysis of schooling by adding that “the inadequacy of schools is not because they don’t work as they currently exist, because they were never intended to work for some families and children anyway” (p. 204).

Student achievement has been advertised as unsatisfactory in regards to individual growth; however, violence in schools has been advertised as consistently increasing. The
increased violence in schools actually mirrors that of society. In society between 1984 and 1994, “the homicide rate for adolescents doubled” and “on a typical day in 1992, seven juveniles were murdered” (Elliot, Hamburg, & Williams, 1998, pp. 4-5). Even more shocking is the fact that “in 1991, more than half (56%) of juvenile victimizations occurred at school or on school grounds” (p. 6). An increase in violence beckons the question of the impact of the fear of violence on student achievement and especially the educational system’s inability to close the achievement gap within the various subgroups. The achievement gap between socio-economic and racial lines illustrates this inability; however, there are many less advertised micro-cultures found within minority and socio-economic subgroups that go unnoticed.

Gang members, or deviant youth groups, are traditionally ignored because the group is stereotypically associated with violence and abnormal behaviors. This sub-group is small and without a voice. It is much easier to ignore any type of intervention that may benefit the group. Instead, in an attempt to portray control and maintain morale in the building, administration looks to remove the problem quickly. This micro-culture is either doomed to fail or is failing due to the fact that it is not being served in today’s educational setting. In the last decade, an emphasis has been placed on all students being college and/or work ready. Additional research will be needed to monitor the affect that this focus has on graduation rate, drop-out rate, and post-secondary endeavors. The movement to increase rigor and core course requirements may produce student frustration, which may have an adverse impact on graduation rate, drop-out rate, and post-secondary endeavors.
If the educational setting continues to remove the problem without attempts to intervene and rehabilitate, our society is doomed to a perpetuation of deviant youth. The school system has an advantage as all youth are captive audience. If the school system turns a “blind eye” to the issue, our community will be the benefactor of our actions. Students without a diploma are without hope and generally continue the behaviors validated by older family members. Thus, when we remove students from school and place them on the streets without a diploma and hope, they use the skillsets they know – our neighbors become criminals.

**Conclusion: Policy Implementation and the Window of Opportunity**

This policy may not receive full support from local town leaders and officials due to their fear of the damaging effects on economic growth; however, based on the increasing amount of newspaper advertised political wrangling over the semantics in defining “gang problems,” the Durham County lawsuit in regards to their gang policy, the recent increase in local crimes attributed to gang members, and the high-profile murders within the Triangle area, the window of opportunity for gang policy implementation is ripe. Kingdon (2003) suggested that “there are times when policy success depends on access through a window of opportunity” (Kingdon, 2003, as quoted in Fowler, 2009, p. 89). Presently in the district associated with this gang research, even community members with no school-aged children are riveted by the increased media exposure given to gang-related issues. The citizens are looking for a community and school response.
Recently, Jamestown County School Superintendent Ed Buckner stated, “the gang situation is very concerning” (Rapp, 6A). Buckner followed this comment about the gang situation by explaining that “you don’t have near the issues of gangs in schools as the public perception” (Rapp, 6A). Finally, Buckner illustrates the perspective of most educational leaders today as he explains that when a gang issue occurs on a Saturday night, “our concern is what happens on Monday morning when these people all come together in school” (Rapp, 6A). The proposed gang policy utilizes components that would bring the community and the schools together.

Unfortunately, some communities are attempting to quiet the hysteria by reducing their attention to the gang issue. For example, a Camden gang tactical officer who has a great relationship with the school system was moved to a different department. Speculation suggests that he was moved because he understands the evolution of gangs, and he has openly recommended that the community respond more aggressively, which once again illustrates the unwillingness of a recognition of the gang problem. Camden leaders, no different than any other community leaders, have chosen to denounce any problem or existence of gangs in fear of a possible damaging effect on growth.

There are important issues to consider when creating a new gang policy (see Appendix D). These issues clarify whether or not the policy is aligned with school and district philosophy, needs, priorities, and resources. In addition, the issues question community values and school populations. It is my recommendation that the school, district, and community cherish the idea of safe and orderly schools; and even though the cost of the
policy is minimal, I expect that the community would support the policy regardless of cost. In regards to support, Camden parents and community members have organized citizens’ groups asking for more structure and greater police protection. These same groups have met with school officials to inquire about policies and intervention strategies. Without the assistance of community and school leaders, the community groups have organized and held information forums. I do not project that this gang policy will gain the support of every stakeholder, but at this stage in the process, “leaders should put aside any notions that they know best and listen carefully to what other stakeholders say” (Fowler, 2009, p. 288).

Public schools are supposed to meet the needs and educate all students. In this research, the deviant youth group, gang members, is a subgroup that we are not addressing and there are severe repercussions for not only the individuals but for society as a whole. A new gang policy with support from all stakeholders is one way that we can begin to address this issue. Using a three-tiered approach of identification and prevention, intervention, and suppression, school systems have a greater chance of guiding students toward a more functional role in schools and society.

Unfortunately for Rashieve Ray, there was no structured educational response for his poor decision-making. As his choices placed him on the fringes of social acceptance, he failed to learn to play “the school game.” Without positive adult relationships, Rashieve entered a downward spiral that resulted in tragedy. As a bystander of this decline, I have felt somewhat responsible. Although I developed a relationship with Rashieve, this one relationship was not influential enough to alter his course. His gang life became the
structured support he needed. Without a concerted effort and a policy that offers structure and support, schools will continue to unsuccessfuuly educate the Rashieve Rays of society.

For administration today, emphasis must be placed on developing relationships. Too many of our students are entering and exiting high school without a relationship and genuine dialogue with an adult. It is not happening at home and we are refusing to let it occur at school. It will take courageous leadership to change the culture of our school system. Those with voices wish to remove what they define as the “problem. I simply argue that removing these students and placing them on the street is not serving as beneficial to our community. Those “removed” students do not move away – they remain and become our neighbors.

Education is a partnership of stakeholders. Making an effort to re-direct deviant youth is an obligation of the school system. Presently at South Johnston High School, we relationships are paramount. Our four-year graduation cohort rate has increased from 76% to 94% and we have improved test scores as well. We use our POWER Block, an intervention period embedded into our lunch schedule, to remediate, tutor, and to develop relationships with students. I would propose that this block of time is more important than any other time during our school day.

Some critics feel that these deviant youth do not deserve a relationship, flexibility, and nurturing because the majority of these youth do not positively respond. I would urge all critics to place a face with each name of a deviant youth whose life was changed by a positive relationship with an educator. I would also clarify that developing relationships with
students does not equate to lowering standards. Our at-risk students at South Johnston High understand that consequences can be assigned with respect, love, and concern. For those students who are gang interested or involved, they know there is only one gang, and that is Mr. Price’s gang. There is a mutual respect between principal and student – regardless of their values and lifestyle.

The power of change starts with one – just one. Rashieve, I’m still in it to win it.
REFERENCES


Center for Mental Health in Schools at UCLA. (2007). *Youth gangs and schools*. Los Angeles, CA.


APPENDICES
APPENDIX A. Interview Questions

General Question
1. Did you receive a copy of the informed consent letter? Did you have any questions about the form? Are you willing to move forward with participating in this study?

Grand Tour Questions
1. Tell me about your gang.
2. Why did you join the gang?
3. How old were you when you joined?
4. Do you have a social media page (MySpace, Facebook, etc.)? Why or Why not? What is on this page?
5. Did you graduate from high school?
6. If not, in what grade did you drop out of school?
7. Are you employed? Why or why not?

Story Questions
8. How were you initiated into the gang?
9. Tell me about your experiences at school. How many different schools have you attended? What was your favorite school? Why? What was your favorite subject? Why? Did you have a favorite teacher? If so, why was this person a favorite?
10. Tell me about your worst teacher or worst experience in school. Why was it bad?
11. Describe your home life when you were growing up? Your family.
12. Are any members of your family associated with gang life? (Remember, do not identify these individuals by name or by relationship with you).
13. Why did you graduate/drop out of school?
14. Who is the most positive influence in your life? Why? Please do not identify these individuals by name.
15. Who is the most negative influence in your life? Why? Please do not identify these individuals by name.
16. Who do the teachers at school remind you of in your family, neighborhood, or gang? (Remember, do not identify these individuals by name or by relationship with you). Why?
17. What does the gang give you that the school does not?

Native Language Questions
18. Do you have a Book of Knowledge? Why or Why not? If you do, why is that book easier to memorize than school information?
19. What is the difference in the Book of Knowledge and the student rules at school?
20. What would you recommend that a school do to help gang affiliated students stay in school, follow the school rules, and graduate?

Demographic Information
1. How old are you?
2. What is your race?
Proposed Change to Education

1. What could be done differently in the educational system so that individuals like you could experience greater academic and social success?
### APPENDIX B. Gang Survey

Egley, Howell, and Howell, 2006

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Questions</th>
<th>Points</th>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>No</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Do you have graffiti on or near your school grounds?</td>
<td>5</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Do you have crossed-out graffiti on or near your school grounds?</td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>3. Do your students wear colors, jewelry, clothing, flash hand signals, or display behaviors that may be interpreted as gang related.</td>
<td>10</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>4. Are drugs available in or near your school?</td>
<td>5</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>5. Has there been an increase in physical confrontations or incidents of threats, abuse, or intimidation in or near your school?</td>
<td>5</td>
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<td>6. Is there an increasing presence of weapons in your community?</td>
<td>10</td>
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<td>7. Do students use beepers, pagers, cellular phones, or other technological devices for communication purposes?</td>
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<td>8. Has there been a “drive by” shooting in the community?</td>
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<td>9. Have you had a “show by” or display of weapons near your schools?</td>
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<td>10. Has there been an increase in the truancy rate and/or daytime burglaries?</td>
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<td>11. Are there an increasing number of “racial” incidents in your community or school?</td>
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<td>12. Does your community have a history of gangs?</td>
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<tr>
<td>13. Is there an increasing presence of informal social groups with unusual names?</td>
<td>15</td>
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**Total points (See Interpretation Below)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>What Your “Total Points” Mean...</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>0-15 points</td>
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<tr>
<td>20-40 points</td>
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<tr>
<td>45-60 points</td>
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<tr>
<td>60+ points</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### APPENDIX C. Gang Definition

Langston, 2003

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Level I: Fantasy</th>
<th></th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The individual knows that gangs primarily from newspapers, newscasts, and the movies. The individual may or may not know about “real” gangs. In addition, the individual may or may not know a gang member. In this level, the individual sees gang members as “living out a fantasy.”</td>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Level II: At Risk</th>
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<tr>
<td>The individual knows about gangs and gang members first hand. Often, the individual casually associates with a gang member due to the fact that he/she may live near the gang turf. The individual may like or admire gang lifestyle but not participate fully in gang life.</td>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Level III: Associate or “Wannabe”</th>
<th></th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The individual knows and likes gangs as he/she regularly associates with gang members. The individual considers gangs and gang lifestyle as normal activity. At this level, the individual is seriously thinking about joining the gang.</td>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Level IV: Gang Member</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The individual is officially a gang member. He/She associates almost exclusively with gang members to the exclusion of family and former friends. This individual is willing to participate in gang crimes and other related activities to improve “rank.” Finally, he/she has substantially rejected the authority or value system of family and society.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Level V: Hard-Core Gang Member</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>This individual is totally committed to gang lifestyle. He/She totally rejects anyone or any value system other than that of the gang. This individual will commit any act with the approval or a demand from the gang. Finally, this individual does not accept any authority other than that of the gang.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
APPENDIX D. Policy Implementation

Fowler, 2009, p. 286

Determining whether or not a policy is appropriate for a specific context:

- Is the proposed policy consistent with the school’s or district’s vision statement or philosophy?
- Is the proposed policy consistent with the school’s or district’s assessed needs?
- Is the proposed policy consistent with the school’s or district’s priorities?
- Is the proposed policy consistent with the available or potentially available resources?
- Is the proposed policy consistent with the value of the community?
- Does evidence exist that the proposed policy has been effective with student populations such as the school’s or district’s in terms of...
  - Age;
  - Racial or ethnic background;
  - Gender composition;
  - Socioeconomic class;
  - English language proficiency; and
  - Life experiences?
APPENDIX E. Book of Knowledge

Who I be? What I claim? Why I bang?
I be dat bloody fool MAYHEM poppin' lid.
Flame $et fire aka 911 and grenades aka
Billy Boa A.M. I bang against appeasement and
destruction. I ride for purpose die fora doubts on comrad.
I come approach or oppo my dagga. $ poppin' lid. droppin' fro
Killa til my basket
drop. 5 alive & multitude
MAYHEM

$AREFAKE
$KoKed
$KoKed

Heat
Majgor

Baron
Cornd

Broadway
Blitz
Colors

What that blue b'like: the first color of blood

What that brown b'like: the color of my people
the soil I stroll and
the war I prepare for

What that black b'like: universal-universe
all the world

What that white b'like: all the natural bow
down to the almighty
De tye

What that red b'like: Bloody war. Bay! That
fan of red paint the town
with the apple but into
4 ways are for Fiaboos, one
for the folks, one for Nete,
and one for all those who
oppose blood.

What that green b'like: The grass I stroll on;
the need I smoke and
the money I must make.

What that beige b'like: The cotton my ancestors
picked.
What that bunce in like: That U.B.N.

What that red ice like: s-poppin & choppin
from killa till my gasket drop.

★ First S Street Cans ★
  Black P Stone Rangers
  Bishops
  Swans
  Bounty Hunters
  Brims

★ First S Blood Sells ★
  Almighty Black P Stone Rangers
  Piri
  Bishops
  Brims
  Swans

★ Founding Fathers ★
  Corey Banks
  Fogg
  Huey & Newton
  Bobby Seals

★ Father of the U.B.N★
  King G Red triple O:G:Red
  King Darkside a.k.a Triple O:G:Darkside (Estate)
  King Don Derky a.k.a Triple O:G: Don Derky
  King Die Won a.k.a Triple O:G: Die Won
  Short Pimp a.k.a Pudder (Bobby Banks stated Piri
31 Rules

1. No snitchin
2. No Home Sexual Acts
3. Dope feins not tolerated
4. Always put R.I.P. O.G. Tie at the end of every letter
5. Never enemy your set or Nation for anyone
6. Put in work at all times
7. Never deny a dog a plate of food
8. No Repin Women or Children
9. Remember foases
10. Remember O* thes
11. Never lie to your dogs
12. Never give out Romu info unless to Romu
13. No set trippe
14. Flay your #doe's at all times
15. Learn you founding fathers
16. Respect all S Riders
17. Respect all Red Riders
18. Never do anything that will hurt another Romu
19. Never say anything that will hurt another Romu
20. Keep hygiene up at all times
21. It’s O* B’sef to bong Blood
22. It’s o* B’sef once you done
23. As S Riders we must understand the S principles
25. Learn your Black History
26. Remember Pledges
27. NO Pledgin to anyone but blood
28. Eat one, teach one
29. Only NO pledging to anyone but blood
30. Fast on every 31st
31. Respect all High Rank Bloods
It's 31 self, we been blood. It's about being up and stayin' up. It's about being around when it's time to get down. It's about my dog havin' my tanoage and my nation havin' my heart. It's about ridin' the S and dyin' like OG Tye. It's about 031 my 0 stand for my triple 0 Nation, my 3 stand for the 31 Rules we must go by and my 1 stand for 1 Nation under Roma love. S alive 6 must die RIP OG Tye. It's 31 self and you gone.
BLOOD
Brotherly
Love
Verses
Oppression and
Destruction
in Society

0 - My triple D Nation
3 - 31 rules must go by
1 - 1 nation under Roman law
**Damu, Piru, Grip Stars**

10 point zuluism aka African Blood Brotherhood

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Black Panther</th>
<th>Head Man</th>
<th>Grip Folk</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>S. Damu</td>
<td>Piru</td>
<td>Alex Rockey (FBI Informant)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Huey P. Newton</td>
<td>Larry Scott</td>
<td>Larry Hoover</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bobby Seals</td>
<td></td>
<td>David Hoover</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fred Hampton</td>
<td></td>
<td>Stanley Williams</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mark Anthony</td>
<td></td>
<td>Raymond Washington</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Merciece Leary</td>
<td></td>
<td>Bobby Owens</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mark</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

There was a point in time until Alex Rockey became a FBI informant, then the headman Larry Scott got killed. There were two groups separated with different beliefs. Now that the headman was dead, the people to the left became the Black Panther party and the people to the right became the Grip/Folk Nation. Together, they were the African Blood Brotherhood.

**Damo 8-ball**

**Folk 8-ball**
OG 51 is the highest ranked. The Gangster 9 live is locked up in Clinton Correctional Facility, NY.

NTG started in 1993 on Rikers Island on 4-73.


Piru started in 1971.

A year old Tye Rogers came to Inh Town in 1973. Started all mighty Blood P. Stone Rogers. UBN started in the mid 70's to stop all war between Blood Sets fighting each other on the street. It started in San Quentin Corrections Institute in California.

The 5 point star is called the people Nation. Everyone started in the late 60's except (Latin King and queens) which later became Vice Lords. They started in 1960. Folk started in the 1970's.

Sage Knight Set - Mob Piru 70's.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Column 1</th>
<th>Column 2</th>
<th>Column 3</th>
<th>Column 4</th>
<th>Column 5</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>B</td>
<td>C</td>
<td>D</td>
<td>E</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>G</td>
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<td>H</td>
<td>I</td>
<td>J</td>
<td>K</td>
<td>L</td>
<td>M</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>N</td>
<td>O</td>
<td>P</td>
<td>Q</td>
<td>R</td>
<td>S</td>
<td>T</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>U</td>
<td>V</td>
<td>W</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>Z</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Ex: 221 - Blood Unity
Ex: 157 - Oral Gangster
Ex: 393 - Blood Warrior
Ex: 1713 - Queen Stasha
Ex: 1713 - Gangsta Mark

4.5.1e
4生活，Spoppin，Shoppin

Ex: Eastside Up

LVVVV OOL every second letter has dot over it remember that!

Ex: TRIGGER

Ex: DAMU
BLOOD

Hypotheses

AB, CD, EF
GH, IT, KL
MN, OP, QR

ST
YZ
UV
WX
Cances

* Red zone - Bring
* Sonic - Slow me down - Up Top
* Boom - I hear dog - Down low

★ 850 - That Nigga - 550
★ It's bigger than me - UBN
★ G's and D's - I don't know
★ LS 400 - I know
★ Dail All - Send

★ Hot 97 - Niggas Talkin
★ Noreaght Karame - Gittin Money

★ See N' Eye - Wealth your Bank
★ Eye for an Eye - I got U
★ Check One - Listen to the Enemy
★ All eyes on me - Outside Contact
★ Enough of Us - Keep it real
★ Baby Love - Money

★ Real Dog - Dog
★ 2400 - Play your position
★ Self Destruction - He/she ain't right
★ Blowfish - get back at me
★ 444 - making us look back
★ Bring facts to the spot - Makin Mates
★ 2 and Down - You living wrong
★ Stand Up - You living right
2/10 - food
3/10 - eat food
7/11 - Put in work
4/10 - it's done

* Born the Cradle - Set a niggas up George Jackson
* Fare full of Red - Mad, angry = Afing Shakur

How to wear your colors:

Red - All the times
Red and White - Birth of Blood, Blood drop, Marriage, funeral
Red and Brown - When you rain out / war
Red and Beige - Black History Month
Red and Green - Every July 4th
Burgundy - Whenever
The Fathers of UBN

★ King G Red aka (Anthony Alonso Payfield)
★ King Darkside aka Triple O.G. Darkside
★ King Don Derky aka Triple O.G. Don Derky
★ King Die Won aka Triple O.G. Die Won
★ Short Pimp aka Puddin (Bookey Banks - who
★ Started Piru)
Blood Oath

When I die bury me with a bloody red flag upon my head and two double barrel shotguns on my sidez and six big FB forks ineeding in me left side never be afraid to wear red when I die not crawling on my knees like a gero in Negative Strive I strive with pride 40 all my dogs rep ya color by throwin up B's and shootin down C's

Blood Short Prayer

If I die before I wake I pray to Blood my soul to take If I rise while I'm awake I'm gonna blast as many FBs as I can with a 38 S alive I must die R.I.P.

D.G. Tye
O.G. Try being in peace Pledge

I pledge allegiance to the Bloody Red Flag of the UBGN which we stand under a Blood oath that all things like quicks carry out their Burns at all times through sickness and death till death do us part, Blood in Blood out. I decide a long-time ago that till the day I suicide or as long as I make you bleed you can't take my Blood from me, my Blood is not blue when I die I bleed Red.

UBN Pledge

I pledge allegiance to the bloody red flag of the UBGN, which we stand together alone and that all bloods carry the Burden of the next Blood, kill without fear, get knocked without crying, bringing without fear crying with crying and keeping it real for the UBGN.

I Bloody Mayhem swear upon this day for the rest of my life to uphold the signs of this Nation, to serve Justice on others as well as myself. If this Nation has been disrespected for I own all I am and I can never be until all is done.
The mentality of Blood all domus are
110%. 110% is the mentality of a Blood.
This is what makes a Blood Almighty
to look out to die. You can never use
10% unless you feel viggered. The only
way you are viggered is if a BSO has
broke your 5th Mentality or Physically. That
when you serve the 5th pointed of the 5
pointed star (Justice) equally. In order
to redeem yourself because you are a 5
point star whole bloody. Blood is an
organization a way of life. It's what we
are and what we do Almighty Blood, anything
or anyone neutral bow down to the Almighty
Everybody need Blood to live. Without
Blood No human can survive and be
amongst the live force which exist through
humility. I bang for Blood...Blood
Bang for me...you 5 point Star Symbolizes
principles of a Blood principles are elements of
keys of life whichuman stands for abcles by
No one can take Blood from you or take your
5 point Star (arm, leg, leg, arm, head). Even
If you 510 because a 510 niga is the
biggest threat to us because they overstand
you make sure you live 110% out the
fullest. Because without this you not Blood
And they don't stack Jewels or build
Temples with you. So always we ain
them closely. * RIP OG Tye
How many bricks in the Pyramid? 5, 555
5,000 - Red
500 - Green
55 - Brown

Red sea on the Right side of the Pyramid
Blue sea on the Left side of the Pyramid

0 - Understand our Nation
3 - 31 rules and regulations
1 - The 1 life and love I have for the UBN.

B - Blood
U - Unity
L - Love
S - Soul
C - Community
R - Representative
I - Inner
P - Party
S - Services

The 5 pillars of Life:
Love, Peace, Truth, Freedom, Justice

Love - For all under the S
Peace - For all under the S
Truth - What we are about for
Freedom - What we stand for, all black people
Justice - Is to be served on anyone who oppose

Blood
184

Fades

- 2 Pac - Be on point
- G-Straw - Let's take a walk
- Mr Clean - Keep on Bangin
- BoeMarley - I'm High
- Son in Top - Gun
- Billy the Kid - Bust yourGun
- Peter Pan - Visit
- YellowBack - Pussy
- 152 - Worth it
- 152 - Homicide
- RulayRed - Gurl
- 030 - Wife
- 025 - Female
- G-Mack - Chill
- RedWall - You fuck
- Barbie - Police
- 7/30 - Brody
- MrJinx in the Scene - Makin moves
- X and O's - Phone#
- Drinkin Pepsi After 12 - Still learning
- Trip S - Razor
- Poe Poe Gatien - Stressin
- Wall Breez - Niggas
- SnowBi - Baby Mom
- Bush - War
- Bill Clinton - Lyin
- Shaggy & Scooby - Scared
- 140 - You
- Night Cops - Listen to the Enemy
- 210 - Worth your Back
- 2100 - Speak on it
* 2Pac - Who Blinded You
* Red Rum - All Day Everyday
* Read The Wall - Study my Ingweek
* Blood Bush - Everybody Eat
* Red Lion - Food
* L-Ro - Project - Humo
* Red Sea Dragon - Humo
* Mob Deep - Snoop
* Appersed - Tell me Bout it
* Get me Fox - Clown Ass Nigga
* 150 - Fucked Up
* J-30 - Stay on Point
* 30 Proof - Not Dumb but ride this
* 7/11 - Put in work - Capone-A-Lexus
* B-Log - Blood Out
* 404 - Cash Money
* Red Flaggin - U Right
* Flav Flaggin - U Wrong
* Krazy Sam - He Hear you
* Drop do Top - Talk in Bodes
* Wopp Wopp - Blood At all
* 100 - back at you
* 035 - Fake Blood
* Circel Fantasy - Violation
* 13/13 - What up Blood
* 2062 - Hater
* 20-0 - Bitch Ass Nigga
* 000 - Thinkin
* 450 - Thinkin
* Miller Thriller - Beat Down
* E.U. - Beat Down
* 81 - Robbery - Scoent
Aces

* Oil - Stress
* Rice Crisp - I'm A Bob
* Queen Bee - Latin Queen
* I See Red Apples Fallin' - Get that Nigga, Death Not
* Kite - Letter
* Pussy Books - Porno Magazine
* Kill Love - Weed, Kali
* Ring Size - 5 min
* Ride or Die - You Slippin' Fool
* Westside - F**k Everybody
* Mack 1 - Murder, Death, Kill
* Changing Faces - Get Trip
* Jack In The Box - He Right There
Liquid Metal OG
B-LO-D Blood Blood you be a gangsta killa you and me Blood for life Capital "B" tep this shit do Or die Blazin Billy Bad Ass Donald Gee Frank Nitty Tony Shots S-A Brim set trip, set dumps nigga feel the Timms, west coast OG, Bith for the Black Victims of oppression generally Capital "B" which no question Blood Blood you be, gangsta killa you and me Blood 4 life Capital "B" Morlonian Brooklyn, Bronx, Queens, North Jersey Oakland dirty Jersey in between 40s, live, dogs die for the red and green spit your ox pop you meet Roc-a-fella runs the streets, thicc Life Quick don't give a fuck Cross a dog and that's your tagk, it seems you get by any and all means dead your ass stand tall, part of pride when my dogs arrive you can run, but you can't hide Blood Blood Blood Blood you be, gangsta killa you and me Blood for life Capital "B" Toss them B's throw em try em BS is for Blood, Bomber, Blazin, Black Bad Brains, Brave Blood to the grave New York is layin it down now he is in the pound with the OG's and BG's to fuck up snakes, snakes, and one by one Oppression and destruction that is own cause Killer be killed that's own laws give respect Blood will get and talk gangsta shit. Them Ni**as like it Blood Blood Blood Blood you be a gangsta killa you and me Blood for life Capital "B"
The Black Panther Party Platform

1. We want freedom for our people. We want power to determine the destiny of our Black Community.

2. We want full employment for our people.

3. We want an end to the robbery of the capitalist of our Black Community.

4. We want nonviolence to solve human being.

5. We want education for all people that exposes the true nature of the decadent American society. We want education that teaches us the truth of history and our role in present day society.

6. We want exemption from military for our people.

7. We want an end to police brutality and the murder of our people stopped.

8. We want freedom for all our black men looked up on held in federal, state, and jail.

9. We want all the people brought to court to be tried by a jury of their peer groups from their black community as it stated in the constitution.
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- 1964 - The Vietnam War took place. The soldiers would greet each other by saying "what it be like young Blood."

- 1965 - The Watts Riot took place due to Police Brutality. Rodney King.


- 1967 - Tye Rogers started the "Black P. Stone Nation in Chi-town.

- 1968 - The Black Panther dropped the self defense and became just the Black Panther Party.

- 1969 - Tye Rogers started the "Black P. Stone Rangers in Cali, one of the firsts Blood sets.

- 1971 - Piru was stated by Bobby Banks. Tree Top Piru was stated in tree top projects in Cali. The same year Black activist George Jackson was killed by prison officials in San Quentin.

- 1974 - Blood Brothers organized a Nation (UBN).

- 1990 - Blood and Crip peace treaty was signed. Blood sets and Crip sets were friends. Only way to be broken is to set trip.
1993 - N.T.G. Shot on June 26th on BIxers Island in C-73 Blot I 11:03 pm on July 10th, O.G. Mack, O.G. Deedeye and O.G. Shaquiel Shot the First Blood shot on the East coast due to blacks being oppressed by Latin Kings

- 1994 - G.K.S. was Shot
- 1997 - Sex, Money, Murder was made Blood (U.B.N. Books Closed
- 1998 - Books reopened under the U.S.C.
- 1999 - June 22 O.G. Mack was released from prison
- 2000 - O.G. Mack let it be known after the ball was dropped
- 2001 - May 8, O.G. Mack gets 107 years inside
- 2002 - August O.G. Mack sentenced to 50 years in Super Maximum Security in Florence, Colorado
APPENDIX F. Informed Consent

North Carolina State University
INFORMED CONSENT FORM for RESEARCH
Title: The Allure of Gang Life: Lessons for School Leaders

Principal Investigator: Bonnie Fusarelli & Eddie Price
Faculty Sponsor: Bonnie Fusarelli

What are some general things you should know about research studies?
You are being asked to take part in a research study. Your participation in this study is voluntary. You have the right to be a part of this study, to choose not to participate or to stop participating at any time without penalty. The purpose of research studies is to gain a better understanding of a certain topic or issue. You are not guaranteed any personal benefits from being in a study. Research studies also may pose risks to those that participate. In this consent form you will find specific details about the research in which you are being asked to participate. If you do not understand something in this form it is your right to ask the researcher for clarification or more information. A copy of this consent form will be provided to you. If at any time you have questions about your participation, do not hesitate to contact the researcher(s) named above.

What is the purpose of this study?
Based on research, students are growing less interested in finishing school. This is particularly true for those students participating in gang activity. The purpose of this study is to help educators improve their success working with gang-involved youth.

What will happen if you take part in the study?
If you agree to participate in this study, you will be asked to participate in 1, 45-minute interview about your experiences as a gang member. The goal of the research is to “tell your story” as a gang member, in the hopes of helping teachers address needs of gang members. You may be asked to meet a second time to confirm the transcription of your interview responses.

Risks
There is a potential legal risk. I might be obligated to report to law enforcement any illegal activities that you disclose. Also, other gang members might be opposed to your engagement in the study thus creating potential psychological, social, and physical risks. These risks will be greatly diminished by you (the participant) discussing your participation with and getting “permission” from your fellow gang members before participating. If you determined that you would need to talk with your gang members, you should do so before you participate. You can stop participating anytime.
Benefits
No direct benefit to you but the information from this study should help educators in their efforts to serve students who are gang members.

Confidentiality
The information in the study records will be kept confidential to the full extent allowed by law. Data will be stored securely in a locked cabinet at the researcher’s office. No reference will be made in oral or written reports which could directly link you to the study. You will NOT be asked to write your name on any materials. All materials will be coded by letter and number and the ledger that is the key to the codes will remain in a locked cabinet, viewed only by the researcher. While the researcher will strive to ensure confidentiality, it is possible that you may be indirectly identified.

The information you share in the interviews might be included in the final report for the study in the form of a quotation. While your name will be changed to protect your identity, it is possible that someone may be able to figure out that it was you who was quoted. To protect you from this realization, I plan to merge the interviews of the five participants into two case studies that illustrate the similar and dissimilar themes. In other words, I will group individual responses together to create 2 composite participants so that individual responses will be more difficult to determine.

Compensation
For participating in this study you will receive no compensation.

What if you have questions about this study?
If you have questions at any time about the study or the procedures, you may contact the researcher, Eddie Price, at 10381 US 301 South, Four Oaks, NC, or by phone at [(919)894-3146].

What if you have questions about your rights as a research participant?
If you feel you have not been treated according to the descriptions in this form, or your rights as a participant in research have been violated during the course of this project, you may contact Deb Paxton, Regulatory Compliance Administrator, Box 7514, NCSU Campus (919/515-4514).

Consent To Participate
“I have read and understand the above information. I have received a copy of this form. I agree to participate in this study with the understanding that I may choose not to participate or to stop participating at any time without penalty or loss of benefits to which I am otherwise entitled.”

Subject's signature________________________________________ Date ____________

Investigator's signature________________________________________ Date ____________
**APPENDIX G. Cost Analysis**

**Cost Analysis of Gang Prevention Program**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Components</th>
<th>Total Annualized Costs</th>
<th>Cost to District</th>
<th>Cost to School</th>
<th>Private Contributions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Personnel</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>At Risk Director</td>
<td>$70,536*</td>
<td>$70,536.00*</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
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<tr>
<td>After School Mentor</td>
<td>$5,760.00</td>
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<td>$5,760</td>
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<tr>
<td>8hrs/week</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Materials and Equipment</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Cornell Notebooks</td>
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<td>0</td>
<td>$1,000</td>
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<td><strong>Food &amp; Refreshments</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>NC Meals on Wheels</td>
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<td>$3,600 ($5 per meal)</td>
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<td><strong>Miscellaneous</strong></td>
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<td>Transportation</td>
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<td>$4,000</td>
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<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Motivational Speakers</td>
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<td>0</td>
<td>$5,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total Cost</strong></td>
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<td>$74,536</td>
<td>$1,000</td>
<td>$14,360</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

*Existing Position - add additional responsibilities*