Abstract

PARKER IV, JAMES HENRY. Middle School Educators' Perceptions of Student Backgrounds Affecting Student Academic Outcomes in Rural Coastal North Carolina. (Under the direction of Co-Chair Dr. Matthew Militello and Co-Chair Dr. Susan Faircloth).

The perceptions of educators affect their students. When educators discount their student's ability to be successful based on student background, this is termed "deficit thinking." Deficit thinking reinforces the stereotype threats of students, which may cause lowered academic outcomes for these students. Q- Methodology was utilized to investigate the subjective opinions of middle school educators. I reviewed literature on deficit thinking and interviewed middle school educators pertaining to student background affecting educational outcomes to create a set of statements. Statements were printed on cards. Thirty-one middle school educators sorted the cards, in a forced distribution, according to their beliefs about student background. The Q-sorts were factor analyzed to reveal statistical correlations among the administrators. One-on-one and focus group interviews for each factor were conducted in order to gain more insight about the middle school educators' perceptions of student background affecting educational outcomes. Data analysis indicated three statistically significant factors. Along with these factors, data emerged explaining how middle school educators view the role of student background affecting educational outcomes. The findings of this study generate insights into middle school educators' perceptions of their students and provide policy makers, researchers, and practitioners with information about this important topic.

Middle School Educators' Perceptions of Student Backgrounds Affecting Student Academic Outcomes in Rural Coastal North Carolina

by
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Dedication

I dedicate this dissertation to my wife, Joell, and my daughters, Bella Peach and Ireland, who faithfully supported me as I worked toward attaining this personal goal. You are the reason I do my job every day. You are my heart and I am proud that the Lord blessed me with you.

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To the middle school educators who participated in this study, thank you for your time and the valuable insights you provided. I was privileged to learn more about you and your views on student background. It takes a special breed of educators to be in middle school. I am proud of the eleven years I spent as a middle school teacher and principal.

To my mother Annelle and father Jimmy who over the past forty years have given me the leeway to be me and never tried to force me into a box or lifestyle. I was blessed with four wonderful grandparents: Grandma Bernice, Grandpa Jamie, Grandmama Melba, and Grandfather James. They took the time to talk to me as a child and guided me to become the man I am today. I want to especially thank Grandma Bernice who gave me her determination and perseverance and Grandpa Jamie who taught me the value of hard-work and dedication to family.

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To the thousands of students and hundreds of educators I have encountered over my seventeen-year career in public school education, thank you for allowing me to be a part of your lives.

Soli Deo Gloria… 2 Timothy 4:7

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Chapter 1

Introduction

> Some are not really causes, but just symptoms. And we misdiagnose a sickness for a symptom of the real sickness. The cause and the effect are often interchanged. For instance is poverty the cause of crime or is poverty only the symptom of it? For instance is ignorance the cause of poverty or is it simply an effect of poverty? Or is poverty nothing but an effect of ignorance? Or is poverty just an effect of an oppression of the rich? Taking much from the poor, who gets
> poorer everyday because there are no reforms coming to solve his poverty, his ignorance, his having to commit a crime to survive his poverty, his being a
> crime of society itself who never cared and wanted him. Who never instituted the much promised reforms? And so you doubt the cause and effect the effect from cause. And if you did not mind so well they may always be interchanged and mistaken for the symptoms. The conditions that always are there deceiving. (Bastasa, 2008)

The preceding poem by Ric S. Bastasa offers insight to the plight of underprivileged students in schools in the United States. These students come from rural, suburban, and urban settings. There are many different demographic categories that these students comprise. Regardless of their backgrounds, ethnicity, family construct, religion, or socio-economic status, these students, much like their more privileged peers, deserve an equitable and quality

education. To ensure this privilege of a free public education all educators must take a stand to deliver this education without bias or prejudice.

Background of the Study

The idea for this study came from my experiences while I served as a middle school principal. The school was located in a very rural, impoverished area of coastal North Carolina. The student population was about forty-five percent Anglo-American, forty-five percent African-American, and ten percent Latino. Seventy-five percent of the students were on free or reduced lunch. While the student population was diverse, the teaching and administrative staff were not. The staff was ninety percent Anglo-American and came from middle to upper middle class financial backgrounds. The staff had a median experience rank of twenty years.

Most of the staff was very experienced in teaching; unfortunately their ideals were those of the early twentieth century model of teaching. Students were arranged in rows of seats. The teacher did all of the talking while students primarily completed worksheets and worked independently. However, I had very different ideas related to teaching and learning. I expected teachers to engage student-centered instruction, where students were talking instead of teacher, collaborating, and using technology. I instituted enrichment and intervention periods into the school day and encouraged diversity in upper level classes. These changes were not welcomed by most of the staff.

A common phrase heard in faculty meetings, student support teams, Individual Educational Plan team meetings, and board of education meetings was, "you know these kids." This phrase was usually followed by a negative comment about the students' inability

to achieve proficiency on standardized tests, have parent support, graduate from high school, or "have much of a future." I quickly became frustrated by the lack of faith or hope in the students by the people in charge of their education. The challenge for the remainder of my tenure there as principal was to change the perceptions of staff members from "these kids" into "our kids." Through my initial research into the phenomenon that I had experienced came the understanding that I had encountered deficit thinking. This phenomenon is known by other names such as the Culture of Poverty, equity traps, or labeling students as "at-risk."

It is my personal educational philosophy that children can overcome their modest beginnings through education and economic opportunities. This education must be provided in a nurturing environment that provides all students the ability to exhibit their hidden, as well as obvious, acumen and talents that I believe "all" children possess in some form or another. It should be the challenge of the educators within schools, both teachers and administrators, to help reveal the talents of their students. These so called "at-risk" students have so many obstacles to overcome: poverty, racism, classism, nutritional, family-related, as well as drug and alcohol abuse. "At-risk" students should not have to overcome the assumptions and prejudices of the people entrusted to provide them a free and appropriate education. There is a need for all educators in a school building to overcome deficit thinking.

Statement of the Problem

Some of the major concepts addressed in this study include deficit thinking, equity in education, at-risk students, middle schools, the Culture of Poverty, and academic outcomes. While there are a number of research studies related to these topics, there are few that intertwine the concepts into a whole research study. I utilized the ProQuest database to

research the aforementioned concepts. "Deficit thinking in education" yielded 255, 931 dissertations and theses that mention this topic; "at-risk students" yielded 167,262 dissertations and theses that mention this topic; "equity in education" yielded 105,322 dissertations and theses that mention this topic; "culture of poverty in education" yielded 161,485 dissertations and theses that mention this topic; "deficit thinking in education" yielded 255, 931 dissertations and theses that mention this topic. When I combined the concepts into one search, the search yielded no results. After manipulating the variables I was able to locate a dissertation on the secondary principal's role in eliminating deficit thinking. I manipulated the variables by using the connectors provided by the ProQuest search engine. Additionally, I was able to find few scholarly articles and texts that combined all the elements of my research interests: middle schools, deficit thinking, school leadership, equity in education, at-risk students, and the Culture of Poverty. Due to the lack of extant literature on deficit thinking and academic outcomes, more research is needed to understand the perceptions of educators in affecting student outcomes based on student backgrounds.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this Q-methodology study was to understand educators' perceptions of their students' backgrounds in their middle school, and consequently what led to the development and persistence of their perceptions. Whether they believe the deficit model or that each child has inherent talents. The study will focus on middle schools because of the lack of relevant literature pertaining to deficit thinking within middle schools. Additionally, it was in middle schools that I faced deficit thinking as a teacher and principal. The lessons learned from this study are expected to be beneficial to anyone in K-12 education especially

educational leaders such as superintendents, district-level administrators, and school-building administrators as they work to improve schools for teachers, parents, and students.

Research Questions

1. How do middle school educators in rural schools perceive their students' backgrounds role in academic outcomes?
2. What factors have contributed to the development and persistence of these perceptions?

Definition of Terms

For the purpose of this study, the following definitions will be used.

Deficit Thinking: Deficit thinking posits that a student who fails in school does so because of internal deficits or deficiencies. Such deficits manifest through limited intellectual abilities, linguistic shortcomings, lack of motivation, and immoral behavior (Valencia, 1997).

At-Risk Student: An at-risk student is a student who, by virtue of their circumstances, is statistically more likely than others to fail academically. The National Center for Education Statistics lists the following factors that lead to an "at-risk" label for students: low socioeconomic status, living in a single-parent home, changing schools at non-traditional times, below-average grades in middle school, being held back in school through grade retention, having older siblings who left high school before completion, and/or negative peer pressure (NCES, 1993).

Culture of Poverty: The anthropologist Oscar Lewis coined the term "Culture of Poverty" in his seminal work, *The Children of Sanchez* (1961). With this social theory, Lewis

postulated that the burdens of poverty were so systemic that they led to a subculture of attitudes that future generations of children were socialized into, perpetuating their inability to escape poverty.

Diverse Student Populations: A student population can be deemed diverse when there is a blend of ethnicities, socio-economic statuses, and abilities among the student population where there is no clear majority or minority group.

Equity in Schools: This is apparent when personal or social circumstances such as gender, ethnic origin, or family background, are not obstacles to achieving educational potential and all individuals reach at least a basic minimum level of skills.

Equity Traps: Equity traps are patterns of thinking and behavior that trap the possibilities for creating equitable schools for children of color (McKenzie & Scheurich, 2004).

Perception: Perception is defined as insight, intuition, or knowledge gained by experience and education.

Non-administrative school leaders: This includes any individual in the school that has a decision-making role other than executive. These typically include grade level/department chairs, curriculum/literacy specialists, support personnel, and parents.

Rural School: The U.S. Department of Education defines rural schools as those located in districts with fewer than 600 students, residing in communities with fewer than 2,500 residents. Many rural areas of the country contain concentrated poverty. Rural schools face particular difficulty in recruiting and retaining teachers and principals. I have

experienced this as a school leader attempting to hire highly qualified teachers to fill vacancies in my schools (Dadisman et al., 2010; Ingersoll, 2004).

Socio-economic status: Socio-economic status (SES) is an economic and sociological combined total measure of a person's work experience and of an individual's or family's economic and social position in relation to others based on income, education, and occupation.

School Culture: The patterns of meaning or activity (norms, values, beliefs, relationships, rituals, traditions, myths, etc.) shared in varying degrees by members of a school community. School community members consist of students, faculty, administrators, parents, and community members.

School Leadership: The leaders of a school make up the leadership of that school. A school leader exerts their leadership through executive authority, work ethic, competence, and reputation. School leaders can be administrators, teachers, students, or support staff.

Student Achievement: This is the level that students reflect their teachers' instructional practices in terms of growth and proficiency related to the curriculum taught and based on the current accountability models of NCLB.

Significance of the Study

There are a few studies that examine deficit thinking and how school leadership can improve equity (Lacey, 2012; Sharma, 2009). There are only a few studies that focus on the racial aspect of deficit thinking (Eldridge, 2012; Simone, 2012). Additionally, they typically occur in urban impoverished settings. In contrast, this study will focus on the class aspect of deficit thinking, specifically low socio-economic rural schools in coastal North Carolina with

diverse student populations. I have not found any research studies or literature that specifically discuss this combination of variables.

Completion of this study has increased the body of literature on the topic of deficit thinking in middle schools. This study's findings may assist school districts and teacher/principal preparation programs in increasing the knowledge base for educators dealing with these conditions in their schools. Additionally, these findings may aid state and local policy makers as well as instructional leaders in school districts in creating relevant policies and procedures to ensure a balanced "field of play" for all students. Finally, this study has allowed educators a chance to reflect on their experiences and practice as they continue to deal with deficit thinking in their schools.

To try and change the perceptions of educators is a very challenging task, if and even if they need changing. Subjectivity is the quality of a person's perspective, experiences, feelings, beliefs, and desires. To deny the importance of subjectivity in the process of transforming the world and history is naïve and simplistic. It is to admit the impossible: a world without people. This objectivistic position is as ingenuous as that of subjectivism, which postulates people without a world (Freire, 1970). Based on this admission, examining the perceptions of educators with regards to deficit thinking is a worthwhile study.

Overview of Methodological Approach

The research questions deal with the perceptions of the participants. Q-methodology will be the tool used to answer the research questions. The participants in this study included the faculty of middle schools in rural, southeastern North Carolina. The choice to use this form of methodology was made because it allows the researcher to gather the participants'

subjective thoughts. Subjectivity is nothing more than a person's point of view (McKeown & Thomas, 1988). Q-methodology is a mixed-methods approach that combines the power of statistical factor analysis with subjective, contextual opinions of participants (Roberts, 2007).

In their 2012 work, *Doing Q Methodological Research- Theory, Method, and Interpretation,* Watts and Stenner outline the stages of performing Q-methodology research. They suggest one start by designing the Q-set, which is a collection of items. This is followed by selecting participants and conducting the Q-sort. The Q-sort is the sorting of the items into three categories and ranking the items individually based on their own perceptions. Next, the researcher would conduct a statistical analysis using a software package and draw your conclusions.

To create the Q-set, I reviewed relevant deficit thinking literature and collect Q-statements that will comprise the Q-set. I then assembled a group of educators: administrators, teachers, and other faculty members to act as a pilot study. The subjects of the pilot study assisted me in narrowing down the list of statements to approximately thirty to forty statements. The information garnered from the pilot study comprised the Q-set. The administrators, teachers, and other staff members from the middle school research sites served as the participants in the study. After the Q-sort was conducted at each site there will be follow-up interviews with select participants. The data was then be statistically analyzed by a software package that has been written specifically for Q-methodology. PQMethod is the statistical software package that was used in this study. Using this analysis and anecdotal data from interviews, robust descriptions of the factors that emerged were detailed.

Research studies are built on a foundation of trust. For a research study to be trustworthy its results must be valid and reliabile. Validity and reliability are not applicable to Q-methodology; however, you can demonstrate that the results of Q-methodology represent the viewpoints of its participants and hence it is valid (Watts & Stenner, 2012). Validity and reliability will be discussed in more detail in Chapter 3, the methods chapter.

Educators much like all individuals, have definite perceptions about the job they perform on a daily basis. These perceptions are based on their education, rearing, socioeconomic status, family structure, and work experiences. Based on these perceptions, educators have definite opinions on the educability of their students. The aim of this study is to understand educators' perceptions of their students' backgrounds in their middle school, and consequently what led to the development and persistence of their perceptions.

Deficit Thinking posits that a student who fails in school does so because of internal deficits or deficiencies. "Such deficits manifest through limited intellectual abilities, linguistic shortcomings, lack of motivation, and immoral behavior" (Valencia, 1997, p. 2). From the four manifestations as characterized by Valencia, there are six characteristics of deficit thinking:

1. A student's alleged cognitive and motivational deficits
2. Victim blamers
3. Pseudoscience
4. Educability of lower socio-economic students
5. Lop-sided power arrangements
6. Rests on nonconformity by the lower class.

This study focuses on the educability of students from rural, lower socio-economic schools in South-Eastern North Carolina. Valencia focuses on genetic disposition, race and culture. This study requires a framework that focuses on class and poverty. For that reason, Paul Gorski's Five Strategies for Defeating Deficit Ideology Framework (2010) will be used to explain the answers to the research questions of this study.

1. Identify deficit ideology (p. 20)
2. Name the limitations associated with class and poverty discourses in education (p. 21)
3. Reflect critically on how and by whom my own class socialization has been trained (p. 21)
4. Refuse to locate any problem in the "cultures" of the disenfranchised communities (p. 22)
5. Refuse to frame "poverty and class" as a culture rather than an oppressed condition (p. 22).

This conceptual framework was used to guide this study and interpret the findings. Later in Chapter 5 this framework was used to discuss the findings and draw conclusions.

Organization of the Study

This chapter has detailed the background of the study, the purpose of the study, a list of the common definition of terms used in the study, the significance of the study, a conceptual framework to draw conclusions from this study, and an overview of the methodological approach for the study. Chapter 2 contains a review of the literature focusing on equity, deficit thinking, and factors to mitigate issues with both phenomena. Chapter 3

contains an in-depth discussion of the methodology that was used in this research study to answer the research questions, including the following: research design and rationale, a list and description of the research participants, detailed data collection and analysis procedures, a subjectivity statement, an explanation of ethical issues, and a conclusion outlining the limitations of the study. . In Chapter 4, I have detailed the quantitative and qualitative results of the study. In Chapter 5, I have discussed the results using Gorski's Five Strategies for Defeating Deficit Ideology Framework (2010) discussed in Chapter 2 and other literature. I have also described implications for policy makers, researchers, and practitioners.

Chapter Summary

Deficit Thinking is the belief that students can or cannot achieve in school based on demographic indicators. The purpose of this Q-methodology study is to understand educators' perceptions of their students' backgrounds in their middle school, and consequently what led to the development and persistence of their perceptions. The experiences I had as a middle school educator and my personal educational philosophy will provide the background for this study. These experiences and philosophy will inform this study. The Defeating Deficit Ideology Framework will be used as a conceptual framework to answer the research questions in this study.

Chapter 2

Literature Review

Introduction

The purpose of this chapter is to review literature associated with deficit thinking. I constructed this review by examining the most current conceptual/theoretical, empirical, and dissertation studies related to deficit thinking in schools. Boote and Beile (2005) explain that scholars need the ability to advance the collective understanding of what has been done before, to assess the benefits and weaknesses of existing studies, and to understand what they might mean to guide their current studies. Once I identified the topic of deficit thinking as the focus of my study, I began reading articles, research studies, and texts associated with the subject. I developed a literature review table (Appendix A) that consists of the articles, texts, and studies I examined. The table is designed sequentially, reflecting the order in which I read each work.

I begin the literature review with a brief discussion of equity in schools and the interplay of equity and place. Next I discuss how equity plays a role in student success. Equity is commonly discussed in the same arenas as deficit thinking; therefore, to understand deficit thinking you must first have an understanding of equity. As I investigated the phenomenon of deficit thinking seven themes emerged from the literature. These themes include the following: (1) the concept of deficit thinking, (2) the Culture of Poverty, (3) at-risk students, (4) the Ruby Payne phenomenon, (5) student interactions with deficit thinking, (6) teacher interactions with deficit thinking, and (7) school leadership interactions with deficit thinking. This study examines school educators' perceptions, and to do this

successfully one needs to understand the interactions of students, teachers, and school leaders. Finally, I examine Identity Threat to illuminate its importance in this study of deficit thinking. As I reviewed the literature I sought to explain why each of these studies was important to include in this review, discussed the research, critiqued the appropriateness of research methods to warrant claims, and critiqued the practical and scholarly significance of the research (Boote & Beile, 2005).

Equity in Schools

Equity in schools has many meanings depending on the context of the conversation. Within the realm of K-12 schools there are two domains of equity- inclusion and fairness. Inclusion focuses on who is allowed into schools and programs from some status point such as academic ability or relationship to other people. In the landmark civil rights case *Brown v. Board of Education of Topeka, Kansas*, state-sanctioned segregation of public schools was found to be a violation of the 14th amendment and was therefore unconstitutional. This Supreme Court ruling overturned the "separate but equal" precedent established by the *Plessy v. Ferguson* case some sixty years earlier.

Fairness encompasses personal and social circumstances such as ethnicity or ancestry, gender, sexual orientation, religion, and socio-economic status. In *Leandro v. State of North Carolina,* the North Carolina Supreme Court held that every child in the state is entitled to a sound basic education, which includes several specific learning outcomes. This does not equate to equal resources but equitable resources. Americans are guaranteed certain rights under the Constitution, fairness and inclusion are two of those expectations in education. Time and history have proven otherwise to certain groups of citizens.

Education policy makers routinely deal with equity issues, either with formal or hidden issues. These issues can be seen at the federal, state, and local education authority levels. There are three policy areas that affect equity in education: the design of educational systems, practices in and out of school, and allocation of resources (OECD, 2008). The design of educational systems consists of where schools are located, how they are organized, and what types of students will attend. Practices inside and outside of school consist of forces from politics, religion, and community. Allocation of resources primarily consists of which schools get which teachers and leaders and how funding of educational programs is allocated. Table 2.1 below identifies several of the variables that can contribute to policy dilemmas involving equity.

Table 2.1.

Policy Areas that Affect Equity in Education.

Design of Educational Systems	Practices in and out of School	Allocation of Resources
Location: Urban, Sub-urban, and Rural settings. Grouping of Students. Zoning of Students.	Parent and Community Involvement. Tracking and Group Formation.	Funding and Quality of Staff. Teaching Ability. Leadership Ability Building and Grounds.

Note: This table is based on information gleaned from *Ten steps to equity in education.* OECD, 2008.

There are countless studies (e.g., Darling-Hammond, 2010; Shields, 2010) that have been conducted on equity in education. For the purpose of this review of literature I will focus on the "where" and the "who" in the occurrence of inequities in schools. The "where" constitutes the places where inequity is visible in school buildings, districts, and communities. The "who" consists of the people that have the most influence on changing the inequities: the teachers, administrators, and policy-makers.

The *Nation at Risk Report of 1983* brought the accountability movement to education. This report found we were failing at K-12 education in the United States and began to shed light on the plight of equity in education. This was the first time that American students were reportedly falling behind their German and Japanese counterparts since the space race of the 1950s and 1960s. The launch of Sputnik in the 1950s by the Russians spurred the United States to focus education initiatives to compete with the Russians.

Equity and Place

Urban and Suburban Education in the United States.

As the accountability movement emerged, a landmark, text *Savage Inequalities*, was published. This book became synonymous with inequities in K-12 education. *Savage Inequalities* was written by Jonathon Kozol (1991), the first of his many books on equity and education. Kozol visited 30 schools in poor urban and suburban neighborhoods all over the country. He summarized his experiences in six vignettes (small case studies) that comprise the six chapters of his book. The vignettes tell the stories of poor school children from inner-city East St. Louis; South Chicago; New York City; Camden, New Jersey; Washington DC; and San Antonio. From his experiences Kozol concluded that:

1. The fact of ghetto education (his terminology) as a permanent American reality appears to be universally accepted.
2. While Reagan era social policies set concerns for poor and minority children back decades, it also set back their education almost 100 years.
3. The inner-city schools the author visited were extraordinarily unhappy places.
4. No educators, politicians, parents, or community members were asking the students their opinions of the schools or their neighborhoods.
5. Through the author's experiences, he painted a very sad state of the equity or lack thereof in the lives of poor and minority children with respect to their white, middle class counterparts.

Kozol's inclusion here is relevant to the topic of equity and deficit thinking. His book was one of the first to bring these inequalities to light. His methods of qualitative study were sound, using ethnography and case study protocols. Furthermore, his findings have practical and scholarly significance. The significance is that through his book Kozol introduced a new genre of research interest. Most studies before were from sociological and anthropological points of interest. In contrast, Kozol is a former teacher who cited his first-hand experience of teaching inner-city students in the 1960s and 1970s and his three-year journey of studying six locales of inner-city education to write this book. Another former educator that followed Kozol' lead as an advocate for equity in schools is Linda Darling-Hammond.

Linda Darling-Hammond is one of the most authoritative experts and passionate proponents of education in America. Darling-Hammond (2010) wrote *The Flat World and Education: How America's Commitment to Equity Will Determine Our Future.* In this book,

she documents the educational crisis in the United States and identifies the five major building blocks that create unequal and inadequate educational outcomes in the United States:

1. "The high level of poverty and low levels of social supports for low-income children's welfare and health, including their early learning opportunities."
2. "The unequal allocation of school resources, which is made politically easier by the increasing re-segregation of schools."
3. "Inadequate systems for providing high-quality teachers and teaching to all children in all communities."
4. "Rationing of high-quality curriculum through tracking and interschool disparities."
5. "Factory-model school designs that have created dysfunctional learning environments for students and unsupportive settings for strong teaching." (p. 30)

Darling-Hammond's work is reminiscent of Kozol. She also points to the re-segregation of schools and lack of social supports needed to lessen the educational gap between poor students and their peers. Darling-Hammond adds scholarly significance to the discussion of equity as she speaks from an academic research perspective. She posits the lack of teacher preparation, curricular, and school design as major issues to overcome.

Rural Education in America.

Much like inner city areas described by Kozol, rural areas also possess concentrated pockets of inequalities. In rural schools of the Appalachian region and the Deep South, schools reproduce the inequalities found in mainstream society. Some of these inequalities

are equitable education outcomes, access to healthcare and nutritious meals, and modern buildings for schools. Although, these inequalities are found in rural areas all over the United States, they are more concentrated in the Deep South and the Appalachian regions. However, most children don't know they are poor until they go to school and someone explains that they are (Howley & Howley, 2010). This type of treatment of poor students by their school and community fosters the students' belief in their future role in society, in their mind's eye a belief that could be defined as self-deficit thinking. This future may be filled with poverty, crime, and addiction

In their book *Rural Communities Legacy and Change*, Cornelia B. Flora and Jan L. Flora (2008) focus on various capitals in rural areas that constitute community. These capitals include natural capital (land resources), cultural capital (values), human capital (individual abilities), social capital (networks), political capital (influence), financial capital (money), and built capital (infrastructure). The authors provide readers with a framework for understanding rural society. Flora and Flora (2008) argue that the social stratification of rural communities is often reproduced in the school (p. 73). First cliques and recreational activities for young people replicate the social structure of the adult world. Second, those adults who have a direct impact on children, including teachers, school administrators, and community leaders systematically discriminate against children from lower classes. Finally, children from the lower class learn patterns both at home and in school that hamper them in educational and occupational attainment (Flora & Flora, 2008). Hollingshead (1949) identified three mechanisms by which rural communities' social stratification were reproduced in the school.

> First through clicks and recreational activities for young people replicated the social structure of the adult world. Second those adults who had a direct impact on the children including teachers, school administrators, and community leaders systematically discriminated against children from lower classes. Finally, children from the lower class learn patterns both at home and in school that hampered them in educational and occupational attainment. (page #?)

This brief discussion of rural education and equity is significant to this study of deficit thinking. This study will be conducted in a rural, low socio-economic school district in eastern North Carolina. Just like urban and suburban areas, rural areas have unique social structures and customs that influence the local schools. It can be challenging to facilitate the change to twenty-first century global learning that is mandated by federal, state, and local education authorities. As one author stated, "For me the future of our rural communities is dependent upon our ability and willingness to revision, repurpose, and restructure education in ways that will enable our youth to utilize the skills they are taught locally as well as globally" (Faircloth, 2009, p. 3).

Deficit Thinking

As I investigated the phenomenon of deficit thinking seven themes emerged from the literature. These themes include the following: the concept of deficit thinking, the Culture of Poverty, at-risk students, the Ruby Payne phenomenon, student interactions with deficit thinking, teacher interactions with deficit thinking, and school leadership interactions with deficit thinking.

The Concept of Deficit Thinking.

Deficit thinking posits that a student who fails in school does so because of internal deficits or deficiencies. Such deficits manifest through limited intellectual abilities, linguistic shortcomings, lack of motivation, and immoral behavior (Valencia, 1997). According to Valencia there are six characteristics of deficit thinking in relation to schooling:

1. "The Deficit Thinking framework is rooted in a student's alleged cognitive and motivational deficits, while institutional structures and inequitable schooling arrangements that exclude students from learning are held exculpatory (justify the accuser's actions). The model is largely based on imputation (dishonesty) and little documentation (no scientific or evidenced merit)."
2. "The victim-blamers' nature of deficit thinking and the lop-sided power arrangements between Deficit Thinking and economically disadvantaged students can be oppressive. The Deficit Thinking paradigm holds little hope of addressing the possibility of school success for these students."
3. "Deficit Thinking is a form of pseudoscience, where researchers approach their work with deeply embedded biases using methodologically flawed procedures, and communicate their findings in proselytizing manners."
4. "The alleged deficits are transmitted through the genetic code or inherited from parents, inferior culture and class, or inadequate familial socialization."
5. "Deficit Thinking is a prescriptive model based on the educability of low SES students."

6. "Historically, Deficit Thinking has rested on an orthodoxy- the dominant, convenient, scholarly, and ideological climates of the time." (p. 10)

Valencia has spent over thirty years living and researching the perils of deficit thinking. He is the most cited author for deficit thinking, whether the literature is conceptual, empirical, or dissertation research. Valencia has contributed to the practical and scholarly significance of the topic more than can be expressed in this short section.

Buck Cooper is a graduate student and contributing author to LearnNC. His research focuses on authenticity in science education and improving the science teaching of students from diverse cultural backgrounds. Cooper (2012) writes, "deficit thinking accounts for students' academic and social struggles at school by pointing out those desirable attributes students or their families lack" (para. 3). He also categorizes deficit thinking a little less specifically: neohereditarianism (genetic disposition), the culture of poverty paradigm (engrained disposition), and cultural and environmental deficits (parenting and ethnicity disposition). Although Cooper uses similar language to Valencia, his version is more powerfully read. He bluntly calls deficit thinking what it is: the misguided belief that deficient genes, poor neighborhoods, poor parenting, and bad culture determine what children can or cannot do in school and life.

Sharma (2009) concludes from his dissertation study three arguments to create truly democratic education possibilities and eliminate deficit thinking. First, the critical lens is the philosophical stance that is needed in order to identify and acknowledge the problems of deficit thinking. Secondly, everyone must be morally responsible for his or her actions and behaviors. Finally, everyone must work to overcome the struggles that a critical democratic

stance will encounter. Both Cooper and Sharma use literature reviews as their primary data sources, and both credit Valencia in the reference sections.

Deficit thinking is associated with blaming a student's academic and social struggles on the lack of "desirable" qualities in a student or a student's family (Singam, 2010). These beliefs are held by the people involved in these students' daily lives: their teachers and school administrators. These students typically live in communities with lower socioeconomic status and have different ethnic backgrounds than their teachers and administrators. According to Singam, "Their schools are usually underfunded, overcrowded, non-white, and poorly managed" (p. 1). It is important to note that deficit thinking may be found in other schools with other demographics. Deficit thinking is applied to the student's background not necessarily the school he or she attends.

Paul Gorski a contemporary academic and educational researcher, details deficit ideology as a remnant of the imperialist movements of colonial powers during the past 400 years of world history (2010). This phenomenon of deficit thinking is not a new concept. "We can trace its roots to United States slave trade, American Indian Genocide, and Jim Crow laws (p. 7)." As with most hegemonic forces, deficit thinking maintains the status quo through social conditioning and compliance enforcement. Schools are microcosms of the larger society, thus allowing deficit ideology to permeate schools. "… a litany of atrocities within the education milieu, from the withering away of bilingual education to inequitable school funding, have been aided by deficit socialization processes that frame the least powerful communities as deficient and, as a result, undeserving of equal opportunity (2010, p.7). He chooses to use the term "deficit ideology" instead of "deficit thinking" to emphasize

that it is an ideology, based on a set of assumed truths about the world and the sociopolitical relationships that occur in it.

Gorski's identifies three discursive signs that deficit ideology is being employed in conversations about class and poverty in education. These include: (1) an unnamed assumption of shared stereotyped thinking (between author and reader, speaker and listener, and so on), (2) identification of the "problem" of inequality, or of poverty itself, as existing within working class and low-income families and their "cultures," and (3) failure or refusal to acknowledge sociopolitical context (p. 21). His Five Strategies for Defeating Deficit Ideology Framework (2010) will be used to explain the answers to the research questions of this study.

1. Identify deficit ideology (p. 20)
2. Name the limitations associated with class and poverty discourses in education (p. 21)
3. Reflect critically on how and by whom my own class socialization has been trained (p. 21)
4. Refuse to locate any problem in the "cultures" of the disenfranchised communities (p. 22)
5. Refuse to frame "poverty and class" as a culture rather than an oppressed condition (p. 22).

Culture of Poverty.

There are competing sides to the Culture of Poverty paradigm. Some researchers declare its existence (Lewis, 1961) while others (Delpit, 2012; Gorski, 2008) dispute their findings and claim racism or classism. Still others (Haberman, 1991) state that it is a Pedagogy of Poverty and not a culture, referring to the way poor kids are educated. In the following sections I will cite examples of these claims.

Culture of Poverty is the term the anthropologist Oscar Lewis coined in his seminal work *The Children of Sanchez* (Lewis, 1961). With this social theory, Lewis postulated that the burdens of poverty were so systemic that they led to a subculture of attitudes that future generations of children were socialized into, perpetuating their inability to escape poverty. Lewis in a later work (1966) defines the components of the Culture of Poverty as consisting of a way of life handed down from generation to generation. It provides poor people with a design for living. The setting is a cash economy with wage labor and production for profit, high rates of unemployment and underemployment, and low wages for unskilled labor. This theory holds that the dominant class asserts a set of values, which stresses the possibility of upward mobility, whereas low socio-economic status results in personal inadequacy and inferiority. Poor children accept their station in life by six or seven years of age. There is an awareness of middle class values but no sustained practice of these values.

In contrast, Paul Gorski (2008), argues that there is no such thing as a culture of poverty and that the concept is really a collection of stereotypes of poor people. These stereotypes are certainly unfair, and as with most stereotypes, they are not generalizable to an entire population of people. Gorski concludes there are four myths of a culture of poverty: (1)

poor people are unmotivated and have weak work ethics, (2) poor parents are uninvolved in their children's learning and largely they do not value education, (3) poor people are linguistically deficient, and (4) poor people tend to abuse drugs and alcohol. In his opinion, classism defines students by their weaknesses instead of their strengths. It draws on stereotypes and ignores systemic conditions.

Another critic of the myth of the Culture of Poverty is Lisa Delpit (2012). She laments, "It is convenient to choose poverty as the reason for poor performance, attaching poor academic performance to factors such as the number of parents in the household, the educational background of the mother, or the level of poverty in the community" (p. 23). This kind of thinking harkens back to the old cultural-deficit arguments of the 1960s and 1970s (Delpit, 2012). She provides an antithesis to the culture of poverty: the culture of power. In it there are five aspects of power (Delpit, 2005):

1. "Issues of power are enacted in classrooms."
2. "There are codes or rules for participating in power; that is, there is a 'culture of power'."
3. "The rules of the culture of power are a reflection of the rules of the culture of those who have power."
4. "If you are not already a participant in the culture of power, being told explicitly the rules of that culture makes acquiring power easier."
5. "Those with power are frequently least aware of or at least unwilling to acknowledge its existence. Those with less power are often most aware of its existence." (p. 41)

A close relative to the Culture of Poverty is the Pedagogy of Poverty. Educator

Martin Haberman originated this term in the 1990s. He argues that the way poor, urban-students are taught to master basic skills erodes their overall educational experience. There are core functions of urban teaching: giving information, asking questions, giving directions, making assignments, monitoring seatwork, reviewing assignments, giving tests, reviewing tests, assigning homework, reviewing homework, settling disputes, punishing noncompliance, marking papers, and assigning grades (Haberman, 1991). Reformers of urban schools are now raising their expectations beyond an emphasis on basic skills to the teaching of critical thinking, problem solving, and even creativity. The alternate approach to this basic skills approach is one of progressive pedagogy. This pedagogy includes activities such as cooperative learning, peer tutoring, scientific inquiry, media-assisted instruction, and behavior modification. According to Habberman (1991), "Graduates who lack basic skills may be unemployable and represent a personal and societal tragedy. However, graduates who possess basic skills but are partially informed, unable to think, and incapable of making moral choices are downright dangerous" (p. 294). Through a change in instruction and philosophy the pedagogy of poverty can be overcome.

Lewis (1961) bases his findings on principles of anthropology, psychology, and sociology. Gorski (2008) and Haberman (1991) use their personal experiences as educators and researchers to validate their points. All make valuable and salient points for the practical and scholarly significance of their contributions to the conversation of deficit thinking. Delpit (2012), much like Valencia (1997), is a renowned author commonly cited in deficit thinking studies and articles. Delpit brings a fresh take on the subject of the culture of poverty, one of critical social theory. Critical social theory can be defined as a multi-

disciplinary framework to advance the emancipatory function of knowledge (Leonardo, 2004).

At-Risk Students.

The construct of the at-risk label came from the excellence movement of the 1980s. Critics sought to distance educators and policy makers away from the belief that success and failure hinged primarily on individual effort (Swadener & Lubeck, 1995; Margonis, 1992). At-risk children are often described as victims of racism, poverty, and inferior school conditions, location, addiction, and the legal system. Valencia (1997) lists the etymology of the term "at-risk students":

1. "At-risk is a resurrected metaphor of the cultural deprivation and culturally disadvantaged terms of the 1960s. This term labels whole segments of the population unfairly."
2. "At-risk holds structural inequalities absolved in creating problems. This is problematic as it deflects attention away from the hegemonic forces of the dominant class."
3. "Scholars have been quick to name, identify, and ossify students with "risk" factors. These factors are not indicative of ability rather of demographic information."
4. "This movement is influenced by politics. The conservative movement that sprung from the 1970s and 1980s political climate continues to admonish the people that are supported by welfare and limited access to a quality education."
5. "This movement fails to acknowledge the strengths, competencies, and promise of low socio-economic status of children and parents. These people of low socio-

> economic status are denigrated for their demographic features without much celebration of what they contribute to society." (p. 197)

At the heart of the conversation of at-risk students are their family and individual characteristics. In this age of accountability, at-risk is quantified by the likelihood that students will not complete high school and receive a diploma. The National Center for Educational Statistics (1993) lists characteristics of at-risk students. Most of these factors are attributed to a student's gender, race-ethnicity, and socioeconomic background.

> These factors include students from single-parent families, students who were overage for their peer group, or students who had frequently changed schools; students whose parents were not actively involved in the student's school, students whose parents never talked to them about school-related matters, or students whose parents held low expectations for their child's future educational attainment; students who repeated an earlier grade, students who had histories of poor grades in mathematics and English; students who did little homework; students from urban schools or from schools with large minority populations. (NCES, 1993, p. vii)

Dudley-Marling (2007) cites Hart & Risley (2003) and Payne (1996) for perpetuating deficit thinking. Hart and Risley theorized that children living in poverty learn the vocabulary they need to get along in their families and communities but not the vocabulary required for success in school. The acceptance of this study by mainstream education is emblematic of the trend to embrace a deficit stance that pathologizes the language and culture of children living in poverty (Dudley-Marling & Lucas, 2009). According to Payne (1996), learning the hidden

rules of poverty is an adaptive skill, necessary for coping with the material circumstances of poverty.

The deficit gaze (Dudley-Marling's term for deficit thinking) renders students' background knowledge and experiences irrelevant, or worse, as risk factors. The price of success in school for these students is to reject their language and culture and to learn middle class norms. Providing rich, engaging curricula that is respectful of the linguistic and cultural backgrounds of children is the manner that could ameliorate these so-called factors (Dudley-Marling, 2007). Schools attempt to reduce the impact of these at-risk factors by emphasizing basic skills, offering remediation and tutoring to students, and seeking to educate parents. These programs are funded by federal and state streams associated with low-wealth and poverty. Dudley-Marling based his conclusions on a review of the extant literature, which is a common data collection method in educational research articles.

The Ruby Payne Phenomenon.

One of the most popular and controversial figures in the deficit thinking realm is Ruby Payne. The sale of her book *A Framework for Understanding Poverty* (1996) and her ownership of education company aha! Process, Inc., which publishes her books and professional development materials, has made her a multimillionaire. Payne is a former teacher and school administrator and comes from a middle class background. Her only real tie to poverty other than her limited experience with students in one school, which she worked, is that her husband was reared in poverty. Most of her research comes from a 30-year, qualitative ongoing case study. It relies heavily on an anthropological approach. She

also draws from many scholarly works such as those of Oscar Lewis and other Culture of Poverty proponents.

Payne's framework consists of the role of language, hidden rules, characteristics of poverty, role models, support systems, instruction, and creating relationships dealing with children of poverty. She asserts that hidden rules are class bound, originate from cause and effect situations, and serve as survival mechanisms. Payne claims that poor and minority students lack access to the formal register of language, the one used in school and middle class life. Payne perpetuates the deficit thinking mentality by retelling the relationship of low socio-economic status students and academic success.

Although many school districts and educators swarm to hear her speak ($17,000 per engagement) and purchase her programs, she has many critics (Valencia, 2010; Bomer et al., 2009; Ng & Rory, 2006). Those who see value in her work are usually in desperate need of school reform options and seek her because of her fame. These patrons believe that Payne's focus on mitigating at-risk factors by indoctrinating students with middle class values will resonate with teachers and parents (Gorski, 2005).

Payne's work materializes the values, behaviors, and orientations of poor people, reinforcing stereotypes and misconceptions that suggest that poor people have a choice to remain in poverty (Ng & Rory, 2006). She appeals to many people's common sense and conservative approach of how poverty works. However, this thought pattern is not supported by contemporary social science research. Recent research suggests that poor people's social environment is considerable, more influential than Payne suggests (Gorski, 2005). Teachers with a deficit perspective lower the quality of education: offer less instruction to poor

children and interact not with a person of dignity and possibility, but with an instance of made up faults and absences (Bomer et al., 2009). Payne's book is based on the idea that everyone desires mobility. In the end, her success comes from lower class students buying into capitalist ideology (Tooley, 2003).

Although some scholarly critics (Valencia, 2010; Gorski, 2005) disavow Payne's framework for inaccuracies, there are parts of the framework they like. For example, Payne's book brings class to the forefront of the conversation. Before her book, it was an afterthought or secondary consideration. Poverty and social class are important in how they impact children; educators must understand that their impact is important in the lives of children (Bomer et al., 2009). According to Delpit (2012) many of Payne's suggestions should be adopted by schools that want better outcomes for their students.

Many will agree that Payne's program is well intentioned, but it is not based on sound or thorough understanding of poverty and its causes (Ng & Rory, 2006). Scholars seem to be unified against Ruby Payne and her interpretations of poverty and class (Valencia, 2010; Bomer et al., 2009; Ng & Rory, 2006). However, some educators in K-12 schools have found her methods beneficial and her advice very practical in dealing with students of poverty. Her research methodology is shaky at best and does not follow any rigorous structure (Bomer et al., 2009). I would agree that she pieced together large research studies that may or may not be generalizable to the entire population of impoverished people. Educators are looking for the next "magic bullet" to help impoverished schools and they do not always concern themselves with sound research methodology.

Accountability and Deficit Thinking.

The Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) of 1965 was the educational component of President Johnson's War on Poverty. The No Child Left Behind (NCLB) Act of 2001 is the reauthorization of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act. It is the primary federal program related to promoting equity and excellence. NCLB requires states to create accountability systems that monitored student proficiency in the core subjects of math and reading (No Child Left Behind [NCLB], 2002). Students' test results are measured and reported as Adequately Yearly Progress. Originally, each state was to meet the 100% proficiency mark in both math and reading by 2014. Additionally, schools had to report their results by subgroups of demographics: race, exceptionality, socio-economic status, and English proficiency. Schools were subject to sanctions if they did not meet certain criteria.

As time progressed and the 100% goal was deemed unachievable, the United States Department of Education decided to allow states some flexibility in this requirement. States could apply for a waiver against the 100% proficiency mark and submit to two provisions: include student data in teacher evaluations and to designate schools under the categories of Reward, Priority, and Focus. Under the waiver system, Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) was replaced with Annual Measurable Objectives (AMO), and states could establish their criteria based on subgroups. The subgroups' reporting was a subject of controversy for years and a perpetuator of deficit thinking for many critics of NCLB. When schools failed to meet AYP it was almost certain to be based on minority, socioeconomic status, or exceptionality subgroup, thus again perpetuating deficit thinking. Under the AMO designation states could

decide targets based on demographics such as race. Table 2.2 below details which states decided to issue academic performance targets by race.

Table 2.2

States' Variability of Academic Performance Targets by Race

States that have academic performance targets that vary by race.	States that have targets that do not vary by race.	States where students must meet 100% proficiency in math and reading by 2014. No waiver
Washington, Utah, South Dakota, Kansas, Kentucky, Minnesota, Wisconsin, Arkansas, Mississippi, Indiana, Tennessee, New York, Massachusetts, Rhode Island, Connecticut, New Jersey, Delaware, Maryland, Virginia Washington DC, Georgia, North Carolina, & Florida.	Oregon, Idaho, Nevada, Arizona, New Mexico, Colorado, Oklahoma, Missouri, Louisiana, Michigan, Ohio, & South Carolina.	California, Montana, Wyoming, North Dakota, Nebraska, Texas, Iowa, Illinois, Alabama, Maine, Vermont, New Hampshire, Pennsylvania, & West Virginia.

Note: This table is based on information gleaned from *NBC News Tackles Race-based Goals in States' NCLB Waiver Plans* (McNeil, 2013).

In 2012 North Carolina applied for and received a waiver thus accepting the two provisions. For the first time in the history of North Carolina, student data were included in teacher evaluations and principal evaluations, as the now infamous standards six and eight. To designate schools under the categories of Reward, Priority, and Focus, North Carolina chose to use an A, B, C, D, and F categorical system to report school quality to the public. As noted in the table above, North Carolina set criteria based on demographic subgroups. Table 2.3 below details the different proficiency percentages required for each subgroup. Note the difference between races, socio-economic status, and exceptionality.

Table 2.3

The New AMO Targets by Subgroups, for Reading & Mathematics in Percentages of Proficiency for each Demographic Subgroup

Subgroup	3-8 Reading	9-12 Reading	3-8 Math	9-12 Math
Native American	61.8%	75.5%	77.5%	75.9%
Asian	80.8%	88.4%	92.4%	92.2%
Black	57.8%	77.8%	71.4%	72.0%
Hispanics	61.1%	80.2%	80.2%	80.8%
White	83.2%	93.0%	90.4%	90.1%

Table 2.3 Continued

Economically Disadvantaged (ED)	61.4%	78.9%	76.2%	75.7%
Limited English Proficient (LEP)	42.4%	42.0%	71.1%	56.2%
Students With Disabilities (SWD)	44.5%	50.9%	59.9%	51.1%
Total All Students	73.0%	87.2%	83.7%	84.0%

Note: This table is based on information gleaned from *Determining Annual Measureable Objectives (AMOS)* (NCDPI, 2012). For grades 3 through 8 and high school, the new AMO targets by subgroups, for reading & mathematics in percentages of proficiency for each demographic subgroup (beginning in the 2011-2012 school year).

The *A Nation at Risk Report* and legislation such as NCLB have contributed to a standards-based school reform movement, which is measured by the accountability model of NCLB. The standards-based school reform movement is structurally misdirected because it treats the symptoms of school failure (i.e., poor academic achievement indices such as low reading test scores and high dropout rates), rather than the root causes (inferior schools) (Valencia, 2012). Marshall (2004) posits that educational administration scholars should take advantage of the momentum of accountability to focus on social justice.

Scheurich et al. (2000) studied highly successful schools and districts with low-income children and children of color. Their research suggests a monumental moment in education history:

1. In what previous historical moment has such high level public attention been applied to public school's lack of success with low-income and children of color?
2. In what previous historical moment has there ever been a major public commitment to high academic performance for all races and SES classes by US political parties and their candidates for president?
3. The substantially improved academic success of children of color and low-income students and improved equity in some schools and in some districts.

Thinking carefully about equity and accountability, one must examine and appreciate the possibility that a movement towards social justice could indeed be the answer to deficit thinking.

In the past, most reform proposals merely tightened with accountability and narrowed curriculum. With the implementation of the Common Core and Essential Standards Curriculum in the 2012-2013 school year, there is hope for a curricular expansion and increase in teacher efficacy. This new curriculum allows teachers to be more creative and students to be more collaborative. Common Core asks students and teachers to delve deeper into topics, this makes for a more rigorous learning environment. This increased rigor will also influence equity across the national, state, and local level as all students are being held to the same standards (Long, 2013).

Interaction of Deficit Thinking and Students.

The true impact of deficit thinking is measured in the manner in which it affects students. Under the new waiver program, school and teacher data will be reported to the public (NCDPI, 2012). For North Carolina schools, how will students' self-worth be affected by attending a level C, D, or F under the new NCLB waiver or attending the class of poorly rated teacher? These are important questions that need to be answered by policy-makers. Students are not fooled by education buzzwords, non-genuine rhetoric, and insincere remarks. They are keenly aware of the perceptions of their teachers that can include lowered academic expectations. Students are aware that minorities and poorer students are disproportionally retained and tracked into non-academic college preparatory programs. In the table below (see Table 2.4), Delpit provides actual comments from students who attend impoverished inner-city schools. This table contains the feelings from these students that suggest they are aware of their teachers' deficit gaze (Delpit, 2012).

Table 2.4

Delpit's (2012) Conversation with Students from Impoverished Schools

"Students were also very aware of the culture of their schools, the attitudes their teachers have toward teaching, and the effort those teachers put into their craft":	"I also asked them to describe a good teacher they had encountered in their school lives":

Table 2.4 Continued

• "It's bad when they say you go to a bad school. It's like then they think you are automatically a bad person. Even when it's just one bad seed that acts crazy, people think everyone in the school is like that." • "Sometimes the teachers won't give you help. Some of them say things like, 'I got mine; all I have to do is get my paycheck'." • "In high school a lot of teachers are about occupying us, not teaching us." • "The bookwork and the tests have nothing to do with us." • "Our teachers don't understand how much impact they have. It's hard when they act about as serious about what they're doing as our little sisters or brothers."	• "A good teacher takes time, makes sure you understand." • "One who enjoys being there." • "One who doesn't put on a movie when they're tired." • "A teacher who asks questions to help get the students closer to the answers." • "For each chapter there should be a lecture, activities and games, and reading outside of the text from different sources (from a future teacher, perhaps?)." • "One who has a sense of humor, but can be serious when necessary." • "Someone you can find outside of class for help." • "Someone who is patient, understanding, ready to teach.

It may be surprising to some that students respond to such high expectations and strong demands (Delpit, 2012). High expectations and rigorous instruction are important, but without care and concern student impact is minimal. Students will rise to the high expectations and demands if they truly feel and sense their teachers have compassion for them. According to Nieto (2010), "I have often been struck by how little young people believe they deserve, especially those who do not come from economically privileged backgrounds" (p. 398). These students could teach educators a lot if educators would listen. Students from poverty could inform pedagogy, curriculum, ability grouping, and expectations of ability that would increase the numbers of young people that could be reached.

Interaction of Deficit Thinking and Teachers.

Teachers have the greatest impact on students (Leithwood & Jantzi, 2006), and in this interaction teachers must overcome their preconceived notions of deficit thinking. Fortunately, this is not true of all teachers; deficit thinking by teachers is "the exception" in some schools and "the rule" in other schools. Deficit thinking is not just limited to lower and middle level achievement of students, it can also be found in accelerated classrooms such as Advanced Placement (AP) courses in high schools. Izzo (2012) followed four teachers from the AP Challenge Program for three months. He observed classroom interactions and interviewed teachers about their expectations, specifying targeting beliefs and attitudes. He analyzed the data through an interpretivist paradigm using deductive and sequential analysis. He concluded that teachers did consider demographics in developing predictions about

performance thus offering support that teachers' expectations are grounded in deficit and dynamic thinking.

In relation to teachers, there are two areas where deficit thinking can be overcome: professional development and teacher preparation programs. Teacher education usually focuses on research that links failure and socioeconomic status, failure and cultural difference, and failure and single parent households (Delpit, 2005). It is difficult to believe that these children can possibly be successful after their teachers have been so thoroughly exposed to so much negative indoctrination (2005). Pre-service teachers are given reasons for student failure long before they are given classrooms and children to teach. These teacher preparatory programs should prepare teachers to challenge these deficiency frameworks, to challenge their students through critical thinking, and to consider what is right with their students as opposed to what is wrong with them.

Garcia and Guerra (2004) contend that deficit thinking permeates society, thus schools and teachers mirror these beliefs. Garcia and Guerra believe that deficit thinking can be deconstructed through professional development. In order to do so, professional development activities must link equity knowledge to classroom practice and create a cultural lens for the teacher to view their students (2004). Their study of deconstructing deficit thinking through professional development generated five general themes: overgeneralizing about family background; writing students off before they came to school; absence of a critical lens; a mono-cultural view of child-rearing practices and success; and the system works but students and parents need to change. Staff development experiences create cognitive dissonance for some participants, between their beliefs and assumptions and those

reflected in culturally responsive pedagogy. In this study, teachers were confronted with the task of overcoming their beliefs and assumptions

Sherry Marx, professor at Utah State University in the secondary education department, is a leading researcher of deficit thinking and pre-service teachers' education. She draws from the theoretical perspectives of critical White studies and critical race theory, when studying Whiteness and White racism with pre-service teachers. Marx comments that the women in her study express deficit thinking with respect to culture, language, families, self-esteem, and intelligence (Marx, 2006). In response, she developed an intervention program that sought to confront and change her students' racism via seven discrete steps, as follows:

1. "Acknowledging one's own racism."
2. "Bringing attention to contradictions."
3. "Catching a glimpse of the shaky evidential base students relied on to attest to their lack of racism."
4. "Challenging easy answers that might alleviate any racist beliefs that may affect the student's teaching."
5. "Drawing attention to the larger context of White racist effects on children of color."
6. "Recognizing and admitting their own racism and taking responsibility for their part in perpetuating it."
7. "Moving past the guilt associated with White racism."

It is too convenient to fall back on deficit theories and continue the practice of blaming students, their families, and their communities for educational failure. Marx presents

strategies that will not just work for the subjects of her study, but that can be generalized to most teachers in assisting them in overcoming equity issues in their classrooms. Instead, schools need to focus on where they can make a difference, namely, their own instructional policies and practices (Nieto, 2010). Teachers should recognize that students have inherent strengths and value and establish a better relationship with the student and family.

Interaction of Deficit Thinking and School Leadership.

School Level Leadership.

The group most capable of eliminating deficit thinking is school leaders. These leaders hold authoritarian, legitimate, and transformative powers over their students, teachers, and communities. Instruction is the leading factor in student learning, with leadership being the second most important factor (Leithwood, & Jantzi, 2006). When these two factors are combined into instructional leadership, there is a very powerful force at work for student learning.

Instructional leadership is characterized as direct principal involvement in curriculum and instruction: monitoring classroom instruction and student progress and working with teachers to improve teaching and student outcomes (McKenzie & Locke, 2010). To overcome educational inequities an instructional leader focuses on equity consciousness and high quality teaching skills. This important task can be accomplished by focusing on "all" children being successful. This is a central tenet of social justice. McKenzie and Locke review relevant literature and research, including recent research on the subject of equity and how instructional and transformational leadership may overcome these inequity occurrences. The meta-analysis methods that McKenzie and Locke use in this report are widely accepted

and commonly used by scholars and academics alike. McKenzie and Locke conclude that the closer principals align themselves with the "business of teaching and learning" the more likely they will have positive impact on student outcomes.

School leaders who have an equity-focused school building focus on instruction. Three factors that contribute to equity-focused school leaders focusing on instruction include the ability to influence others to adopt instructional practices that support students' needs; the influence to change operational structures that are not in the best interest of students; and being willing to share power and champion the work of teacher leaders (James-Wilson & Hancock, 2011). Principals who possess these abilities are the leaders of change in negative equity situations. In a recent study by Edwin Javious (2009), he identified a schema for Courageous Equity Leadership that school leaders possess to lead results-driven schools. In this study, the leaders possessed skills that allowed them to capture results, develop a culture of equity and excellence, and have tightly linked coherence, congruency, and commitment as leaders. In the author's opinion, this as accomplished by improving the quality of instruction. To do this school leaders must overtly share with their staff members the fact that equity is for everyone and improving what we do is our initiative (Javious, 2009).

This section detailed instructional leadership and overcoming equity deficits. The studies that contributed to this section were empirical in nature and followed the case study approach. These studies demonstrate the practical significance of equity deficits and offer practical, if not scholarly, approaches to the issues school leaders encounter.

If principals are untrained or unfamiliar with overcoming deficits of equity, they need tools to aid them. Two available constructs for principals to use in overcoming inequity in

their schools are identifying equity traps and using equity audits. Equity traps are thinking or assumptions that prevent educators from believing that their students of color can be successful learners. These traps stop or hinder our ability to move toward equity in schooling. McKenzie and Scheurich (2004) identify equity traps and detail strategies for addressing them:

1. A deficit view based on Valencia's (1997) definition (these kids). Richard Valencia is a renowned authority on the deficit thinking worldview. School leaders need to help teachers reframe thinking (neighborhood walks). A strategy to overcome this deficit view is for educators to take neighborhood walks. Neighborhood walks involve school staff going into students' neighborhoods to establish a better rapport with students and their families.
2. Racial erasure, based on bell hook's (1994) work with Engaged Pedagogy, argues that "racism would cease to exist if everyone failed to see color" (p. 613). School leaders could have teachers conduct book studies on educating diverse races and classes or equity audits.
3. Avoidance and employment of the gaze, taken from Foucalt (1977), is when teachers try to fly under the radar from administrators and their scrutiny. Faulting other teachers for their deficit perspectives. Leaders could hire teachers with the expectation of success for ALL students.
4. Paralogical beliefs and behaviors from medical literature: exists when a conclusion is drawn from premises that logically do not warrant that conclusion. "The anger of kids has caused me to act this way." School leaders could have teachers visit other

teachers' classrooms that have found success with their type of students, using master teachers to promote success, and developing a critical mass of advocates for equity among teachers.

Ongoing identification of equity traps and resolution of these traps will ensure equity will increase. Although the equity traps detailed in McKenzie and Scheurich's research was used to improve equity for children of color in this article, for my study it could be generalized to class very easily and appropriately. Ultimately, the best route to influence teachers is through the principal who research repeatedly has shown to be the key to school change (McKenzie & Scheurich, 2004).

In equity audits, teachers, administrators, school board/community members, and policy makers identify inequalities in various aspects of their schools and systematically examine these areas and then devise ways to eliminate the inequities. Skrla et al. (2004) outline the process for using equity audits:

1. "Develop a committee of relevant stakeholders"
2. "The numbers and percentages of key indicators must be discussed by the committee"
3. "The discussion must include the gaps"
4. "The group needs to discuss potential solutions"
5. "Implementation of proposed solution"
6. "Monitor results and report results". (p. 153)

These equity audits must be used as a continuous process: they are not one-time fixes. It would behoove a principal to place this tool in his/her administrative tool belt for future use.

The concepts of equity traps and equity audits are grounded in practical and scholarly research. McKenzie and Scheurich based their research on the critical theory perspectives of hooks and Foucalt, and the conceptual framework of Valencia. Skrla et al. base their ideas of Equity Audits on the success of similar auditing frameworks used during the Civil Rights movements of the 1960s and 1970s and the curriculum auditing, and state accountability systems of the 1990s. Utilizing these strategies will provide credible and reliable results.

Simone (2012) studied how secondary principals could eliminate deficit thinking in their schools. A qualitative case study consisting of interviews, anonymous teacher surveys, and observations of two secondary principals was utilized for the study. Preliminary findings concluded that deficit thinking is defined as power imbalances, and it is beneficial to principals to understand deficit thinking as prejudices. The study also produced strategies to address deficit thinking: constant dialogue with all relevant stakeholders, increasing parent involvement, professional development, access for all students, addressing personnel with notion of eradicating deficit thinking, realistic homework practices, and democratic education focused on the whole child. I will elaborate on these strategies in the following paragraphs.

Parents also play a powerful role in the education of their children. School leaders must consider families and their children as positive resources. They must realize that families constitute the foundation for educational improvement. School leaders need to encourage parents and provide them the opportunity to participate thoroughly in the educational process. Lott (2003) discusses a number of obstacles that prohibit low socio-economic status parents' educational involvement such as: the parents believe that schools are external to their field of influence; they parents worry about teachers' reprisals if they

advocate for their children; and their economic plight (e.g., child care problems; job insecurity) creates obstacles to school participation. The roles that are afforded to these parents are usually minimal and require less substantive involvement.

Another strategy school principals could utilize would be to implement "the funds of knowledge" framework. Funds of Knowledge are defined by researchers Moll et al. (2001) as the historically accumulated and culturally developed bodies of knowledge and skills essential for household or individual functioning and well-being. If teachers visit students' homes and learn from students and their families about their culture, traditions, and life experiences, they can use these children's' funds of knowledge to connect with their children in the classroom. By focusing on what is good in their students (funds of knowledge) teachers will be promoting social justice the interaction of home and school.

Leadership styles that encourage social justice for all students are also powerful tools for addressing deficit thinking. As discussed earlier in the section on Equity and Leadership, traditional training for educational leaders perpetuates a culture that has marginalized issues and concerns of social justice. Through these programs, professors, and scholars of educational administration have the ability to shape the social justice values, stances, and skills of practicing and future administrators and scholars (Marshall, 2004). This practice takes courageous people to step outside of the norms of traditional K-12 and higher learning institutions to promote social justice.

In his qualitative study involving principals of elementary, middle, and high schools, Theoharis (2007a) interviewed individuals deeply committed to social justice leadership. He identified four strategies through which the participants enacted leadership for social justice:

increasing student academic achievement, improving the structure of schools, re-centering and strengthening staff capacity, and strengthening school culture and community. After these social justice programs were implemented, marginalized families' school involvement increased and the negative stereotypes exhibited by White, middle-class parents began to change. The school staff also encouraged participation of marginalized parents other than the conventional parent–teacher conference. In some schools and districts there is resistance to leaders that strive for social justice. Situations, incidences, issues, and people that apply pressure against leaders who are trying to enact a social-justice agenda. Theoharis' (2007b) review of pertinent social justice literature identifies some of these pressures: deficit thinking as status quo, social justice issues seldom surface in school leadership professional training, and specific national and local policies. When school leaders are aware of these internal and external pressures they can formulate a plan to circumvent these efforts to usurp their authority.

District Level Leadership.

When deficit thinking extends beyond the school building and permeates throughout a school district, a school principal can be powerless to correct it. In these instances the district superintendent must be the one to address deficit thinking and implement strategies to correct the issues of inequity. As educators move throughout their career, from teacher to principal to superintendent, pervasive deficit thinking has inundated many of them. Superintendents in districts that have a deficit perspective of poor and minority students believe they cannot change this perspective. However, when a superintendent utilizes the

power of accountability, they can accomplish a substantial displacement of deficit thinking. In a large study, Skrla & Scheurich (2001) researched four school districts with student populations ranging from 8,000 to 50,000 in Texas. The districts had all shown significant improvement on the state's standardized test for children from low-income homes. The districts had also decreased the achievement gap. One-third of the campuses had middle to high-level poverty, and the free and reduced lunch rate was greater than fifty-percent.

Sklra and Scheurich found that accountability makes educational inequity visible, state accountability reduces risk for superintendents, accountability forces superintendents to seek success exemplars, accountability develops anti-deficit leadership orientations, and accountability drives successively higher expectations. Their findings suggest that district superintendents can move toward a more equitable environment and displace deficit thinking, all because of accountability measures.

Success, Stereotype, and Teacher Perceptions

So far in this literature review I have discussed equity and deficit thinking in-depth. But the research questions deal with student background having an effect on student academic outcomes, specifically middle school educators' perceptions of these backgrounds affecting student success. Next I define what student success in middle school looks like.

Webster's dictionary defines success as a "favorable or desired outcome." Thus, student success may be defined as a favorable or desirable student outcome. Haggerty, Compton, and Hubert define student success in middle school as possessing five educational success skills (2012). These skills include the ability to organize materials and time to be productive; the ability to manage class projects, take notes, and take tests; the ability to

effectively communicate, convey, negotiate, or assert interests, desires, needs, and rights, and includes assertiveness and asking for help; the ability to articulate short- and long-term goals and the steps to reach them; and the ability to know how the school system works and what courses/credits are needed to move onto high school. Obviously, possessing these skills will garner students the ability to find success later in high school and postsecondary in career or college.

The next question concerning student success is what does it look like post-secondary? For most people the pursuit and attainment of the "American Dream" is what determines that success. The "American Dream" is the idea that anything can happen and good things might. An essential element of the American Dream is the idea that anyone can be successful (Hochchild, 1995). The assumption that the "American Dream" is achieved through hard work, prudence, and associated with virtue is false. Hochschild (year?) points out that:

> American society has erected social barriers to some (i.e., related to skin color, ethnicity, sex, sexual-orientation, and so forth), although it is fine to dream of success, not everyone can be rich and famous, hard work does not guarantee success (e.g., ask any Iowa farmer!), and the successful are no more virtuous and the unsuccessful are no less virtuous for being so. (page #?)

The belief that everyone can achieve the American Dream is a disillusioned statement, which is why deficit thinking is such a powerful factor in student success. An implicit assumption underlying deficit ideology appears to be that the opportunity structure is relatively fair, that

the playing field is relatively level, and that the system is relatively equitable; but it is not (Gorski, 2010).

If deficit thinking is essentially based on stereotype, what do stereotypes have to do with academic success for middle school students? Gorski found that research refutes virtually every common stereotype about poor people, including those that form the basis of the "culture of poverty" paradigm (2008). He notes that

> There is no evidence that poor people have weaker work ethics than their wealthier counterparts. Studies have shown consistently that low-income parents possess the same attitudes about the value of education as their wealthier peers. Drug use is distributed equally across socioeconomic brackets. Linguists have known for decades that all language varieties are highly structured with complex grammatical rules and syntaxes. (page #?)

Claude Steele (2010) is a social psychologist that studies how stereotypes affect us. He used peer-reviewed publication to link stereotype threat to poor performance, scientifically backed research that shows how stereotype threat affects educational outcomes. "Identity contingencies are conditions one has to deal with in a setting in order to function in social identities such as education, class, and race" (p. 68). This effect is not tied to students' abilities but it's almost like an intimidation factor.

In earlier sections it has been documented that students sense their teachers' perceptions of them. "When students' identities are under attack it diverts attention from the task both psychologically and physiologically, thus affecting academic outcomes (p. 126)." Students' motivation and interests are undermined by teachers' low expectations. Stereotype

threat arises when an individual becomes consumed with fear of confirming a particular stereotype by his or her own actions. The extra effort it takes students to dispel stereotype threat interferes with academic performance. The causes of underperformance are not tied to the effort but how cognitive resources are allocated during assessments. If teachers have preconceived notions about student backgrounds because of stereotypes then student outcomes can be affected by these stereotype threats.

Ready and Wright (2011) used nationally representative data and three-level hierarchical linear models to explore the links between teacher perceptions and children's socio-demographic backgrounds. "Teacher perceptions have powerful implications for children's educational experiences and future social and economic opportunities" (p. 338)." Ready and Wright employ a large and nationally representative sample from the ECLS-K. They assume that teacher perceptions even of individual children are mutable over time. Studies of teacher perceptions rarely control for objective measures of the same attribute being observed. Their analyses recognize the inherent nested nature of our questions and data. Their study examine kindergarteners because kindergarteners begin formal schooling with a relatively ''clean slate."

Teachers' perceptions influence their interactions with and expectations of their students; they drive important decisions, especially those related to student placements into academic programs; and they have meaningful consequences for children's immediate and long-term opportunities. Ready and Wright (2011) found that…

> Teachers underestimate the average low-SES child's literacy ability by roughly one-fifth standard deviation compared to a higher-SES peer. These misestimates are

> exacerbated by the fact that low-SES children are also more likely to attend low-SES classrooms. Using the same parameters defining low and high SES, on average, the literacy skills of a low-SES child in a low-SES classroom will be underestimated by over one half standard deviation compared to a high-SES child in a high-SES classroom. By most standard interpretations, this is a relatively large and meaningful difference. (p. 354)

Teacher inaccuracies flow much more from the contexts in which teachers work rather than from the socio-demographic or professional backgrounds of teachers themselves. Ready and Wright's findings relate to teacher perceptions of kindergarteners' academic competencies. They found that the contexts in which all teachers work—regardless of their social backgrounds—are more strongly associated with perceptual accuracy. This is key to my study of Title One middle schools located in rural southeastern North Carolina.

Literature Synthesis

In the following sections I will synthesize the literature previously discussed in this chapter. I have done this by combining the summaries of the sources and drawing conclusions about their relationships. I have divided the literature synthesis into two sections. Each section will detail how the literature relates to the two research questions in this study.

Research Question 1.

Research Question 1 deals with the perception of students' backgrounds by educators. Research Question 1 asks, "How do middle school educators in rural schools perceive their students' backgrounds' role in academic outcomes?" Based on the review of literature thus

far, plus my own experience, I can assuredly say that deficit thinking does occur and exists in K-12 settings throughout the United States. However, the question asks what do these particular middle school educators perceive in their schools. I synthesized the literature associated with the existence of the phenomenon and will use this synthesis to guide me while conducting this study. The literature synthesized below is all of a conceptual nature. The first research question examines and identifies the existence of a concept. Although empirical and dissertation studies would have added scholarly significance to this portion of the literature synthesis, but the lack of extant studies proved problematic with their inclusion

This study will be conducted in a rural setting in southeastern North Carolina. I included a conceptualization of the construct of deficit thinking in rural areas within this literature synthesis. None of the contemporary researchers focus on deficit thinking in rural areas in North Carolina. To better illustrate rural education and equity I included two selections from experts on these topics. Flora and Flora (2008) focus on various capitals in rural areas: natural, cultural, human, social, political, financial, and built. The authors provide the reader with a framework for understanding rural society based on the concepts and explanations of social science. Funded and staffed by community members, rural schools play an important role in orienting children with their future position in society. Howley and Howley (2010) surmise that historically and economically rural communities construct the rich and poor labels that are attributed to the students in rural schools. Although the authors do not define these practices in rural areas as deficit thinking, it is apparent to me that there is sufficient evidence to call these phenomena just that.

In order to identify the existence of deficit thinking one must first conceptualize it based on evidence. Cooper (2012), Gorski (2010), and Valencia (1997) identify contemporary deficit thinking similarly. Cooper is a researcher who came to know the phenomenon while studying limited English proficient students. He conceptualizes deficit thinking as accounting for students' academic and social struggles at school by pointing out those desirable attributes that the students or their families lack. Paul Gorski a contemporary academic and educational researcher, details deficit ideology as a remnant of the imperialist movements of colonial powers during the past 400 years of world history (2010). Valencia has been studying the phenomenon for over forty years mostly in the southwestern United States. Valencia argues that deficit thinking is a pseudoscience founded on racial and class bias. Both authors cite the Culture of Poverty and the "at-risk student" constructs for the perpetuation of deficit thinking.

The Culture of Poverty paradigm comes from Oscar Lewis (1961). This worldview concludes that poor people are unmotivated and have weak work ethics, are uninvolved in their children's learning, do not value education, are linguistically deficient, and tend to abuse drugs and alcohol. Payne (1996) draws from Oscar Lewis and other Culture of Poverty proponents in her very popular book, *A Framework for Understanding Poverty*. Both Lewis and Payne draw their conclusions based on white, upper-middle class values. They subject these values onto the poor and minority populations without valuing those populations' culture. In contrast, Gorski (2008) claims there is no such thing as a Culture of Poverty, but there is such a thing as classism. According to Gorski, classism defines students by their

weaknesses instead of their strengths. It draws on stereotypes and ignores systemic conditions.

The conceptualization of deficit thinking and its remedies by Cooper, Valencia, and Gorski has been used to create the evidences for participants of this study to identify. Payne and Lewis are not always popular in some contemporary circles, nor do I agree with them. The participants of my study may echo Payne's and Lewis' viewpoints and conclusions, thus making their inclusion here necessary. Though I agree with Cooper, Valencia, and Gorski, the participants of my study may not. It is imperative to have competing viewpoints in the Q-Sample for participants to sort to make it a reliable study.

Research Question 1 deals with whether or not the educators in the middle school have the deficit gaze or believe all students can find success in life. Educators with the deficit gaze believe that students cannot overcome their demographic makeup or background to find success in school or life. Educators without the deficit gaze believe the contrary by focusing on what is right with their students as opposed to what is wrong with them.

Whether or not educators at the middle school level have the deficit gaze or believe in asset thinking is the focus of Research Question 1. I have focused on the polar opposite approaches of deficit thinking because that is what is chiefly found in the literature. Either as a proponent of it or someone that believes that it is the problem and not the solution. There are certainly gray areas in this field of research that will be illuminated during this study and will provide rich robust data points.

Research Question 2.

Research Question 2 deals with what has contributed to the development and persistence of perceptions by middle school educators. Research Question 2 asks, "What factors have contributed to the development and persistence of the perceptions of middle school educators?"

The literature that supports or illuminates the deficit gaze is composed of conceptual and empirical studies. As noted previously, Ruby Payne is a perpetuator of the deficit gaze. Payne (1996) asserts that hidden rules are class bound, originate from cause and effect situations, and serve as survival mechanisms. She also claims that poor and minority students lack access to the formal register of language the one used in school and middle class life. Bomer et al. (2009) agree that poverty and social class impact children and educators, and they must understand that impact. However, they found that teachers with a deficit perspective lower the quality of education and give less instruction to poor children. This construct is sometimes referred to as the Pedagogy of Poverty (Habberman, 1991).

According to Singam (2010), higher socio-economic status does have its advantages in favor of higher educational outcomes. The failure to recognize that as a reality is a thinking deficit. It is also a thinking deficit to ignore the reality that family does make a difference in academic achievement. Family does have a powerful influence on academic performance. Singam concludes that a more wealthy and supportive family background will provide their offspring with better educational attainment than the contrary. Although Payne and Singham are mostly conceptual in nature, they do illuminate the plight of socio-economic status in educational terms. Payne is from an upper class background and she has

become wealthy from her educational company aha Inc. Singam is an award winning Indian physicist who comes from a wealthy, educated background. It is interesting to consider the extent to which their perceptions might be different if they had been born into different families with impoverished backgrounds? The two authors perpetuate the Culture of Poverty paradigm of Oscar Lewis and others of the 1960s and 1970s. Garcia and Guerra (2004) contend that deficit thinking permeates society, thus schools and teachers mirror these beliefs. This is similar to the "blame the victim" of the same era as illuminated by Valencia (1997).

In the review of literature I presented two empirical studies that shed light on why the deficit gaze perpetuates. The Hart & Risley (1995) study found that while children usually begin language development around the same age, their vocabulary growth depended on the amount that their parents talked to them. Hart & Risley concluded that children of professional parents grew more vocabulary than the children of working class and welfare class counterparts because their parents talked to them more. The study also concluded that these parents encouraged their children more while parents from lower socio-economic backgrounds discouraged their children more. Although this study is widely accepted it does have its critics. In a counter study, Dudley-Marling and Lucas (2009) provide evidence that the findings of the Hart & Risley literacy study of poor children and their families is unwarranted. Dudley-Marling and Lucas claim the study had methodological flaws, ethnocentric bias, and failed to make explicit the theory of language and culture that frames their analysis. They posit that the acceptance of this study by mainstream education is emblematic of the trend to embrace a deficit stance that pathologizes the language and

culture of children living in poverty. The Hart & Risley study reinforces the upper and middle class values and norms associated with Payne and other deficit thinking perpetuators. Ready and Wright (2011) used nationally representative data and three-level hierarchical linear models to explore the links between teacher perceptions and children's socio-demographic backgrounds.

The literature that supports the idea that all students have inherent strengths and values was summarized earlier in this chapter and was composed of conceptual and empirical studies. The conceptual studies of Nieto (2010) and Delpit (2005) as well as the empirical studies of Moll et al. (1992) and Dudley-Marling and Lucas (2009) shed light on how educators can resist deficit discourses that pathologize the culture, language, and family make-up of children living in poverty. Both Nieto and Delpit agree that educators cannot fall back on deficit theories and continue to blame students, their families, and their communities. By focusing instead on instructional practices and policies, educators can make a huge difference in the education of poor children.

Moll et al. (1992) have a similar take on the subject but take a more hands-on approach. They encourage educators to visit homes and learn from students and their families about their culture, traditions, and life experiences. These educators can then use these funds of knowledge to connect with the children in their classrooms. While they focus on teachers in their study, the practice can easily be generalized to all educators: administrators, counselors, support staff, and teacher assistants. Dudley-Marling and Lucas (2009) found that students enter school with extraordinary linguistic, cultural, and intellectual resources. These resources are not always present in the results of standardized test scores. The teacher must

draw on these resources to support learning in the classroom and acquisition of school values. Claude Steele used peer-reviewed publications to link stereotype threat to poor performance. His scientifically backed research shows how stereotype threat affects educational outcomes. Again although this study focuses on teachers, this practice can easily be generalized to other educators. I know many educators that follow these practices outlined here and believe they help students overcome humble beginnings to find success in school and life.

Chapter Summary

In this chapter, I constructed this review by examining examined the most current conceptual/theoretical, empirical, and dissertation studies related to deficit thinking in schools. First, I summarized the literature. Then I critiqued the appropriateness of research methods as well as critiqued practical and scholarly significance of the research. I examined equity in schools and the interplay of equity and place. Next I discussed how equity plays a role in student success. There were seven themes that emerged from the literature related to deficit thinking: the concept of deficit thinking, the culture of poverty, at-risk students, the Ruby Payne phenomenon, student interactions with deficit thinking, teacher interactions with deficit thinking, and school leadership interactions with deficit thinking. I then synthesized the current literature as it related to each of this study's research questions.

Many research studies were reviewed concerning equity, leadership, and deficit thinking. From this lengthy list of research (see Appendix A), it is evident that gaps still exist in the body of literature. Most of the studies were conducted in urban areas. Most studies consisted of case studies and surveys. Most of the studies had units of analysis that

were relatively small. None of the studies investigated or reported the perceptions of educators in rural middle schools in southeastern North Carolina. The identification of these gaps and my personal interest in deficit thinking leads me to inquire: How do middle school educators in rural schools their students' backgrounds' role in academic outcomes? What factors have contributed to the development and persistence of these perceptions?

In the next chapter I will detail the procedure of the research methodology that I have used to answer the research questions. To accomplish this task I used Q-methodology. I discussed the background and rationale for using Q-methodology. Next I explained how the Q-statements were created and who comprised the P-sample. I described both the quantitative and qualitative portions of the data collection and analysis. Lastly I detailed my personal subjectivity for the study, as well as the limitations and ethical considerations for the study.

Chapter 3

Methodology

Introduction

The purpose of this Q-methodology study was to understand educators' perceptions of their students' backgrounds in their middle school. The primary research question for this study was, how do middle school educators in rural schools perceive their students' backgrounds role in academic outcomes? The secondary research question for this study, what factors have contributed to the development and persistence of these perceptions?

The research questions deal with the perceptions of the participants. Q-methodology was the tool used to answer the research questions. The choice to use this form of methodology was made because it allows the researcher to gather the participant's subjective thoughts. Subjectivity is nothing more than a person's point of view (McKeown & Thomas, 1988). Q-methodology is a mixed-methods approach that combines the power of statistical factor analysis with subjective, contextual opinions of participants (Roberts, 2007).

Q-Methodology

Q-methodology was used to conduct this study and answer the research questions. William Stephenson began using Q-methodology in 1935. Stephenson was interested in providing a way to reveal the subjectivity in any situation. He took his mentor Charles Spearman's method of factor analysis and inverted the traditional "R" approach to factor analysis by exploring the "person" and not the "variable" (Militello & Benham, 2010). Q-methodology uses a sort technique that involves the rank ordering of a set of statements from

agree to disagree. Its purpose is to reveal subjective structures, attitudes, and perspectives from the standpoint of the person or person's being observed (Brown, 1996).

Q-methodology has been considered a quantitative method for analyzing qualitative data (McKeown & Thomas, 1988). This methodology starts with the formulation of the Q sample, which comes from individuals with experience and expertise with the phenomenon being studied. The information garnered from these individuals may come from interviews or examination of extant literature and theory relevant to the topic. The Q sample is comprised of forty to eighty items; this number will be reduced and refined through a piloting process described later in this chapter (Watts & Stenner, 2012). Next, the P sample or participants sort the statements based on their level of agreement. In Q-methodology participants have the status of variables instead of sample items, thus it does not require a randomly generated P sample (Militello & Janson, 2007).

Once the sorting has taken place in the data collection phase, the data analysis occurs in two phases. Phase I consists of the Q sorts being factor analyzed for inter-correlations. These factor arrays are then interpreted through examining and comparing to identify the factors that are used to draw conclusions. Phase II consists of the qualitative portion that occurs after the sort. In this phase the investigator interviews individuals that loaded on certain factors and asks clarifying questions regarding the way the sort occurred. As with all research studies, subjectivity, limitations, and ethical issues arise. Later in this chapter I will detail how these issues will be eliminated.

In the following sections I will describe how each step of the research study was conducted using Q-methods.

Concourse Development

The ability to communicate is the foundation of human endeavor, the essence that separates us from our mammal cousins through the articulation of thoughts into speech, art, and written words. Stephenson defined these concepts through his concourse theory of subjective communicability (1978). Concourse can be summarized as the components of conversations, discussions, and private thoughts. There exists a concourse for every one of these concepts when viewed through subjectivity (Watts & Stenner, 2012). This concourse development is found at the very heart of Q-methodology, the Q-Sample. The concourse is structured in such a way to answer the research questions of the study, so the Q-sample must be constructed to serve that end. According to Brown (1993), "It is Q-methodology's task to reveal the inherent structure of a concourse…the thoughts that sustain it and in turn are sustained by it" (p. 94).

Development of the Q-Sample

The research questions for this study focused on understanding teacher perceptions of their students' backgrounds and their school. These types of research questions suggested a more personal touch, inviting participants to tell us what a topic meant to them, especially in terms of a certain situation (Watts & Stenner, 2012). The Q-sample or Q-set consisted of a set of statements that allowed participants to identify with objects, concepts, descriptions, and behaviors. Two characteristics of the Q-set were coverage and balance (2012).

In order to ensure these two characteristics are met, I have used a naturalistic concourse theory creation method. "The advantage of using naturalistic Q-samples is two-fold: (1) they mirror the opinions of the persons performing the Q-sorts, and (2) they expedite

both the Q-sorting process and the respondent's construction of meaning." (McKeown & Thomas, 1988, p. 25). The Q-statements were generated from two data sources.

First, interviews were conducted with twelve educators with middle school experience. These educators consisted of one teacher, one teacher assistant, four school-level administrators, one guidance counselor, two curriculum specialists, and three district-level administrators. These educators were asked to describe their relationship with students and the students' backgrounds. Additionally, I asked these educators questions pertaining to students' backgrounds and educational attainment. Interview questions included:

1. How does a student's background affect his/her learning?
2. When is the student's background beneficial to the student's learning?
3. When is the student's background detrimental to the student's learning?
4. What does "ALL students learn" mean to you?

After interviewing this group of educators I interpreted their responses by searching for patterns in the evidence and data. These patterns were coded for emerging themes; these emerging themes were then used to create the Q-statements for this study.

Typically, interviews in a research study fall under the auspices of the Institutional Review Board (IRB). Q-methodology is rooted in communication theory or as Stephenson said, "the sharing of knowledge" (Stephenson, 1982, p. 237). To understand the viewpoints of the experts in the field of study you must discuss with them the phenomenon. These viewpoints were be combined with the relevant literature to create the concourse statements or Q-sample. Since I am trying to understand their views and will not directly quote them in

the study, IRB approval will not be sought or needed to conduct the concourse statement generation interviews.

The second step in the concourse development is to review the relevant literature on the topic of deficit thinking and the interaction with educatators. I reviewed conceptual, empirical, and dissertation texts and studies on these topics. I constructed a literature review table (Appendix A) to summarize the type of study, the research methodology, and key findings or conclusions drawn from each study. From this table, I searched for patterns in the evidence and data. These patterns were coded for emerging themes; these emerging themes will be combined with the themes from Phase I to be used to create the Q-statements for this study.

The final Q-sample must enable the participants to answer the research questions (Watts & Stenner, 2012). To do this I utilized Fisher's (1960) "balanced-block approach" to experimental design to develop forty Q-statements (2012). The Q-set was then organized relative to four categories: existence of deficit thinking, all students can learn, deficit gaze determines perceptions, and leadership interplay with deficit thinking. The statements were then winnowed into these four categories. I took the statements from the interviews and the literature that met the criteria of the four categories above. Appendix B details how Statement 6 was created using the two data sources. From those two lists I created forty-three initial concourse statements see Appendix C for the list of these statements.

I asked the participants of the survey to review the statements for clarity and consistency, see Appendix D: Questions for Concourse Clarification and Development by Middle School Educators. Of the original twelve participants, five agreed to provide

feedback. Those five consisted of Curriculum Specialist 1, Teacher, School Level Administrator 2, District Level Administrator 2, and District Level Administrator 3.

Question one dealt with statement clarity, all five participants suggested to change "limit" in Statement 31 to "limited." The Teacher and School Level Administrator 2 suggested adding "if" between "even and their" in Statement 21. The Teacher thought that Statement 10 would read better with the word "employ" in place of "include." She additionally felt that Statements 5 and 16 needed "school" and "home' clarified in the context of the statement.

Question two dealt with the similarity of statements and the possibility of combining statements. All participants except the School Level Administrator 2 decided that Statements 3 and 4 should be combined. Curriculum Specialist 1, District Level Administrator 2, and District Level Administrator 3 also felt that Statements 7 and 8, 22 and 23, and 32 and 34 should be combined. I agreed with combing Statements 22 and 23, and 32 and 34. I decided that Statements 7 and 8 were two independent concepts and reworded them to differentiate between the two instead of combining them.

Question three dealt with removing statements from the list that were not needed. None of the five participants decided there were any statements that needed to be completely removed. Question four dealt with adding statements to the list that were needed but not present. None of the five participants determined that there were statements that needed to be added to the list. After taking into account the feedback of the survey participants the initial forty-three statements were winnowed to forty statements. Table 3.1 comprises the complete final list of Q-statements.

Table 3.1

Final Q-Sample Statements

#	Final Statement
1	I must understand how language plays a role in my students' success.
2	It is important to know how family cultures influence student motivation to learn.
3	I know that children are products of their home environment
4	I understand the context or setting of a school (e.g., urban, rural, Title 1) can influence how students see themselves.
5	I understand the selection process of school programs can influence how students see themselves.
6	It is important to ensure that the setting where students congregate within the school building (e.g., in classrooms, cafeteria, after school activities) does not determine the success of my students.
7	It is important to ensure that the culture within the school building related to socioeconomic status does not determine the success of my students.
8	It is important for me to take the time to listen and learn from students about their experiences.
9	I must employ multiple strategies to include parents in the child's education.
10	I must honor the multiple forms of literacy (e.g., storytelling, multicultural, technological) that my students possess.
11	Students must feel loved by the adults in their schools to be successful academically.

Table 3.1 Continued

12	Students must trust and be trusted by the adults in their schools to be successful academically.
13	I must honor the values that students receive from their families.
14	I know that working class parents prepare their children for school (e.g., exposing them to skilled trades, work ethic through going to work each day).
15	I know that when children are harmed by life (i.e. abuse or abandonment) they cannot perform at the same level as other children.
16	I know that when education is not valued in the home students cannot perform at the same level as other children.
17	I understand that at home students may not be passive bystanders as they are at school.
18	I understand that in their homes students may be motivated to learn and play by their interests and questions unlike in school.
19	I know students' linguistic deficiencies come from parents' inability to provide language
20	I know that students can find success in school even if their parents or siblings could not.
21	I know students should not be considered at-risk for school failure just because they lack material wealth.

Table 3.1 Continued

22	I know a school community should not be considered at-risk for school failure just because it lacks material wealth.
23	I know a student's social worth comes from their exposure to people, places,
25	I know that lack of parental support for low socioeconomic students is sometimes caused by parents need to work and support the family (i.e. multiple jobs, extended family concerns)
26	I know that lack of parental support for low socioeconomic students may not be caused by the attitudes and values of their impoverished community.
27	I know that lack of parental support for low socioeconomic students is may not be caused by parent linguistic deficiencies.
28	I know that students can overcome motivational challenges that stem from their disadvantaged experiences (i.e. parents did not complete high school, have to work inside or outside home)
29	I know that students with limited exposure to academic vocabulary in their homes
30	I understand when my students know I believe in them they are motivated to learn.
31	I understand when I show my students that I will go the extra mile for them they are
32	I show my students I care about them by my work ethic.
33	I know school leaders can improve student outcomes by creating relationships with all stakeholders.

Table 3.1 Continued

34	I know school leaders can assist teachers with developing an inclusive school culture for ALL students.
36	I must consider what is "right" with my students instead of what is "wrong" because every child can learn.
37	I know that high expectations for ALL students no matter where they begin will allow them to experience success.
38	I must ensure the equity of education for ALL my students so that they can achieve at their own rate
39	I must create strong positive relationships with students to ensure their academic success.
40	I must learn from my students to know how to best serve them academically.

Participants: P-Sample

The research sites for this study were middle schools located in rural, southeastern North Carolina. The middle schools were chosen based on specific demographic conditions such as socio-economic status of the students and the presence of a diverse student population. The locations of the sites were based on my accessibility to the site. I have professional contacts in the school districts that contained the research sites. Through this network and former working relationships with school district administrators I sought permission from the local school board. I used the various petition processes for each school

board in conjunction with the North Carolina State University Institutional Review Board. Table 3.2 details the research sites for this study. Some of the faculty and staff of the school served as the participants or P-Sample for this Q-methodology study. These sites were located in a rural area of southeastern North Carolina. These schools have diverse populations and receive Title 1 funding under the ESEA, which is indicative of low socio-economic status for an area. Title 1 funding is calculated based on the percentage of students that qualify for Free or Reduced Lunch Rate.

Table 3.2.

Research sites for this study

School	Student Population	Number of Classroom Teachers	Number of Participants in the Study from this site	White-Black Achievement Gap Reading and Math (2012-2013)	White-Hispanic Achievement Gap Reading and Math (2012-2013)
AMS	538	32	4	22.3%	16.5%
BMS	592	39	4	21.7%	21.5%
CMS	221	16	5	3.7%	-6%
DMS	520	32	13	12.6%	-1.6%
EMS	382	22	5	6.7%	-4.2%

For Q-methodology to be optimized to its fullest potential, participants must be chosen that have a defined viewpoint to express; these viewpoints matter in relation to the subject at hand (Watts & Stenner, 2012). Patton (2002) refers to this type of sampling as purposeful. According to Patton, the typical sample would be the average person, situation, and/or instance of the phenomenon of interest (1990). The topic of interest for this study was of course educators' perceptions their students. Q-methodology does not require large numbers of participants. The general rule for a P-sample is at least half the number of the Q-Sample. In this study with a Q-set of forty, the P-sample was thirty-one thus exceeding the general rule requirement.

The P-sample consisted of twenty-six females and five males. Of those participants eight had worked at their school for four or fewer years; eight had worked at their school for five to nine years; eight had worked at their school for ten to fourteen years; and seven had worked at their school fifteen or more years. The bulk of the participants were teachers, twenty-four of them. Two participants were administrators. Four participants were counselors or certified specialists. One participant was a paraprofessional. The average experience level working within middle school education was 8.7 years. With twenty-six years being the most experience in middle school and one year being the fewest number of years in middle school education.

Data Collection: Protocol

The data collection phase of this research study was conducted in two phases. The first phase was the quantitative phase whereby the Q-sort and post-sort interviews were conducted. The data taken from the Q-sort was input into the computer software program

PQMethod. This program interpreted the statistics from the Q-sorts and identified important factors. The second phase of data collection was the qualitative portion of Q-methodology. After the data was processed through PQMethod factors were identified. Participants that loaded on certain factors were then interviewed in one-on-one interviews or in three person focus group interviews. This depended on the participant's proximity to the other participants that loaded on the same factor. The sites were spread among four counties in rural, southeastern North Carolina. The distance did necessitate the use of one-on-one interviews in some instances when applicable. The qualitative portion served to provide additional support to the quantitative data.

Phase I: Quantitative Section.

The Q-sort followed Brown's (1993) procedure. The respondents were given a pack of randomly numbered cards based on the Q-set. The respondents ranked the cards from "most to most." The respondents will be provided a score sheet (Figure 3.1) using a continuum from strongly agree to strongly disagree, based on the number of Q-statements. Appendix E contains Card Sort Instructions. After the respondent completed the sort, he or she then completed a short post-sort interview. The respondents were asked to elaborate on their salient points and why they chose the various rankings.

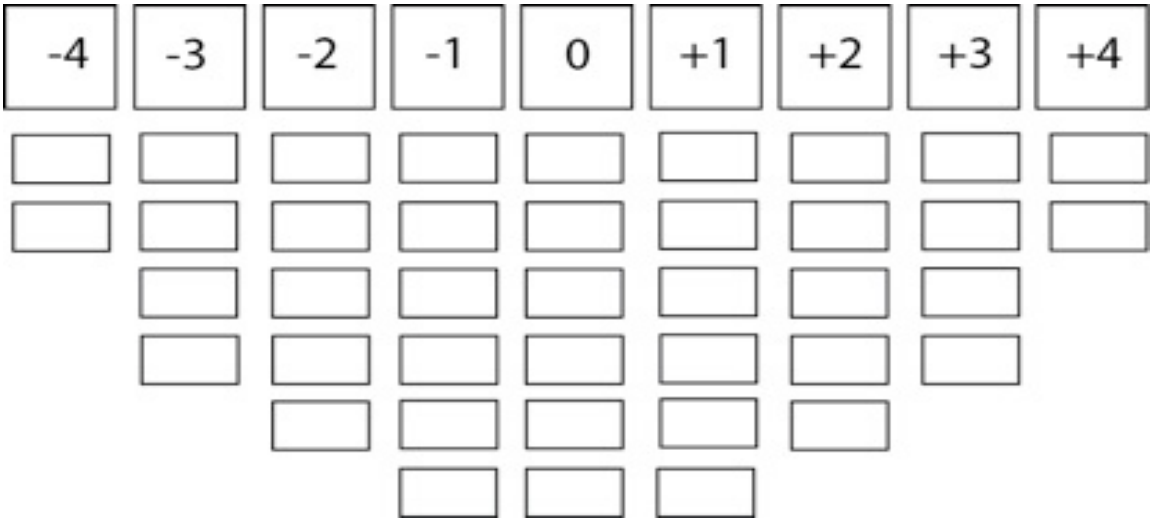

Figure 3.1. Q-Sort Distribution Grid

Phase II: Qualitative Section.

Yin (2009) states that there are six commonly used sources of evidence. For the qualitative portion of this study, the primary sources of evidence were interviews. A challenge in research studies is managing the quantity of data collected (Crichton & Childs, 2005). To ensure the data is managed properly and securely, I utilized the Apple iPad Dragon Dictation application to record and transcribe interviews and back up my data to my Google Drive from my NCSU email account. This virtual data system had limitless space to hold any information.

For the collection of qualitative data I used one-on-one and focus group interviews. I conducted interviews because they yield targeted and insightful evidence. I interviewed nine respondents from phase I based on the loading of certain factors using the interview questions found in Appendix G. Proximity determined whether each factor was examined by one-on-one and/or focus group interviews. A focus group interview brings several different

perspectives into focus through a process that is open and emergent (Maykut & Morehouse, 1994). The lists of interview/focus group questions were based on the study's research questions.

Data Analysis

To answer the research questions, the collected data was analyzed in two phases. In Phase I or the quantitative phase, the data from the Q-sorts was entered into a statistical computer software program PQMethod to identify factors. In Phase II or the qualitative phase, the post-sort interview responses, one-on-one interview, and focus group interview responses were analyzed using constant comparative analysis.

Phase I: Quantitative Section.

Factor Analysis.

There are essentially three statistical procedures calculated during Q-methodology: correlation, factor analysis, and computation of factor scores. As noted earlier Stephenson constructed a factor analysis process to measure subjectivity, to do so he substituted portions of R-method to found Q-method. Q- method differs by focusing on correlation and factoring of persons (factor scores), as opposed to R-method that focuses on tests, traits, and the like (factor loadings) (Brown, 1993; McKeown & Thomas, 1988). In Q-methodology one might infer these processes were inverses of each other but they are not, the difference is the Q-sort. Once the Q-sort has been collected and correlated the mathematics are identical to R-method (1988).

In Q-methodology it is the Q-sorts that are factor analyzed for inter-correlations rather than the opinion statements (Militello & Janson, 2007). The statistical software program will identify factors. People with similar views will share the same factor. These similarities will reveal the level of perceptions that the P-sample has regarding the phenomenon. In the following list, van Exel and de Graaf (2005, pp. 8-9) detail the basic steps of the analysis of the Q-sorts.

1. The correlation matrix of all Q-sorts is calculated.
2. The correlation matrix is subjected to factor analysis (people with similar views will share the same factor).
3. The original set of factors is then rotated to arrive at a final set of factors. This rotation is objective according to some statistical principle (Varimax).
4. Calculation of factor scores and difference scores: Factor scores are a factor's composite Q-sort based on the z-score that can be attributed to the quasi-normal distribution. The difference score points out the salient statements that deserve special attention in describing and interpreting the factors.
5. Finally, the explanations from the post-sort interviews can be helpful in interpreting the factors.

Forty statements were used for this study of which factors were determined. The statistical significance for this study was determined using 95% and 99% as confidence intervals. For the 95% confidence interval, the standard error equation was ($1/\sqrt{N}$ 1.96). N will equal the total number of statements; in this study N is 40. The significance level at the 95% confidence interval equaled .3099. The standard deviation was $p<.05$. For the 99%

confidence interval, the standard error equation was (1/√N 2.58). The significance level at the 99% confidence interval equaled .4079. The standard deviation was $p<.01$.

Quantitative Research Validity and Reliability.

Validity and reliability of research findings are central components and expected pieces of a quantitative research process. In qualitative research trustworthiness and credibility are the benchmarks for this form of research. Validity and reliability are important in proving R-methodological findings. The R-scale or instrument is said to be valid if it successfully measures what it claims to (Watts & Stenner, 2012). An extension of that is reliability when those results are reproducible given the exact conditions. Reliability in Q-methodology is viewed somewhat differently. There is no true reliability of the process the person's viewpoint or the emergence of similar factors may become reliable (Thomas & Bass, 1993). Validity is measured by an outside criterion, since there is no criterion for subjectivity, validity is not relevant to Q-methodology (Brown, 1980). The success of Q-methodology is much like R-methodology it measures what it claims, viewpoints and perspectives of respondents.

Phase II: Qualitative Section.

During the second phase of the data analysis, the qualitative data was examined and analyzed. The post-sort interview responses, one-on-one interviews, and focus group interview responses were analyzed to provide additional insights that the quantitative portion of the study could not reveal. I used constant comparison analysis as a method because it was appropriate to answer general or overarching questions of data (Leech & Onwuegbuzie, 2007). I utilized the following steps to complete the constant comparative analysis:

1. Read through the entire set of data.
2. Chunked the data into smaller meaningful parts.
3. Labeled each chunk with a descriptive title or code.
4. Grouped codes by similarities.
5. Identified themes and document based on grouping.

Use of constant comparative analysis allowed me to better understand the phenomenon of deficit thinking. The themes identified were discussed in detail based on the review of literature, and conclusions will be drawn later in this Chapter's 4 and 5.

Qualitative Research Validity and Reliability.

Researchers can assess local events accurately to improve short-run control, or they can develop explanatory concepts, which will help people use their heads to draw conclusions (Cronbach, 1975). Valid and reliable qualitative research can meet both of these goals (Merriam, 1998). I used qualitative strategies from Merriam that enhance internal validity. Merriam defines internal validity as how research findings match reality (1998). Table 3.3 details strategies to enhance internal validity, their definition and their evidence of use in the study. These include triangulation, member checks, and the researcher's biases.

Table 3.3

Strategies to Enhance Internal Validity

Strategy	Definition	Evidence
Triangulation	Using multiple sources of data	Q-sorts, interviews, and

Table 3.3 Continued

Member Checks	Taking data and interpretations back to participants and see if results are plausible	Interview and focus group participants
Researcher's Biases	Clarifying the researcher's assumptions, worldview, and theoretical orientation	These declarations will be made clear in the subjectivity statement, limitations of the study, and the ethical considerations in the methods chapter.

To enhance the reliability of the study so that generalizability will increase, I provided rich, thick descriptions for readers. Readers need this type of description to construct meaning in their minds eye. It was important to present a holistic interpretation of what has happened for the reader. I also used reflexivity to ensure rigor in my study. Reflexivity is a process whereby researchers place themselves and their practices under scrutiny, acknowledging the ethical dilemmas that permeate the creation of knowledge (McGraw et al., 2000). What sorts of factors influence the construction of knowledge and how these influences are revealed in the planning, conducting, and writing up of the research is based on this critical reflection (Guillemin & Gillam, 2004). I accomplished this through member checks and triangulation.

The quantitative data from Phase I and the qualitative data from Phase II were combined to paint a picture of the phenomenon of deficit thinking and its interaction with school leadership. Q-methodology brings a sense of coherence to research questions that have many potentially complex and socially contested answers (Watts & Stenner, 2005). The marriage of these two methodologies provides robust descriptions resulting in powerful stories of explanation.

Subjectivity Statement

As an educator I believe it is my job to construct meaning out of reality for our students, and as a K-12 administrator to do the same for staff members and our community. I have always been a proponent of using the "5 R's" in education: rigor, relevance, relationship, research, and results. I believe that all children can and will learn given the proper instruction for their academic level in a caring and student-centered environment. This education should be delivered by professionals who make learning relevant to their lives; create relationships with students; and give students rigorous learning activities that follow research based practices and yield the results to ensure these students will be able to lead a sustainable and moral life. This education should be evaluated through a critical lens to ensure that all students are treated equitably. As an educational leader it is my job to ensure that this type of education can be evidenced in every classroom, school building, and school district that I work. I take this charge seriously and will work tenaciously to ensure its accomplishment. I hope to use what I have learned through the course of this study in my doctoral program to create a better educational experience for students and teachers.

In this study I had to recognize potential biases that I have concerning deficit thinking. I have experienced deficit thinking as a student, teacher, and administrator in K-12 settings. As a student I experienced deficit thinking based on the fact that I came from a single parent, lower socio-economic household and attended three elementary schools in two years. The community where I attended high school held the community where I was reared in low regard. Later when I became the only Anglo American teacher in a predominantly African American middle school, I had to overcome the perceptions of the staff and community as a white educator. During this time I also had to deal with my own deficit gaze perspective being from a rural environment and teaching in an urban one. Once I became an administrator I was shocked at the manner in which teachers and staff members talked to- and about- students they deemed "those students." As a teacher I was solely focused on my classroom and thus in my own little world, protected from the negativity of other educators. As an administrator I had to challenge those views for the betterment of our school.

The deficit views held by the staff, community, and in some cases the students contradicted my philosophy of education. This personal philosophy is founded in my limited knowledge of the concepts of critical social theory. Critical social theory uses a multi-disciplinary framework to advance the emancipatory function of knowledge (Leonardo, 2004). Critical social theory focuses on critical pedagogy with an analysis of world events, controversial issues, and diversity to provide a vision for better world and social change. "Quality education is not something that teachers provide it is the product of a struggle during the pedagogical interaction where both teacher and students play the role of critic"

(Leonardo, 2004, p. 16). Paulo Freire, Antonio Gramsci, and Pierre Bourdieu are major contributors to the creation and influence of critical social theory.

Paulo Freire's belief of educating the poor goes hand in hand with the concept of overcoming deficit thinking. He fought for the rights of poor citizens in Brazil and other countries of South America. The central theme of Freire's pedagogy is the practice of conscientization. This critical consciousness also includes taking action against the oppressive elements in one's life that are illuminated by that understanding (Freire, 1970). Teachers are not abstracted from their praxis and articulation of people's worth and ability to know and change the world (Weiler, 1991). People are conditioned by economic structures, not determined by them. Teachers can reinforce dominant and hegemonic value systems, or they can challenge them. They can fight to keep dreams and the concept of utopia alive for students (Jackson, 2007). Freire put the ability to overcome class issues in the hands of teachers (2005). As most educators believe, classroom teachers have the power to help students overcome obstacles. The challenge for educators is how to ensure that teachers with deficit thinking do not stand in their way.

Antonio Gramsci was an Italian scholar who fought for workers' rights throughout his homeland. His best-known contribution to critical thought was his theoretical work with hegemony (Gross, 2011). Gramsci defines hegemony as the ways that ruling groups maintain order through consent rather than coercion. Through critical education, people can be helped to question the legitimacy of these ruling groups (Gramsci, 1971). A counterhegemonic education can illuminate the potential of poor students suffering under the

cloud of deficit thinking. Gramsci's theories offer insights into the means to counteract deficit thinking in schools.

Pierre Bourdieu was a French educational philosopher who overcame a humble beginning to rise to the pinnacle of the French intellectual system. His main contribution to critical theory was the interlinked concepts of habitus, capital, and field (Levinson, 2011). Bourdieu focuses on the symbolic mechanisms that inequality produced and legitimized. According to Bourdieu, the process of schooling imposes a kind of symbolic violence on students of lower social standing (Bourdieu & Passeron, 1977). Utilizing Bourdieu's theory, this study will provide insights into the reproductive tendencies of formal schooling and the difficulties of social transformation to overcome deficit thinking in schools.

In order to perform this Q-methodology study I had to remain a conscientious and objective researcher. I had to discreetly avoid my predisposition for deficit thinking. This was a challenge for me, but in the interest of completing a valid, reliable and credible study it was imperative for me to resist these thoughts. It is important for the reader of this study to understand my experiences dealing with deficit thinking. Understanding my background will allow the reader insight into the importance of this work.

Limitations of the Study

Although Q-methodology is an accepted form of research methodology, it is not without its limitations. Militello & Benham (2010) detail the limitations of using Q-methodology. The pre-determination of the statements may limit the number of accounts available to respondents. As with all research studies, Q-methodology relies on the integrity and honesty of participants. The number of uncertain responses is limited by the forced

distribution required by this methodology. Additionally, due to the small sample size there may be questions of reliability and generalizability. One important aspect of reliability found in Q-methodology is replicability. According to Brown (1980), there are only a distinct number of viewpoints on any topic. Any well-founded Q-study could then replicate those viewpoints with different P-samples.

As a novice researcher there are also many limitations I bring to this study. One limitation is my inexperience using Q-methodology; this was my first experience using this approach. The proximity to the phenomenon by myself (both in locale and feeling) may affect how I interpret and collect the data. A final limitation of the study could be the weakness of evidence. Evidence sometimes has limited access because of moral and legal obligations of the possessor of the evidence and the potential reader. Interviews may be limited by bias, inaccuracies, and reflexivity. Although I attempted to safeguard the study from these limitations, some will exist in the final product. Finally, as with any research methodology, time was a limitation.

Ethical Considerations for the Study

When one studies the subjectivity of human beings, he must ensure protection of those subjects from harm. Harm may come in the forms of personal injury, coercion, violation of constitutional rights, financial, and employment. This study will fall under the auspices of the North Carolina State University Institutional Review Board. I followed all policies and procedures set forth by the Institutional Review Board while I conducted this Q-methodology study. Participants were asked to review and sign a statement of consent. These statements gave information about and explained the expectations of my study. See

Appendix I. for the statement of consent for the card sort and Appendix J. for the statement of consent for the post-sort survey. Additionally I sought permission from the local school board. I did this through the various petition processes for each school board in conjunction with the North Carolina State University Institutional Review Board.

Chapter Summary

In this chapter I have detailed the research methodology that I used to answer the research questions. To accomplish this task I used Q-methodology. I discussed the background and rationale for using Q-methodology. Later, I explained how the Q-statements were created and who comprised the P-sample. I described both the quantitative and qualitative portions of the data collection and analysis. My personal subjectivity related to deficit thinking and the limitations of this study were then discussed. Lastly, I detailed ethical considerations for the study. In Chapter 4 I have detailed the quantitative and qualitative results of the study.

Chapter 4

Findings

Introduction

The purpose of this Q-methodology study was to understand educators' perceptions of their students' backgrounds in their middle school. The primary research question for this study was, how do middle school educators in rural schools perceive their students' backgrounds? The secondary research question for this study was what factors have contributed to the development and persistence of those perceptions?

This chapter details the results of this Q-methodological study. First is a review of the procedures that were used to determine the data that were used to answer the research questions. Next, the quantitative portion of the study will be detailed. The data were loaded into a software program called PQMethod. This program determined the correlation matrix that allowed for the factor analysis and the determination of factor loadings. The final portion of this chapter will detail the qualitative portion of the study. Data were gleaned from the post-sort interviews, one-on-one interviews, and focus group interviews to name and define the factors. The first hand accounts of participants painted robust descriptions that helped to explain the answers to the research questions.

The data taken from the thirty-one Q-sorts were put into the computer software program PQMethod. This program interpreted the statistics from the Q-sorts and identified important factors. The second phase of data collection was the qualitative portion of Q-methodology. After the data were processed through PQMethod, factors were identified. Participants that loaded on certain factors were then interviewed in one-on-one interviews or

in three person focus group interviews. This depended on the participant's proximity to the other participants that loaded on the same factor. The sites were spread among four counties in rural, southeastern North Carolina. The distance between participants did necessitate the use of one-on-one interviews in some instances when applicable. The qualitative portion served to provide additional support to the quantitative data.

P-Sample, Q-Sample, and Coding

The participants for this study were from middle schools located in rural, southeastern North Carolina. The middle schools were chosen based on specific demographic conditions such as socioeconomic status of the students and the presence of a diverse student population. The locations of the sites were based on my accessibility to them. I had professional contacts in the school districts that contained the research sites; this aided in my access.

Thirty-one individuals participated in the P-sample, which consisted of twenty-six females and five males. Of those participants, eight had worked at their school for four or fewer years; eight had worked at their school for five to nine years; eight had worked at their school for ten to fourteen years; and seven had worked at their school fifteen or more years. The bulk of the participants were teachers, twenty-four of them. Two participants were administrators. Four participants were counselors or certified specialists. One participant was a paraprofessional. The average experience level working within middle school education was 8.7 years, with twenty-six years being the most experience and one year being the fewest number of years in middle school education.

Of the thirty-one participants, all but one loaded on one of the three factors that were used for the study. Fourteen participants loaded on Factor 1, "Compassion of Educator Motivates "Whole Child" to Succeed." Eleven participants loaded on Factor 2, "Authentic Understanding Between Home Life and School Life Leads to Student Success." Four participants loaded on Factor 3, "Collaboration and Inclusion for ALL Removes Barriers to Student Success." All sorts were significant, sort 18MB was not used for this study because it was determined to be confounded. "A confounding sort is a Q-sort that loads significantly on more than one of the study's factors… confounding sorts are not typically used," (Watts & Stenner, 2012, p. 129). Participant 18MB loaded on Factors 2 and 3 almost identically, differing by .0002. A detailed explanation of factor loading process will be discussed later in this chapter, including Table 4.5 that contains the factor loads for each of the participants.

The Q-sample consisted of a set of forty statements that allowed participants to identify with objects, concepts, descriptions, and behaviors. The Q-statements were generated from two data sources. First, interviews were conducted with twelve educators with middle school experience. The second step in the concourse development (creation of the Q-Statements) was to review the relevant literature on the topic of deficit thinking and leadership. After interviewing and reviewing the literature, I interpreted the responses and research by searching for patterns in the evidence and data. These patterns were coded for emerging themes; these emerging themes were used to create the Q-statements for this study. I asked those who completed the survey to review the statements for clarity and consistency. After taking into account the feedback from the survey participants, the initial forty-three statements were winnowed to forty statements.

To maintain the confidentiality of the participants I created an anonymous code for each individual. Each set of statement cards had a corresponding identification number. When a participant chose that particular set of cards, their identity was transferred to that number. This number was combined with letters that corresponded to their demographic information sheet to create a unique identification that only I had access to. This randomized code was in turn used in the PQMethod program to identify individual sorts. Throughout the remainder of this study this code was used to discuss those particular individuals.

Correlation Matrix

PQMethod computed inter-correlations among the Q-Sorts, which were then factor-analyzed with the principal component method to construct a correlation matrix. For this study, the correlation matrix measured 31 x 31 based on the number of participants (n=31). A correlation matrix includes all the viewpoints that the participants have produced. This matrix displayed the relationships that pertain to all the Q-sorts including the nature and extent (Watts & Stenner, 2012). This represents the level of (dis) agreement between the individual sorts, that is, the degree of (dis) similarity in points of view between the individual Q sorters (van Exel & de Graaf, 2005, p. 8). The correlation matrix was used to group participants in the next step, factor analysis. Table 4.1 provides a truncated version of the correlation matrix.

Table 4.1

Correlation Matrix between Sorts (truncated)

Participant	4DH	6BK	7KL	…	37UW	38PB	39MK
4DH	1.0	.48	32	…	.30	.38	.30
6BK	.48	1.0	.43	…	.50	.66	.49
7KL	.32	.43	1.0	…	.43	.44	.36
…	…	…	…	…	…	…	…
37UW	.30	.50	.43	…	1.0	.54	.44
38PB	.38	.66	.44	…	.54	1.0	.58
39MK	.30	.49	.36	…	.44	.58	1.0

Factor Analysis

During factor analysis people with similar views on the topic shared the same factor and thus were grouped. Each resulting final factor represented a group of individual points of view that are highly correlated with each other and uncorrelated with others. PQMethod grouped the sorts into eight un-rotated factors. In consultation with Dr. Matt Militello, we ran the data to examine the un-rotated factors. First, we ran the data extracting three factors and then we repeated the process to extract four factors. After initially examining the three-factor solution, Dr. Militello noticed some sorts that could be flagged to increase the number of loadings. Table 4.2 details the information discussed while we decided how many factors to examine.

Table 4.2

Information Used to Determine the Factor Rotation

Factor Rotation Solution	Eigen Value Included	Explained Variance	Number of Participants Loaded	Correlation Among Factors	Reasoning
3 Factors	9.6, 3.2, & 2.0	47%	28 out of 31	.35, .28, & .14	Rejected: Good- lots of loads Bad- lower explained variance
3 Factors (w/1 flag)	9.6, 3.2, & 2.0	47%	30 out of 31	.13, .39, & .36	Accepted: Good- number of participants loaded
4 Factors	9.6, 3.2, 2.0, & 1.9	53%	24 out of 31	.14, .32, 27, .08, .3, & .04	Rejected because it had fewer number of participants loaded; Good-high explained variance

Dr. Militello and I decided to use the three-factor solution with the flagging for this study because it contained thirty of the thirty-one participants and an acceptable amount of explained variance. Each factor potentially identified a group of participants that shared

similar perceptions of middle school students' backgrounds. The data suggests that the three factors related to one another. Table 4.3 details the correlation between each factor.

Table 4.3

Correlations between Factor Scores

	Factor 1	Factor 2	Factor 3
Factor 1	1.0000	0.3853	0.3613
Factor 2	0.3853	1.0000	0.1278
Factor 3	0.3613	0.1278	1.0000

After consultation with Dr. Militello to determine the number of factors to study, I applied two parameters to ensure that an appropriate number of factors had been reached. I used the Scree Plot Test (Catetell, 1966) and Humphrey's Rule (Watts & Stenner, 2012, p. 107); both are accepted practices for factor determination. The scree plot of Eigen values was created to determine a noticeable elbow. Figure 4.1 details the study's eight Eigen values, ranging from 9.6450 to 1.2003. On the scree plot there was a noticeable bend between factors two and four, much like the human arm when it is bent at a ninety-degree angle. The closeness of the third and fourth factor caused the additional rotation for the third factor with flags; thus allowing us to decide on a three-factor solution.

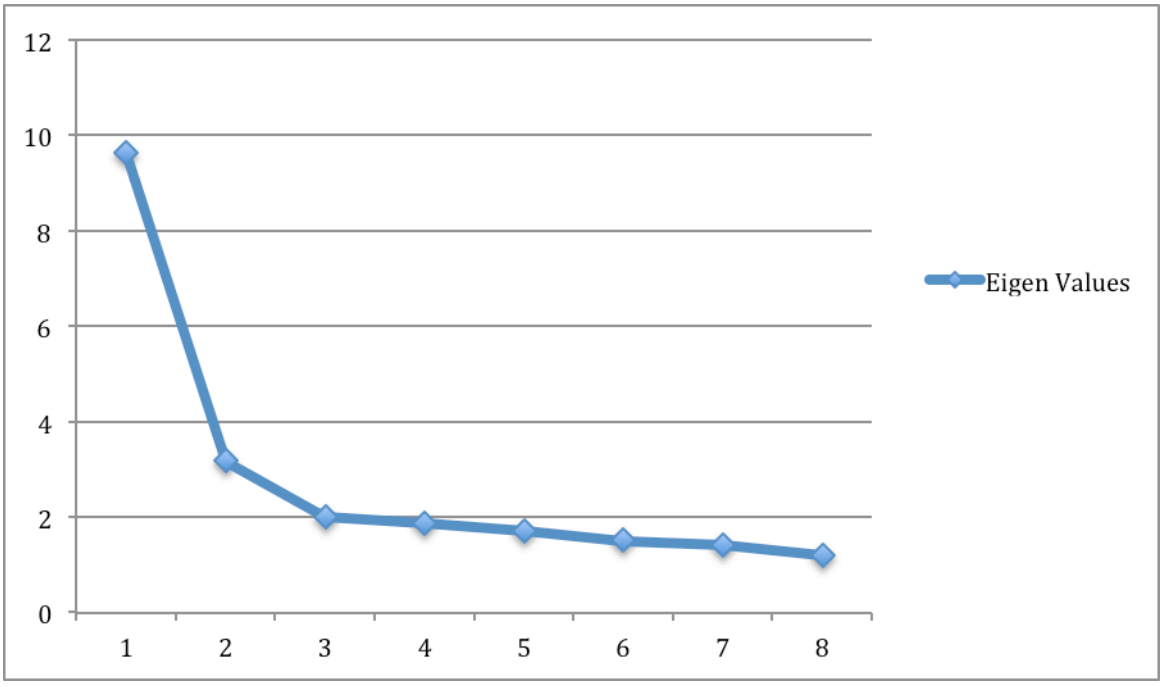

Figure 4.1. Scree Plot of Eigen Values

To legitimately accept this three-factor solution I then completed a test of Humphrey's Rule on the factors. "Humphrey's rule states that a factor is significant if the cross product of its two highest loadings (ignoring the sign) exceeds twice the standard error" (Brown, 1980, p. 223). Table 4.4 details the results of the calculations for each factor. Based on the results, the three factors for this study have satisfied the criteria and should be studied.

Table 4.4

Humphrey's Rule

	Factor 1	Factor 2	Factor 3
Standard Error	0.158	0.158	0.158
Standard Error x2	0.316	0.316	0.316
Cross Product of Two highest Loadings	0.607	0.398	0.483
Difference	0.291	0.082	0.167

.

Factor Loadings

PQMethod computed inter-correlations among Q-Sorts and then factor-analyzed with the Centroid method. The resulting factors were rotated analytically with the Varimax method. The statistical significance for this study was determined using 95% and 99% as confidence intervals. For the 95% confidence interval, the standard error equation was (1/√N*1.96). N equals the total number of statements; in this study N is 40. The significance level at the 95% confidence interval equaled .3099. The standard deviation was $p<.05$. For the 99% confidence interval, the standard error equation was (1/√N*2.58). The significance level at the 99% confidence interval equaled .4079. The standard deviation was $p<.01$. Table 4.5 details how each participant loaded on the three factors.

The rotated factors account for forty-seven percent of the variance. Factor one represented twenty-five percent, factor two represented thirteen percent, and factor three represented nine percent. Fifteen participants loaded on factor one, eleven participants loaded on factor two, and four participants loaded on factor three. No participants loaded on more than one factor. Only one participant did not load on any factor.

Table 4.5

Factor Matrix Using Participants' Q-Sorts (Loadings)

Participants	Factor 1	Factor 2	Factor 3
4DH	0.5168x	0.4108	-0.0346
6BK	0.7273x	0.1991	0.4100
7KL	0.4406	0.5071x	0.2503
9CW	0.4026	0.0951	-0.6682x
10SP	0.1471	0.4377x	0.0372
11CM	0.6211x	0.2609	0.1051
12RJ	-0.1065	0.4808x	0.0216
13AC	0.6741x	0.4455	0.0482
14DD	0.2958	0.4707x	0.2156
15RM	0.5116x	0.3925	0.3205
16EB	0.5592x	-0.2042	-0.1245
17LH	0.5689x	0.1115	0.0562

Table 4.5 Continued

18MB	0.3003	0.4796	0.4798
19SW	0.6717x	0.1071	0.2552
22GG	0.1628	-0.0277	0.6896x
24GW	0.4831	-0.3079	0.5244x
25LW	0.7686x	-0.1314	-0.0063
26RH	0.1318	0.5630x	-0.0813
27JD	-0.1196	0.4115x	-0.2493
28VM	0.2843	0.5538x	0.1390
29JR	-0.2125	0.7065x	-0.0727
30AB	0.6567x	0.2449	0.1507
31QM	0.3000	0.4676x	0.3792
32CR	0.1990	0.5639x	0.2673
34CJ	0.3855	0.1893	0.7001x
35JE	0.5463x	-0.2157	0.2402
36PM	0.7704x	0.0641	0.3080
37UW	0.6788x	0.1768	0.0555
38PB	0.7881x	0.2331	0.0519
39MK	0.6955x	0.0644	0.2127

An "x" denotes that the participant loaded on the particular factor.

Table 4.6 details the Q-sort statements and how each factor group sorted the statements.

Table 4.6

Statement and Factor Placements

Statements	Factor 1	Factor 2	Factor 3
1. Language plays a role in my students' success.	1	-1	-3
2. Family cultures influence student motivation to learn.	0	-1	-1
3. Children are products of their home environment (e.g., single parent home, living in poverty, primary care giver for siblings, abuse, drug or alcohol dependency).	-2	0	-3
4. The context or setting of a school (e.g., urban, rural, Title 1) influences how students see themselves.	0	-4	-3
5. The selection process of school programs (e.g., Academically Gifted, Exceptional Children's,	0	2	-4
6. The setting where students congregate within the school building (e.g., in classrooms, students.	-3	-3	-1

Table 4.6 Continued

7. The culture within the school building related to socioeconomic status does not determine the success of students.	-3	-1	2
8. It is important to take the time to listen and learn from students about their experiences.	3	4	1
9. Employing multiple strategies to include parents in the child's education affects the success of students.	1	4	2
10. Honoring the multiple forms of literacy (that students possess is valued by students	-2	0	-1
11. Students must feel loved by the adults in their schools to be successful academically.	2	2	0
12. Students must trust and be trusted by the adults in their schools to be successful academically.	2	3	-1
13. Honoring the values that students receive from their families is important to students.	0	3	0
14. Working class parents prepare their children for school	-2	2	1
15. When children are harmed by life cannot perform at the same level as other children.	-4	1	1

Table 4.6 Continued

16. When education is not valued in the home students cannot perform at the same level as other children.	-4	2	-2
17. At home students may not be passive bystanders as they are at school.	-2	-2	-4
18. In their homes students may be motivated to learn and play by their interests and questions unlike in school.	-2	1	-2
19. Students' linguistic deficiencies come from parents' inability to provide language rich home environments.	-1	-1	0
20. Students can find success in school even if their parents or siblings could not.	1	3	0
21. Students should not be considered at-risk for school failure just because they lack material wealth.	0	0	3
22. A school community should not be considered at-risk for school failure just	-1	-1	1
23. A student's social worth comes from their exposure to people, places, and consistency.	-3	-2	-2

Table 4.6 Continued

24. Lack of parental support for low socioeconomic students may not be caused by parents' devalued sense of education.	-1	-2	-2
25. Lack of parental support for low socioeconomic students is sometimes caused by parents' need to work and support the family (i.e. multiple jobs, extended family concerns).	1	1	-3
26. Lack of parental support for low socioeconomic students may not be caused by the attitudes and values of their impoverished community.	-1	-2	-1
27. Lack of parental support for low socioeconomic students is not caused by parent linguistic deficiencies.	-3	-4	-1
28. Students can overcome motivational challenges that stem from their disadvantaged experiences	2	3	2
29. Students with limited exposure to academic vocabulary in their homes may struggle to find academic success.	-1	0	2

Table 4.6 Continued

31. Students that know their teachers will go the extra mile for them are motivated to try.	3	1	0
32. Students know that their teachers care about them by the teacher's work ethic.	-1	-2	3
33. School leaders can improve student outcomes by creating relationships with all stakeholders.	1	-3	-2
34. School leaders can assist teachers with developing an inclusive school culture for ALL students.	1	-3	0
35. It is the responsibility of all educators in a school building to work collaboratively to help all students reach their full potential.	2	1	4
36. Considering what is "right" with my students instead of what is "wrong" proves that every child can learn.	3	0	1
37. High expectations for ALL students no matter where they begin will allow them to experience	4	-1	4
38. Ensuring the equity of education for ALL students will prove that they can achieve at their own rate	0	-3	3

Table 4.6 Continued

39. Creating strong positive relationships with students will ensure their academic success.	2	0	2
40. Teachers must learn from students to know how to best serve them academically.	3	1	3

To answer the research questions in this study, quantitative and qualitative methods were used. I detailed the three factor groups that emerged from the quantitative portion of this study through the PQMethod software program. The identified factors revealed participants that share similar perceptions of students' backgrounds. In the following sections I have detailed the qualitative portions of the study, data received from post-sort interviews, as well as from focus group and one-on-one interviews of the participants that shared these similar viewpoints. The combined findings from the quantitative and qualitative portions were combined to answer the research questions of the study.

Factor 1: Compassion of Educator Motivates "Whole Child" to Succeed

Fifteen participants loaded significantly on factor one. This constituted forty-eight percent of the P-sample and twenty-five percent of the explained variance. These results suggested that a large number of middle school educators share the same beliefs related to middle school students' backgrounds. Table 4.7 details demographic information for participants that loaded on Factor One. Most of the participants that loaded on factor one were teachers, thirteen of them. Two participants were administrators, and one was a

counselor/specialist. Time spent at their current school ranged from two to twenty-one years. Experience as middle school educators also varied. Two participants had spent 0 to 4 years as a middle school educator, four participants had spent 5 to 9 years as a middle school educator, seven participants had spent 10 to 14 years as a middle school educator, and two participants had spent more than 15 years as a middle school educator. All but one participant that loaded on Factor One were female.

Table 4.7

Participants Loading Significantly on Factor One: Compassion of Educator Motivates "Whole Child" to Succeed

ID Code	Gender	Years as a middle school educator	Current Role	Years at current school?
4DH	Male	0 to 4	Administrator	4
6BK	Female	5 to 9	Administrator	8
11CM	Female	10 to 14	Teacher	5
13AC	Female	5 to 9	Teacher	4
16EB	Female	10 to 14	Teacher	7
17LH	Female	15 or more	Teacher	21
19SW	Female	15 or more	Teacher	6
25LW	Female	5 to 9	Teacher	8

Table 4.7 Continued

30AB	Female	5 to 9	Teacher	3
36PM	Female	10 to 14	Teacher	10
37UW	Female	10 to 14	Teacher	10
38PB	Female	10 to 14	Teacher	11
39MK	Female	0 to 4	Teacher	2

Table 4.8 details a truncated version of the sequence of statement cards for the participants that loaded on Factor One. This sequence determined the Factor One model card sort. Figure 4.2 is the Factor One model sort that exhibits the perceptions of the fifteen participants related to students' backgrounds. This sequence is determined based on the z-score for each statement as ranked by the P-sample. The statements are ranked by the strength of the agreement; z-score of 1.667 was the highest and -1.789 was the weakest z-score.

Table 4.8

Sequence of Statement Cards for Factor One Participants (truncated)

No.	Rank	Z-Score
30	+4	1.667
37	+4	1.587
40	+3	1.507

Table 4.8 Continued

…	…	…
7	-3	-1.423
16	-4	-1.607
15	-4	-1.789

-4	**-3**	**-2**	**-1**	**0**	**+1**	**+2**	**+3**	**+4**
16	23	14	24	5	20	28	40	30
15	27	17	32	4	33	39	36	37
	6	18	29	13	25	11	31	
	7	3	22	38	9	35	8	
		10	19	2	1	12		
			26	21	34			

Figure 4.2 Factor One Model Sort

The highest and lowest placed cards for the Factor One sort are listed in Table 4.9. These cards represented the viewpoints of the participants that loaded on Factor One. These statements provided valuable insight into how the middle school educators that loaded on this factor related to students' backgrounds. These statements were most representative of the participants that loaded significantly on Factor One.

Table 4.9

Factor One: High-Positive and High-Negative Statements

Score	Card #	Statement
4	30	Students that know their teachers believe in them are motivated to learn.
3	36	Considering what is "right" with my students instead of what is "wrong" proves that every child can learn.
3	31	Students that know their teachers will go the extra mile for them are motivated to try.
3	8	It is important to take the time to listen and learn from students about their experiences.
2	12	Students must trust and be trusted by the adults in their schools to be successful academically.
-2	3	Children are products of their home environment (e.g., single parent home, living in poverty, prime care giver for siblings, abuse, drug or alcohol dependency).
-3	7	The culture within the school building related to socioeconomic status does not determine the success of students.
-4	16	When education is not valued in the home students cannot perform at the same level as other children.
-4	15	When children are harmed by life (i.e. abuse or abandonment).

Forty-eight percent of the P-sample loaded on Factor One, "Compassion of Educator Motivates 'Whole Child' to Succeed." The highest scoring statements related student success to caring teachers that motivate their students. Common themes include students know teachers believe in them, high expectations lead to success, "what" is "right" with students, and teachers go the extra mile. Participants placed Statements 30, 37, 40, 36, 31, and 8 in the +3 and +4 side of the sort continuum.

Participant 17LH, when explaining what she perceived of her students' backgrounds affecting their educational outcomes, stated, "students' needs are dictated by their backgrounds." She felt that teachers should teach differently depending on the student's background, but maintain the same expectations for all students. Participant 35JE had similar feelings, "I feel that parents and families play an essential role in educational outcomes. However, I believe that negative influences can be somewhat diminished if a positive and effective teacher is in the classroom." Both participants believed the teacher has the power to motivate their students to succeed in school.

Participant 25LW agreed that background plays one of the largest roles in her students' educational outcomes. However, she did not feel that students' background forces them into a mold. According to her, " they can inspire others to reach higher, just as forced expectations can cause some to give up for fear of not being good enough." She posited an interesting anecdote that students do not succeed based on their fear of success, and it is easier for students to live their lives as they have become accustomed to from their parents and their culture.

Participant 35JE loaded significantly on Factor One. She placed Statement 40, "Teachers must learn from students to know how to best serve them academically" in the +4 Column. When asked to explain this statement, she said that "teachers who truly believe that a student's success is measured by his or her mastery of a topic will feel successful if a student reaches milestones that are independent of standardized testing," meaning there are other ways to show success than by passing a test. All students have talent, you simply have to know where to look.

Participant 38PB also loaded significantly on Factor One. She placed Statement 30, "Students that know their teachers believe in them are motivated to learn" and Statement 36, "Considering what is 'right' with my students instead of what is 'wrong' proves that every child can learn," in the +4 Column. Participant 38PB placed these statements in the "Strongly Agree" column because teachers should believe in students and consider what is right. She states,

> I strongly believe that a teacher that takes the time to know a student and find strengths in them will motivate a student to find success in some area. Every child has something that they are "good" at, and belief in them and their skill will cause that child to want to do well."

Participant 19SW also placed Statements 30 and 36 in the +4 Column. She believed that knowing what a student knows gives more leeway to assisting the child to grow in knowledge in the courses she teaches.

Participant 36PM placed Statement 37, "High expectations for ALL students no matter where they begin will allow them to experience success," and Statement 40, "Teachers must learn from students to know how to best serve them," in the +4 Column. She stated, "All students can be successful. Teachers must treat students as if they can succeed rather than dwell on their shortcomings. As teachers, we must learn how to reach our individual students." Participant 16EB agreed, stating, "I see the potential in all children, even if they are not all in the same educational place at the same time. Every child can be successful, but success is not identical for any two children."

Participant 6BK placed Statement 12, "Students must trust and be trusted by the adults in their schools to be successful academically," along with Statement 37 in the +4 Column.

> I believe strongly that students must trust their teachers. Sometimes they will be asked to complete tasks that challenge them or that they do not understand, but if they trust that the teacher has their best interest at heart it helps the student be more successful. High expectations for all is essential. As educators, we cannot lower/increase expectations based on a student's socioeconomic status, ability, etc. This goes hand-in-hand when gaining trust of students and creating equality for all students.

Participant 37UW agreed "that high expectations force students to be successful. Students are willing to work to your expectations when they feel loved." For this expectation to be performed there must be trust.

Each participant that loaded on Factor One was asked to share the statements they had difficulty placing. Participants 13AC, 38PB, and 6BK provided very salient points related to

naming that factor. For Participant 13AC Statement 16, "When education is not valued in the home students cannot perform at the same level as other students," was difficult to place. She placed that card in the -2 Column. Participant 13AC stated, "There is a tendency to blame the home when a student fails. We should be looking at what is happening at both the home and the classroom, and building the success of those students." This perception is consistent with that of the "whole child" component of Factor One. For Participant 38PB, the cards dealing with school leadership (Statements 33 and 34) were difficult to place. She felt this way because "in order for leaders to help there must be a complete buy in from all staff, and with so many personalities this is difficult to achieve." Participant 38PB placed Statements 33 and 34 in the -2 Column. She reasoned, "I believe that all students have the ability to overcome these… if someone believes in them. Many successful people have grown stronger and successful with these in their past."

Participant 6BK had difficulty placing many statements.

> My disagree statements were easier to place, but I had many more agree. Statements 34, "school leaders can assist teachers with developing an inclusive school culture for ALL students," and Statement 2, "family cultures influence student motivation to learn" are placed in the 0 column, but I feel strongly they should be at least 1 or 2. I also switched Statement 12 (column +4) and Statement 39 (column +3) several times, but ultimately trust prevailed.

The participants that loaded on Factor One disagreed with Statements 16, 15, 23, 27, 6, and 7. These statements were placed in the -3 and -4 side of the sort continuum. These participants did not perceive that the setting or the culture of the school determined success.

They also felt that students that are harmed by life or live in homes that do not value education still can succeed in school.

Participant 36PM placed Statement 3, "Children are products of their home environment (e.g.. single parent home, living in poverty, primary care giver for siblings, abuse, drug or alcohol dependency)," and Statement 16, "When education is not valued in the home students cannot perform at the same level as other children," in the -4 Column. Participant 36PM explained, "these statements are excuses that teachers use when they don't have success with students. All students can overcome situations with the right motivation." Participant 38PB concurred with 36PM. She placed Statement 16 in the -4 Column as well. She believed that all students have the ability to overcome their shortcomings if someone believes in them. She stated, "many successful people have grown stronger and more successful with these shortcomings in their past."

Participant 15RM loaded significantly on Factor One. She placed Statement 24, "Lack of parental support for low socioeconomic students may not be caused by parents' devalued sense of education," and Statement 16 in the -4 Column. Participant 15RM described her reasons for the placements. According to her, "poverty and other stressors impact the amount of parental involvement. I think parents can provide a level of support with non-judgmental attitudes from educators who reach out to families. Students can perform at the same level as other children regardless of economic status." Participant 11CM disagreed with Statement 24 from a different viewpoint. She said, "parents often have an attitude that education isn't important. They tend to persuade a child to do just enough to get out and most of the time live on welfare. Parents could change that by supporting a child to

reach for the stars." Both of these educators, 15RM and 11CM, have many years of middle school experience. They both have over fifteen years experience but their views were at opposite ends of the spectrum on Statement 24.

Participant 6BK placed Statement 14, "Working class parents prepare their children for school (e.g., exposing them to skilled trades, work ethic through going to work each day)," and Statement 3, "Children are products of their home environment (e.g., single parent home, living in poverty, prime care giver for siblings, abuse, drug or alcohol dependency)," in the -4 Column. She explained her placements as follows:

> Firstly, I disagree that working class parents always prepare their kids for academic success because I have seen too many instances where they do not make time for their children or where they assume. This can go the opposite direction too. Many "non-working class" parents do prepare their children for academic success. It's not fair to say "all working class parents do". I strongly disagree that children are a product of their home life...I have seen this both personally and professionally and from both ends of the spectrum.

Participant 25LW placed Statement 18, "In their homes students may be motivated to learn and play by their interests and questions unlike in school," in the -4 Column. She claimed, "students are motivated at home by interests but they can be motivated by those same interests at school." Participant 37UW agreed in part about motivation. She declared, "family culture can be changed by positive influences. We cannot change the home..."

In conclusion, fifteen participants loaded significantly on Factor One, "Compassion of Educator Motivates 'Whole Child' to Succeed." The highest scoring statements related student success to caring teachers that motivate their students. Common themes included students know teachers believe in them, high expectations lead to success, "what" is "right" with students, and teachers go the extra mile. Participants placed Statements 30, 37, 40, 36, 31, and 8 in the +3 and +4 side of the sort continuum.

The participants that loaded on Factor One disagreed with Statements 16, 15, 23, 27, 6, and 7. These statements were placed in the -3 and -4 side of the sort continuum. These participants did not perceive that the setting or the culture of the school determined success. They also felt that students that are harmed by life or live in homes that do not value education could still succeed in school.

Factor 2: Authentic understanding between home life and school life leads to student success

Eleven participants loaded significantly on Factor Two. This constituted thirty-five percent of the P-sample and thirteen percent of the explained variance. These results suggest that a large number of middle school educators share the same beliefs related to middles school students' backgrounds. Table 4.10 details demographic information for participants that loaded on Factor Two. Seven of the participants that loaded on Factor two were teachers, three of the participants were counselors/specialists, and one was a paraprofessional. Time spent at their current school ranged from one to twenty-two years for participants. Experience as middle school educators also varied. Four participants had spent 0 to 4 years as a middle school educator, three participants had spent 5 to 9 years as a middle school educator, and four

participants had spent more than 15 years as a middle school educator. All but three participants that loaded on Factor Two were female.

Table 4.10

Participants Loading Significantly on Factor Two

ID Code	Gender	Years as a middle school educator	Current Role	Years at current school?
7KL	Female	15 or more	Teacher	20
10SP	Female	15 or more	Teacher	21
12RJ	Male	15 or more	Counselor/Specialist	2
14DD	Female	15 or more	Paraprofessional	22
23JJ	Male	5 to 9	Teacher	2
26RH	Female	5 to 9	Counselor/Specialist	5
27JD	Female	0 to 4	Teacher	1
28VM	Female	0 to 4	Counselor/Specialist	1
29JR	Male	0 to 4	Teacher	1
31QM	Female	5 to 9	Teacher	3
32CR	Female	0 to 4	Teacher	1

Table 4.11 details a truncated version of the sequence of statement cards for the participants that loaded on Factor Two. This sequence determined the Factor Two model card sort. Figure 4.2 is the Factor Two model sort that exhibits the eleven participants' perceptions related to students' backgrounds. This sequence is determined based on the z-score for each statement as ranked by the P-sample. The statements were ranked by the strength of the agreement. The z-score of 1.803 was the highest and -1.799 was the weakest z-score.

Table 4.11

Sequence of Statement Cards for Factor Two participants (truncated)

No.	Rank	Z-Score
8	+4	1.803
9	+4	1.590
20	+3	1.565
…	…	…
6	-3	-1.610
4	-4	-1.614
27	-4	-1.799

The highest and lowest placed cards for the Factor Two sort are listed in Table 4.12. These cards represented the viewpoints of the participants that loaded on Factor Two. These statements provided valuable insight into how the middle school educators that loaded on this

factor related to students' backgrounds. These statements were most representative of the participants that loaded significantly on Factor Two.

Table 4.12

Factor Two: High-Positive and High-Negative Statements

Score	Card #	Statement
+4	8	It is important to take the time to listen and learn.
+4	9	Using multiple strategies affects the students' success

Table 4.12 Continued

+3	20	Students can find success in school even if their parents or siblings could not.
+3	13	Honoring the values that students receive from their families is important to students.
+3	12	Students must trust and be trusted by the adults in their schools to be successful academically.
+3	28	Students can overcome motivational challenges that stem from their disadvantaged experiences (i.e. parents did not complete high school, students have to work inside or outside home).
-3	6	The setting where students congregate within the school

		building does not determine the success of students.
-3	33	School leaders can improve student outcomes by creating relationships with all stakeholders.
-3	38	Ensuring the equity of education for ALL students will prove that they can achieve at their own rate
-3	34	School leaders can assist teachers with developing an inclusive school culture for ALL students.
-4	27	Lack of parental support for low socioeconomic students is not caused by parent linguistic deficiencies.

Thirty-five percent of the P-sample loaded on Factor Two, "Authentic understanding between home life and school life leads to student success." The highest scoring statements related student success to bridging the gap between home and school. Common themes included listening to students, involving parents, honoring home values at school, and developing trusting relationships between home and school. Participants placed Statements 8, 9, 20, 13, 12, and 28 in the +3 and +4 side of the sort continuum.

During the focus group and one-on-one interviews I asked participants to conceptualize in one to five words what they observed as a pattern or theme in the high-positive statements and high-negative statements. Participants 7KL and 14DD were interviewed together as they worked at the same school. Their response was, "Student/Parent/Teacher relationships bring success." Participant 12RJ quipped, "effective

listening and valuing student opinions." Participant 26RH was the final participant from Factor Two to be interviewed. She responded, "adult approval and encouragement helps students to learn." The four participants gleaned very concise and salient assertions from the high-positive statements and high-negative statements.

Participant 31QM loaded significantly on Factor Two. She placed Statement 8, "Students must trust and be trusted by the adults in their schools to be successful academically," and Statement 12, "Students must trust and be trusted by the adults in their schools to be successful academically," in the +4 Column. When asked to explain the statements that she placed in the +4 column of the Q-sort continuum, Participant 31QM stated, "Students must feel that they can trust you to put out any effort. You must take time to listen and learn from your students to achieve success daily."

Participant 7KL placed Statement 40, "Teachers must learn from students to know how to best serve them academically," in the +4 Column. She stated that, "I have found over the years that positive relationships are very important to the academic success of middle school students. I feel that I lost some of my students by not having a close relationship with them." Participant 7KL has taught in this same middle school for twenty years.

Participant 12RJ also loaded significantly on Factor Two. He placed Statement 2, "Family cultures influence student motivation to learn," in the +4 Column. He said in his almost twenty year career, "Family involvement in a students education is paramount to their success. Most students need a little push from someone and most of the time, parents can provide that push."

Both Participant 28VM and Participant 32CR placed Statement 36, "Considering what is right with my students instead of what is 'wrong' proves that every child can learn," in the +4 Column. Both of these educators were in their first year at their current school. Participant 28VM said, "Instead of looking for negative, focus on positive. You should have different expectations for different students. Listening to what students have to say is important, they need a voice." Participant 32CR felt " that if the students do not trust the teacher then they will not perform as well in the classroom. If you give the student positives or the 'rights' then they will feel confident in themselves and will perform better."

Participants were also asked to identify the statement that was the most difficult to place during their Q-sort. Participant 28VM reported that Statement 30 was difficult to place even though she placed it in the +3 Column. Statement 30 read, "Students that know their teachers believe in them are motivated to learn." Participant 28VM said, "students may know teachers care but depending on their surroundings, home life, and/or culture this may not be a key factor that determines success."

Finally, participants were asked if any statements were missing from the Q-Sort. Participant 26RH said, "Our own life experiences that brought us to the middle school setting and developed how we interact with students and connect to them." I agree adding these contexts would have helped determine the importance of the statements. Participant 7KL made a valid point that reinforced the name of Factor Two, "Authentic understanding between home life and school life leads to student success." She said, "Finding more time to spend with individual students makes a difference in their success, which goes along with building relationships."

The participants that loaded on Factor Two disagreed with Statements 4, 27, 38, 34, 33, and 6. These statements were placed in the -3 and -4 side of the sort continuum. These participants did not perceive school leaders could influence teachers to create inclusive environments that create equitable classrooms. They also felt that school leaders could not improve student outcomes by fostering relationships with them. Lastly they disagreed that parents' linguistic abilities hampered their participation in their children's education.

Participant 10SP loaded significantly on Factor Two. She has taught twenty-one years at her current school with over thirty years career total. Participant 10SP placed Statement 4, "The context or setting of a school (e.g., urban, rural, Title 1) influences how students see themselves," in the -4 Column. She said, "the context or setting of a school influences how students see themselves is something I do not believe. First of all, students do not know anything different. Their school is all they know. They love and learn regardless." 10SP also placed Statement 10, "Honoring the multiple forms of literacy (e.g., storytelling, multicultural, technological) that students possess is valued by students," in the -4 Column. She declared, "I do not know if students even think in terms of "how am I learning to read or understand stories. I do not think that it affects their self value."

Participant 7KL placed Statement 6 in the -4 Column and Participant 14DD placed it in the -3 Column. Statement 6 read, "The setting where students congregate within the school building (e.g., in classrooms, cafeteria, after school activities) does not determine the success of students." Participant 7KL said, "I don't think school setting makes a difference with how students see themselves. I think they are comfortable with a school in their community no matter where it is." Participant 14DD stated,

> Children have minds of their own. They pick up from others besides parents and environment. Most children grow up not wanting to be like their parents. These are children that learn from being around others from different backgrounds and mingling with other children from other communities. Poverty has nothing to do with a child wanting to do better, they usually see better and want to do better.

Participant 26RH loaded significantly on Factor Two. She placed Statement 24, "Lack of parental support for low socioeconomic students may not be caused by parents' devalued sense of education," and Statement 27, "Lack of parental support for low socioeconomic students is not caused by parent linguistic deficiencies," in the -4 Column. Participant 26RH stated,

> Again, back to the language. Some parents do not have past a sixth grade education and can only write their name. Education was not valued over hard work for them, and because the parent wants more for the child they encourage education. The language barrier and lack of exposure to what a parent needs to do to help their child at times is a problem.

She went on to say during her one-on-one interview,

> The language barrier was another personal experience. I am Hispanic and spoke broken English when I started school and learned conversational English at school… Hispanic families want more for their children then they had. The issue is that we expect them to understand something that is foreign to them they have never experienced before.

Participant 29JR, a first year teacher, also loaded on Factor Two. He placed Statement 4, "The context or setting of a school (e.g., urban, rural, Title 1) influences how students see themselves," in the -4 Column. He felt, "most students don't care or don't know what the school is labeled, such as Title I or urban." Participant 29JR also placed Statement 36, "Considering what is 'right' with my students instead of what is 'wrong' proves that every child can learn," in the -4 Column. He said, "looking to find out what is wrong or right with a student matters none as long as you fix the wrong or make the right the best as possible." His sentiment was not echoed by other participants that loaded on Factor Two, most placed Statement 36 in the 0 Column.

Participant 12RJ placed Statement 34, "School leaders can assist teachers with developing an inclusive school culture for ALL students," in the -4 Column. He concluded, "school leaders can influence some teachers but not all, there are just too many moving parts (different personalities) in a school building to maintain a sustained influence over teachers." Participant 12RJ's viewpoint was shared by 38PB who loaded significantly on Factor One, but who placed Statement 34 in the -2 Column of her sort.

In conclusion, eleven participants loaded significantly on Factor Two, "Authentic understanding between home life and school life leads to student success." The highest scoring statements related student success to bridging the gap between home and school. Common themes included listening to students, involving parents, honoring home values at school, and developing trusting relationships between home and school. Participants placed Statements 8, 9, 20, 13, 12, and 28 in the +3 and +4 side of the sort continuum.

The participants that loaded on Factor Two disagreed with Statements 4, 27, 38, 34, 33, and 6. These statements were placed in the -3 and -4 side of the sort continuum. These participants did not perceive school leaders could influence teachers to create inclusive environments that create equitable classrooms. They also felt that school leaders could not improve student outcomes by fostering relationships with them. Lastly, they disagreed that parents' linguistic abilities hampered their participation in their children's education.

Factor 3: Collaboration and inclusion for ALL removes barriers to student success

Four participants loaded significantly on Factor Three. This constitutes thirteen percent of the P-sample and nine percent of the explained variance. These results suggested that a number of middle school educators shared the same beliefs related to middle school students' backgrounds. Table 4.13 details demographic information for participants that loaded on Factor Three. All of the participants that loaded on Factor Three were teachers. Time spent at their current school ranged from one to twenty-two years for participants. Experience as middle school educators also varied. Two participants had spent zero to four years as a middle school educator, one participant had spent five to nine years as a middle school educator, and one participant had spent more than fifteen years as a middle school educator. All but one of the participants that loaded on Factor Three were female.

Table 4.13

Participants Loading Significantly on Factor Three:

ID Code	Gender	Years as a middle school educator	Current Role	Years at current school
22GG	Female	15 or more	Teacher	26
24GW	Female	5 to 9	Teacher	4
34CJ	Female	0 to 4	Teacher	1

Table 4.14 details a truncated version of the sequence of statement cards for the participants that loaded on Factor Three. This sequence determined the Factor Three model card sort. Figure 4.4 is the Factor Three model sort that exhibits the perceptions of the four participants related to students' backgrounds. This sequence is determined based on the z-score for each statement as ranked by the P-sample. The statements are ranked by the strength of the agreement, the z-score of 1.831 was the highest and -1.936 was the lowest z-score.

Table 4.14

Sequence of Statement Cards for Factor Three Participants (truncated)

No.	Rank	Z-Score
35	+4	1.831
37	+4	1.792

Table 4.14 Continued

38	+3	1.739
…	…	…
17	-4	-1.699
5	-4	-1.936

-4	**-3**	**-2**	**-1**	**0**	**+1**	**+2**	**+3**	**+4**
17	25	24	12	34	8	39	38	35
5	1	23	26	19	36	9	40	37
	4	18	27	31	15	29	21	
	3	33	10	13	22	28	32	
		16	6	11	14	7		
			2	20	30			

Figure 4.4 Factor Three Model Sort

The highest and lowest placed cards for the Factor Three sort are listed in Table 4.15. These cards represented the viewpoints of the participants that loaded on Factor Three. These statements provided valuable insight into how the middle school educators that loaded on this factor related to students' backgrounds.

Table 4.15

Factor Three: High-Positive and High-Negative Statements

Score	Card #	Statement
+4	35	It is the responsibility of all educators in a school building to work collaboratively to help all students reach their full potential.
+4	37	High expectations for ALL students no matter where they begin will allow them to experience success.
+3	38	Ensuring the equity of education for ALL students will prove that they can achieve at their own rate.
+3	21	Students should not be considered at-risk for school failure just because they lack material wealth.
+3	32	Students know that their teachers care about them by the teacher's work ethic.
+3	40	Teachers must learn from students to know how to best serve them academically.
-3	4	The context or setting of a school (e.g., urban, rural, Title 1) influences how students see themselves.

Table 4.15 Continued

-3	25	Lack of parental support for low socioeconomic students is sometimes caused by parents' need to work and support the family (i.e. multiple jobs, extended family concerns).
-3	1	Language plays a role in my students' success.
-3	3	Children are products of their home environment (e.g., single parent home, living in poverty, prime care giver for siblings, abuse, drug or alcohol dependency).
-4	17	At home students may not be passive bystanders as they are at school.
-4	5	The selection process of school programs (e.g., Academically Gifted, Exceptional Children's, AP and Honor Courses) influences how students see themselves.

Thirteen percent of the P-sample loaded on Factor Three, "Collaboration and inclusion for ALL removes barriers to student success." The highest scoring statements related student success to all educators giving all students a chance. Common themes included equity in education, collaboration between all vested parties, teachers working hard for students, and teachers learning best practices from students. Participants placed Statements 35, 37, 38, 40, 21, and 32 in the +3 and +4 side of the sort continuum.

Participant 34CJ loaded significantly on Factor Three, "Collaboration and inclusion for ALL removes barriers to student success." When explaining what she perceived of her students' backgrounds affecting their educational outcomes, Participant 34CJ, stated, "I want

and work towards all students knowing that no matter what their background is it doesn't mean that they have to stay in that situation." The first year teacher encouraged all her students to set goals for themselves and work hard to achieve those goals. Participant 34CJ further explained, "All of my students know that I was there for them and will push them to go further than where they thought they could go."

Participant 6BK placed Statement 37, "High expectations for ALL students no matter where they begin will allow them to experience success," in the +4 Column.
She said,

> I feel passionately about backgrounds when it comes to student success. We must take into account all that students "bring to the table", good or bad. I have seen students who appear to have the perfect life struggle, while those who that didn't have been successful. Our job as educators is to consider all of these factors but not "label" our students and have lower expectation. So many groups of students get these labels and they often are hard to get rid of. My motto is that we should treat every child, as we would want our own treated - same education, same discipline, same expectations, and same goals.

Participant 11CM relayed to me that the majority of her students come from very low socioeconomic situations. She detailed what this looked like to her, "Homes are very poorly kept, clothes are not clean or fitting properly, and there is a lack of food and a push to become more." Participant 11CM believed that it is her job to make every student feel loved, important, and safe. She encouraged "them to 'just beat it', meaning, beat the odds or let the odds beat you.

Participant 24GW loaded significantly on Factor Three. She placed Statement 37, "High expectations for ALL students no matter where they begin will allow them to experience success," in the +4 Column. When asked to explain the statements that she placed in the +4 column of the Q-sort continuum, Participant 24 GW stated, "I believe that, and have seen, students overcome experiences to be successful. We are most limited by challenges but sometimes are strengthened by them." Participant 34CJ also loaded on Factor Three. She agreed with 24GW and placed Statement 37in the +4 Column. 34CL explained,

> I'm a special education teacher and I set high goals for all of my students. No one is allowed to use his or her disability as a crutch or a reason not to be successful. As time passes I learn from the children their learning styles and in return they work hard to be successful because they know I will not accept anything less.

Participant 22GG placed Statement 32, "Students know that their teachers care about them by the teacher's work ethic," in the +4 Column. She said, "High expectations for all students and making the students aware that you care about their success was what I strongly agree with." Participant 22GG has taught in the same school for twenty-six years. She said,

> When you set expectations and challenges for a student you make the student realize they can do more than what they think they can do. By doing this you continue to express that what you are doing is you trust them and you are there for them in their failure and success. You let students know that life is full of challenges and show them they can be successful.

Participant 9CW loaded significantly on Factor Three. He had a very unique viewpoint as he was the only participant that loaded on a factor that had a high negative load.

He was a first year teacher who had changed careers from the business world after the recession cost him his job. His perception was that, "school is many of my students' one and only access to the outside world and knowledge."

Participants were also asked to identify the statement that was the most difficult to place during their Q-sort. Participant 22GG identified Statement 6, "the setting where students congregate within the school building does not determine the success of students," was one that I had difficulty placing. She placed Statement 6 in the -2 Column. She explained the pros and cons of this statement that led to her difficulty. "The pro to this for me was students' need to be exposed to or able to associate with all students regardless of what problems they have. The con is if the student isn't strong minded other students can easily persuade them to do wrong things."

The participants that loaded on Factor Three disagreed with Statements 17, 5, 25, 1, 4, and 3. These statements were placed in the -3 and -4 side of the sort continuum. The four participants did not perceive that students believed in themselves based on the type of school or types of programs they belonged to. They also disagreed that parents do not take an active role at school because they need to work or that language plays a role in student success.

Participant 9CW placed Statement 17, "at home students may not be passive bystanders as they are at school," in the -4 Column. He placed Statement 3, "children are products of their home environment (e.g., single parent home, living in poverty, primary care giver for siblings, abuse, drug or alcohol dependency)," in the -3 Column. Participant 9CW explained, "I know many people that grew up in working class families that are unsuccessful or dead because of their own actions." He went on to say, "I've witnessed first hand students

being pulled out of school because parents had to work/go to classes. Missing school affects a child's education greatly. I know students from previous schools who were 'night and day; compared to in school and out of school behavior."

Participant 34CJ placed Statement 3, "Children are products of their home environment (e.g., single parent home, living in poverty, primary care giver for siblings, abuse, drug or alcohol dependency)," in the -4 Column. She also placed Statement 4, "The context or setting of a school (e.g., urban, rural, Title 1) influences how students see themselves," in the -4 Column. She said,

> Just because a child comes from a low socioeconomic environment does not mean they can't be successful. It is my job to motivate and encourage that child and to build up their self esteem to the point that they believe in themselves and strive to work hard to improve and eventually move away from their current situation.

Participants were asked what statements were missing from the Q-sample. 22GG wanted more information about school leadership. Participant 22GG stated, "the Administration should have been included more because their impact of positive relationships with students and teachers may make a difference. Keeping the children as the number one priority is most important than the paper work they want teachers to complete."

In conclusion, four participants loaded significantly on Factor Three, "Collaboration and Inclusion for ALL Removes Barriers to Student Success."

The four participants agreed that student success came from educators giving all students a chance. Common themes included equity in education, collaboration between all vested parties, teachers working hard for students, and teachers learning best practices from

students. The four participants disagreed that students believed in themselves based on the type of school or types of programs they belonged to. They also disagreed that parents do not take an active role at school because they need to work or that language plays a role in student success.

Consensus Statements

A statement that is not distinguishing between any of the identified factors is called a consensus statement (van Exel & de Graaf, 2005, p. 9). The consensus statements were used to highlight the similarities and differences between factors. PQMethod identified statements 2, 23, 26, and 28 as Consensus Statements for this study. Table 4.16 details the four statements' values for each factor. All four statements are Non-Significant at P>.01, and Statement 23 was Non-Significant at P>.05.

Table 4.16

Consensus Statements

Statements	Factor 1 Values	Factor 2 Values	Factor 3 Values
2. Family cultures influence student motivation to learn.	0	-1	-1
26. Lack of parental support for low socioeconomic students may not be caused by the attitudes and values of their impoverished community.	-1	-2	-1

Table 4.16 Continued

28. Students can overcome motivational challenges that stem from their disadvantaged experiences (i.e. parents did not complete high school, work inside or outside home).	2	3	2

None of the four statements were "perfect" consensus statements as they varied by at least one Q-sort Value. However, the difference between z-scores for each statement was relatively close among Factors One, Two, and Three. The difference between z-scores for Statement 2 was 0.54. The difference between z-scores for Statement 23 was 0.33. The difference between z-scores for Statement 26 was 0.68. The difference between z-scores for Statement 28 was 0.61.

Statements that were placed in the -1 to +1 columns indicated that the participants neither agreed nor disagreed with the statements statistically. Statement 2, "Family cultures influence student motivation to learn" had Q-sort values of 0, -1, and -1. Participant 23JJ explained why this card was difficult to sort, "This statement is about language and culture. I think they can play a part but can be overcome by the student." Participant 9CW explained his difficulty placing Statement 2 this way, "I really do not know others family cultures and what they are. I only know mine."

Participants universally agreed with Statement 28, "Students can overcome motivational challenges that stem from their disadvantaged experiences (i.e. parents did not complete high school, students have to work inside or outside home)." It had Q-sort values of

+2, +3, and +2. Participant 23JJ explained the reason he agreed with this statement, "I believe all students can succeed no matter their background. They have to want to be better." Participant 14DD agreed in this manner, "Most students can overcome challenges with others by seeing that, again, they don't want to be like their parents. They want to do better. If the parents stand behind their children and even the community that child is going to want to do better and be better, most children love a challenge."

Participants consistently disagreed with Statements 23 and 26. Statement 23, "A student's social worth comes from their exposure to people, places, and consistency," had Q-sort Values of -3, -2, and -2. Participant 7KL detailed that she disagreed with this statement, "I had a hard time with the word exposure, and the experience of school is the real exposure for most of my students to the outside world." Statement 26, " Lack of parental support for low socioeconomic students may not be caused by the attitudes and values of their impoverished community," had Q-sort Values of -1, -2, and -1. Participant 4DH disagreed because, "this could be true or not depending on the specific student." Participant 26RH shared similar views, "Some parents do not have past a sixth grade education and can only write their name. Education was not valued over hard work for them, and because the parent wants more for the child they encourage education. The language barrier and lack of exposure to what a parent needs to do to help their child at times is a problem."

Distinguishing Statements

Statements that have a score on two factors that exceeds the difference score are called distinguishing (or distinctive) statements. Though a statement may be distinctive between two factors, usually a statement will be printed out as distinguishing only if it

distinguishes one factor from all the other factors (van Exel & de Graaf, 2005). The distinguishing statements were used to compare and contrast the factors in this study. Factor One had twenty-two statements that ranked differently on it than the other two factors. Factor Two also had twenty-two statements that ranked differently on it than the other two factors. Factor Three had twenty-four statements that ranked differently on it than the other two factors. All of the distinguishing statements were significant at the $p<.05$ level.

Appendix K. Factor One Distinguishing Statements details the most significant distinguishing statements for Factor One. Of the twenty-two distinguishing statements for Factor One, sixteen were significant at the $p<.01$ level. Statements 30 and 36 had the highest z-scores of Factor One's distinguishing statements. Statement 30 detailed students are motivated by their teacher's beliefs, while 36 asked teachers, "what is right with my students?" The distinguishing statements for Factor One with the least z-scores were Statements 15 and 16. Statement 15 stated children are harmed by life, while 16 detailed that education is not valued.

Appendix L. Factor Two Distinguishing Statements details the most significant distinguishing statements for Factor Two. Of the twenty-two distinguishing statements for Factor Two, sixteen were significant at the $p< .01$ level. Statements 8 and 9 had the highest z-scores of Factor One's distinguishing statements. Statement 8 detailed taking time to listen to students, while 9 described using multiple strategies to reach parents. The distinguishing statements for Factor Two with the least z-scores were Statements 34 and 27. Statement 34 discussed school leaders creating inclusive practices while 27 detailed parent linguistic ability created challenges for their support.

Appendix M. Factor Three Distinguishing Statements details the most significant distinguishing statements for Factor Three. Of the twenty-four distinguishing statements for Factor Three, fifteen were significant at the $p < .01$ level. Statements 30 and 38 had the highest z-scores of Factor Three's distinguishing statements. Statement 30 detailed collaboration creates student potential, while 38 emphasized the need for equity in education. The distinguishing statements for Factor Three with the least z-scores were Statements 17 and 5. Seventeen discussed children being passive bystanders, while five detailed student programs create vision for them.

Research Question 1: How do middle school educators in rural schools perceive their students' backgrounds role in academic outcomes?

All participants were asked, "What are your perceptions of your students' backgrounds affecting their educational outcomes?" The participants identified five themes related to their perceptions of students' backgrounds contributing to their success in school: emotion, encourage/expectations, equity, environment, and exposure. Participants felt that emotion played a role in academic success; students know teachers love and care about them. Educators exhibit expectations on students, either high ones or low ones. Teachers encourage students to be successful through motivation and influence. Equity refers to all students having access to the curriculum. A student's environment consists of the culture, family, and location of school and home. Finally, students are exposed to life or the outside world and they may be exposed to harmful events.

Participants that loaded significantly on Factor One, "Compassion of Educator Motivates 'Whole Child' to Succeed," identified the themes of encourage/expectation,

equity, and emotion. Participant 6BK made some very salient points in relation to expectations. She said, "We must motivate our students and believe in them, while keeping expectations high. As educators, we have to not always be critical of our students' weaknesses, but rather build on their strengths." Participant 6BK later detailed, "All too often students are given a label because of circumstances at home; these labels often minimize expectations. This is not true, though, because if educators are doing their job, it will be proven that these factors are not as critical to the students' success as some may think." Participant 36PM further clarified the strength of the theme of encouragement. She said, "My students know I believe in them and they are motivated to learn. This is a huge focal point in my classroom. My students know from day one that I believe in them, and the data, both discipline and state tests, supports this statement."

Reviewing Statement 35 best evidences the theme of equity; "It is the responsibility of all educators in a school building to work collaboratively to help all students reach their full potential." This statement ranked in the high positive statements, with an overall Q-sort value of +2. When discussing equity, Participant 36PM said, "If I am a successful educator, then I will believe that ALL students despite socioeconomic status, lack of parental support, lack of respect towards education, and/or physical or mental abuse, abandonment, or any other external factors can find success in and/or out of school."

Emotion was the final theme related to student outcomes that loaded significantly on Factor One. Participants 17LH and 19SW surmised that, "students don't care how much the teachers know until they know how much the teacher cares." Participant 39MK stated, "I feel that the best way to get your students to grow is for you to truly know and care about

them, and they must believe that you care!" Finally, Participant 25LW explained emotion in this manner, "I want my children to feel loved and secure so they feel safe. It is in this type of environment that I see my children experiencing successes on a more regular basis."

Examining Consensus and Distinguishing Statements aided in explaining the themes of encourage/expectation, equity, and emotion relating to academic outcomes by participants that loaded on Factor One. Consensus Statement 28 reads, "Students can overcome motivational challenges that stem from their disadvantaged experiences (i.e. parents did not complete high school, students have to work inside or outside home)." All participants universally accepted statement 28. The Distinguishing Statements with the highest Q-sort values for Factor One were Statement 30 (+4) and Statement 36 (+3). Statement 30 reads, "Students that know their teachers believe in them are motivated to learn." Statement 36 reads, "Considering what is "right" with my students instead of what is "wrong" proves that every child can learn." The Consensus and Distinguishing Statements exemplified the combination of expectation, equity, and emotion through motivational forces.

Participants that loaded significantly on Factor Two, "authentic understanding between home life and school life leads to student success," identified the theme of environment relating to academic success. For these participants, a student's environment consists of the culture, family, and location of school and home. They believed environment played a huge role in student outcomes. Participants 7KL and 14DD surmised, "A lot of our students come from low socioeconomic families with parents who are very supportive. Many of these speak a different language and have parents with less than a high school education." Participant 12RJ explained, "Involved parents in a child's education does matter,

but students can still find success if the parents are not involved. It is just more difficult." Participant 26RH stated, "The way students are treated by the teachers because of their home life can be sensed by a student. I have seen this first hand." When discussing home life she said, "Home values affect your culture at school, but what is normal at home might be very different than at school and vice a versa."

Statement 8 was a high-ranking Distinguishing Statement for Factor Two. It reads," It is important to take the time to listen and learn from students about their experiences." Statement 8 had a Q-sort value of +4. While discussing environment, Participants 7KL and 14DD surmised that, "Getting to know students and their home lives better can be helpful for individualizing instruction and determining strategies for academic and behavior modifications if needed."

Statement 9 reads, "Employing multiple strategies to include parents in the child's education affects the success of students." Statement 9 was another high ranking Distinguishing Statement for Factor Two. It had a Q-sort value of +4. Participant 26RH explained Statement 9 in this manner, " We all learn differently, students and parents. Knowing the home life informs instruction and thus achievement."

Statement 26 was a Consensus Statement for this study. It reads, "Lack of parental support for low socioeconomic students may not be caused by the attitudes and values of their impoverished community." Across the three factors it ranked -1, -2, and -1 placing it in the neutral to slightly disagree columns. Based on the responses during focus group and one-on-one interviews, it can be surmised that these rankings were not consistent of the eleven participants that loaded on this factor.

Participants that loaded significantly on Factor Three, "collaboration and inclusion for ALL removes barriers to student success," identified the themes of equity and exposure. There were only four participants that loaded on Factor Three. To identify the themes for Factor Three, the Consensus and Distinguishing Statements were carefully examined to add pertinent data to the participants' anecdotal notes to support the themes.

Statements 35 and 38 were Distinguishing Statements for Factor Three. Both statements deal with equity. Statement 35 had a Q-sort value of +4. Statement 38 had a Q-sort value of +3. Statement 35 reads, "It is the responsibility of all educators in a school building to work collaboratively to help all students reach their full potential. Participant 24GW agreed with this statement. She said,

> On this one dimension, I do believe that overcoming barriers and affording opportunity to all students is a shared responsibility and happens most effectively with collaboration of all educators and stakeholders through hard work and resisting fostering the attitude that because of all the outside influences we cannot control (home), students are at an insurmountable disadvantage if we the educators are not aware.

Statement 38 reads, "Ensuring the equity of education for ALL students will prove that they can achieve at their own rate." Participant 9CW strongly agreed with this statement. He said, "I attempt to give all students an equal chance to learn and perform without much knowledge of their financial background."

Statement 23 was a Consensus Statement for this study; across all factors it had Q-sort Values of -3, -2, and -2. The statement deals with the theme of exposure. Statement 23

reads, "A student's social worth comes from their exposure to people, places, and consistency." It was the only Consensus Statement that was Non-Significant at P>.01 and P>.05. Participants universally disagreed with this statement. Participant 22GG detailed that "exposure is important but does not determine a student's educational destiny." Participant 22GG is a veteran teacher with over twenty-six years at the same school. She said, "When teachers expose them to different cultures outside of their environment and places, students will have something to choose from when they become an adult. It is responsibility of all educators in the school to work collaboratively with all students to ensure total success."

In conclusion, the three factor groups expressed common beliefs about student backgrounds. Theses common beliefs or themes are related to their perceptions of students' backgrounds contributing to their success in school: emotion, equity, environment, encourage/expectations, and exposure.

Research Question 2: What conditions have contributed to the development and persistence of these perceptions?

Development of Perceptions

The participants identified five themes related to their perceptions of students' backgrounds contributing to their success in school: emotion, encourage/expectations, equity, environment, and exposure. Focus group and one-on-one interview participants were asked, "What conditions have contributed to the development of these perceptions?" The thirteen participants identified three conditions that led to their perceptions. These conditions included working in low socioeconomic status schools, personal work experience outside of

education, and family background (student and educator). The conditions were not consistent according to the three factors of the study. Participants 17LH, 19SW, 36PM, 39MK, and 24GW cited "working in low socioeconomic status schools" as the condition that led to their perceptions. Participants 9CW and 26RH cited "personal work experience outside of education" as the condition that led to their perceptions. Participants 6BK, 25LW, 7KL, and 14DD cited "family background (student and educator)" as the condition that led to their perceptions.

Condition 1: Working in low socioeconomic status schools

Five participants cited "working in low socioeconomic status schools" as the condition that led to their perceptions. Of these five, Participants 17LH, 19SW, 36PM, and 39MK loaded on Factor One and Participant 24GW loaded on Factor Three. Participants 17LH and 19SW responded together to this question. They listed teaching in a poverty stricken school, single parent homes, and children in foster homes or group homes as giving them this perception. Participants 36PM and 39MK also worked in the same school, but answered separately but similarly. Participant 36PM said, "I have worked at a Title I school my entire teaching career. The majority of my students live in poverty or has a disability to address. I have attended numerous workshops focusing on teaching kids in poverty. Another factor is that I am a minority at my school." Participant 39MK a second year teacher stated, "My personal experiences with working with high poverty students are what have created my perceptions. Also some of my book studies and research given to me in 'Beginning Teacher' meetings reinforce these perceptions." Participant 24GW declared,

> I have always worked in low socioeconomic districts, Title I schools, and minority populations. I have seen students achieve and excel, as well as become "lost" in an environment where educators succumbed to the students, peers, and population's belief that academic success is not within their reach or not "in the cards" because of their outside circumstances. Sometimes the failures add up and make educators stop trying, but I believe we can, and do make a positive difference in students' lives.

Condition 2: Personal work experience outside of education

Two Participants cited "personal work experience outside of education" as the condition that led to their perceptions. Participant 26RH loaded on Factor Two and Participant 9CW loaded on Factor Three. They both worked in the private sector before becoming educators at the same school. Participant 26RH stated "that her experiences from working in public health for twelve years led to her perceptions. She was taught to look at the whole person when teaching." She said,

> I worked and it involved going to patients' homes to care for themselves or another family member. A goal had to be set and the easiest effective way to reach it had to be found, so you make it up as you go. By being encouraging, non-judgmental and accepting of their way of life they had learned.

Participant 9CW worked in the business world for a few years before he lost his job due to the recession. He claimed, "Personal experience in education and various other business related fields are the sole factors" for his perceptions.

Condition 3: Family background (student and educator)

Four participants cited "family background (student and educator)" as the condition that led to their perceptions. Participants 6BK and 25LW loaded on Factor One. Participants 7KL and 14DD loaded on Factor Two. Participants 6BK, 7KL, and 14DD stated their perceptions came from working with students of certain backgrounds. Participant 25LW stated that her perceptions came from her own personal family background. Teaching in her school for almost nine years, Participant 6BK has developed her perceptions from her students. She said, "Student home life and circumstances do play an important role in student success. However, rather than determine their ability, these circumstances bring them into our classrooms with real-life experiences, experiences that shape their educational experience and expectations." With over forty combined years at the same school, Participants 7KL and 14DD concurred with 6BK. They surmised, "A student's home life/background does not necessarily determine success or failure at school. Some of our brightest students come from low-income families with uneducated parents." They felt that good parent, teacher, and student relationships contributed to success.

Participant 25 LW claimed the greatest factor for the development of her perceptions was her father. She stated, "My father is one of the biggest factors in my perception on the high negative end. 'Can't never try hard enough' is one of the many quotes I heard growing up. Also, I've seen too many people do things they were told they cannot do." Another condition that led to her perceptions is her personal compassion for her fellow man. She said, "I have always had compassion for those who have been dealt a bad hand. These are people that really need to feel love and support. When they do, they are more willing to want to

please people that seem to care." She told me, "Even though my high positive and high negative responses may seem to be contradictory, I feel they play off of each other to make me well-rounded."

Persistence of Perceptions

In the previous section I detailed the condition that led to the development of the perceptions of middle school educators. In this section I detailed the conditions that have led to the persistence of these perceptions. Focus group and one-on-one interview participants were asked, "What conditions have contributed to the persistence of these perceptions?" The thirteen participants identified two conditions that led to their perceptions. These conditions included "excuses for student failure" and "personal experience of student success." As in the previous sections the two conditions were not consistent according to the three factors of the study.

Condition 1: Excuses for student failure

Participants 17LH and 19SW listed children being raised by grandparents, shuffled around in foster homes, frequently changing schools, instability & lack of a family life as reasons for student failure. According to them, the persistence of these perceptions has come after years of witnessing these situations. Participant 25LW cited the manner in which students are treated by her colleagues as the condition for the persistence of her perceptions. She said,

My students are the primary factor in the continuation of how I feel on these topics. I've had many of the students that are labeled as the "bad" kids walk out of my classes

> feeling that they are truly cared for and loved (some for the first time), and these children have worked their hearts out for me. They've found success! I strongly believe those success are based on many of the following factors: 1) they know I care and I'm willing to work with them and as a result don't want to disappoint me, 2) they know I'm not going to accept excuses, and 3) they finally see value in themselves and want to do and be better than what they've been exposed to.

Participant 6BK had similar feelings; she felt that students were labeled with excuses by her colleagues. She said,

> These excuses often come from adults in the child's life (teacher, guardian, parents) and not the student. We must continue to believe in our students to make them believe in ourselves. I also feel strongly that media (TV, internet, games, and social media) play a role in compounding the already known conditions that students live in and life as they know it.

Condition 2: Personal experience with student success

Participants 7KL, 14DD, 12RJ, and 24GW cited a very different condition for the persistence of their perceptions, one of student success. Participants 7KL and 14DD discussed many attributes of "student success." They responded,

> There are many success stories of low socioeconomic students. Schools often make decisions based on a student's home life situation. One example is having food banks at school and providing backpacks for students to carry food home for the weekends. School also provides many opportunities at school for the family to become involved

with their child's education. These activities foster that relationship that is so important.

Participant 12RJ detailed that he had varied experience with socioeconomic status and "student success."

> I have worked in schools where the majority of students have free and reduced lunch and schools where many of students' parents had college degrees. The graduation rate in those Title I schools was lower, but a lot of students made it out of their situations and made a great life for themselves. Seeing those students succeed is a great reward as an educator.

One could hear the passion in Participant 24GW's voice when she discussed her students' success. When I asked what caused the persistence of her perceptions, she said, "Personal experience of student success and growth, and the compunction to keep upholding for students what I believe to be my responsibility and gift."

Chapter Summary

In this chapter, I have detailed the results from this Q-Methodology study. The primary research question in this study was, "how do middle school educators in rural schools perceive their students' backgrounds?" The secondary research question for this study, "what conditions have contributed to the development and persistence of these perceptions?" The data taken from the thirty-one Q-sorts was input into the computer software program PQMethod. The reports from this data analysis along with information gleaned from the post-sort interviews, one-on-one interviews, and focus group interviews were utilized to name and define the factors. Three factors emerged from the Q-sorts

Factor One was titled, "Compassion of Educator Motivates 'Whole Child' to Succeed." Fifteen participants loaded significantly on Factor One. The highest scoring statements related student success to caring teachers that motivate their students. Common themes included students know teachers believe in them, high expectations lead to success, "what" is "right" with students, and teachers go the extra mile. Participants did not perceive that the setting or the culture of the school determined success. They also felt that students that are harmed by life or live in homes that do not value education could still succeed in school.

Factor Two was titled, "Authentic Understanding between Home Life and School Life Leads to Student Success." Eleven participants loaded significantly on Factor Two. The highest scoring statements related student success to bridging the gap between home and school. Common themes included listening to students, involving parents, honoring home values at school, and developing trusting relationships between home and school. These participants did not perceive school leaders could influence teachers to create inclusive environments that create equitable classrooms. They also felt that school leaders could not improve student outcomes by fostering relationships with them. Lastly, they disagreed that parents' linguistic abilities hampered their participation in their children's education.

Factor Three: "Collaboration and Inclusion for ALL Removes Barriers to Student Success." Four participants loaded significantly on Factor Three. These participants agreed that student success comes from educators giving all students a chance. Common themes included equity in education, collaboration between all vested parties, teachers working hard for students, and teachers learn best practices from students. The four participants disagreed

that students believed in themselves based on the type of school or types of programs they belonged. They also disagreed that parents do not take an active role at school because they need to work or that language plays a role in student success.

All participants were asked, "What are your perceptions of your students' backgrounds affecting their educational outcomes?" The participants identified five themes related to their perceptions of students' backgrounds contributing to their success in school: emotion, encouragement/expectations, equity, environment, and exposure. Participants felt that emotion plays a role in academic success, students know teachers love and care about them. Educators exhibit expectations of students, either high ones or low ones. Teachers encourage students to be successful through motivation and influence. Equity refers to all students having access to the curriculum. A student's environment consists of the culture, family, and location of school and home. Finally, students are exposed to life or the outside world or they may be exposed to harmful events.

Focus group and one-on-one interview participants were asked, "What conditions have contributed to the development of these perceptions?" The thirteen participants identified three conditions that led to their perceptions. These conditions included working in low socioeconomic status schools, personal work experience outside of education, and family background (student and educator). These conditions were not consistent according to the three factors of the study. Meaning that the development of the perceptions was not limited to participants that loaded on the same factor.

Focus group and one-on-one interview participants were asked, "What conditions have contributed to the persistence of these perceptions?" The thirteen participants identified

two conditions that led to their perceptions. These conditions included "excuses for student failure" and "personal experience of student success." These two conditions were not consistent according to the three factors of the study. Meaning that the persistence of the perceptions was not limited to participants that loaded on the same factor.

In the next chapter, Chapter 5, I have discussed the results using Gorski's Five Strategies for Defeating Deficit Ideology Framework (2010) discussed in Chapter 2. and other literature. I have also described implications for policy makers, researchers, and practitioners.

Chapter 5

Discussion and Implications

In this chapter, I provide a summary of the main findings. I then provide a discussion of the findings and the literature. Next, I revisit Paul Gorski's Five Strategies for Defeating Deficit Ideology Framework (2010) discussed in Chapter 2. This framework was used as an analytical lens to interpret the perceptions of middle school educators. These perceptions were related to their students' backgrounds affecting students' academic outcomes. Additionally, this framework was used to understand the development and persistence of the perceptions of middle school educators. Finally, I discuss implications and recommendations for policy makers, future research studies, and practitioners related to the backgrounds of students' impacting their success in school.

Summary of Findings

There were similarities and differences among the three factor groups. Factor One was articulated as "Compassion of Educator Motivates "Whole Child" to Succeed." Factor Two was articulated as "Authentic understanding between home life and school life leads to student success." Factor Three was articulated as "Collaboration and inclusion for ALL removes barriers to student success." Participants that loaded on Factor One and Factor Two agreed that it is important to take the time to listen and learn from students. However, they felt differently regarding whether or not education being valued in the home affects the ability of students to perform. Respondents to Factor One and Factor Three concurred that when educators have high expectations for all students, they will experience success. However, they had contradicting views related to the socioeconomic culture of a school

building as it affects student success. The idea that students can find academic success by overcoming motivational challenges were recognized by participants that loaded on Factors Two and Three.

Factor One: "Compassion of Educator Motivates 'Whole Child' to Succeed." The participants that loaded on this factor believed that student success came from caring teachers that encourage their students. These educators perceive that if teachers believe in their students by holding high expectations for them, students would find success. Participants that loaded on Factor One did not perceive that the school setting or culture nor the student home life determined success.

Factor Two: "Authentic understanding between home life and school life leads to student success." The participants that loaded significantly on Factor Two related student success to bridging the gap between home and school. To ensure student success, these participants believed that educators needed to learn from the home life of students and honor the values of language, culture, and work ethic at school. They felt that developing trusting relationships between home and school was paramount to student success. The participants that loaded on Factor Two doubted that school leadership could have a lasting effect on teacher, student, and parent relationships.

Factor Three: "Collaboration and inclusion for ALL removes barriers to student success." Four participants loaded significantly on Factor Three. These participants agreed that student success comes from educators giving all students a chance. Common themes included equity in education, collaboration between all vested parties, teachers working hard for students, and teachers learn best practices from students. The four participants that loaded

on this factor disagreed with the idea that students believed in themselves based on the type of school or types of programs they belonged. They also disagreed with the idea that parents do not take an active role at school because they need to work or that language plays a role in student success.

All participants were asked, "What are your perceptions of your students' backgrounds affecting their educational outcomes?" The participants identified five themes in school: emotion, encourage/expectations, equity, environment, and exposure. Participants felt that emotion plays a role in academic success, students know teachers love and care about them. Educators exhibit expectations on students: either high ones or low ones. Teachers encourage students to be successful through motivation and influence. Equity refers to all students having access to the curriculum. A student's environment consists of the culture, family, and location of school and home. Finally, students are exposed to life or the outside world, or they may be exposed to harmful events. Educators that have emotional ties with their students, and that encourage or expect a lot from their students have students that will perform for them. This means that their students usually find success within school. If educational programs ensure equity for all students, their students will also find success. Educators perceived differently related to environment, some felt that some students used it to motivate them while others used environment it as a "cop out" for their failure. Similarly educators felt that exposure could spell success for students or hinder them academically.

Focus group and one-on-one interview participants were asked, "What conditions have contributed to the development of these perceptions?" The thirteen participants identified three conditions that led to their perceptions. These conditions included working in

low socio-economic status schools, personal work experience outside of education, and family background (student and educator).

Focus group and one-on-one interview participants were asked, "What conditions have contributed to the persistence of these perceptions?" The thirteen participants identified two conditions that led to their perceptions. These conditions included "excuses for student failure" and "personal experience of student success."

The research findings indicated there were similarities and differences among the development and persistence of middle school educators' perceptions related to students' backgrounds. These conditions were not consistent according to the three factors of the study, meaning that all the participants that loaded on a certain factor did not share the conditions.

Five participants cited "working in low socioeconomic status schools" as the condition that led to their perceptions. Of these five, Participants 17LH, 19SW, 36PM, and 39MK loaded on Factor One and Participant 24GW loaded on Factor Three. Two Participants cited "personal work experience outside of education" as the condition that led to their perceptions. Participant 26RH loaded on Factor Two and Participant 9CW loaded on Factor Three. Five participants cited "family background (student and personal)" as the condition that led to their perceptions. Participants 6BK and 25LW loaded on Factor One. Participants 7KL and 14DD loaded on Factor Two.

Four participants cited "excuses for students" as the reason for persistence of their perceptions. All of these participants loaded on Factor One. Participants 7KL, 14DD, 12RJ, and 24GW cited a very different condition for the persistence of their perceptions, one of

student success. 7KL, 14DD, and 12RJ loaded on Factor Two, while 24GW loaded on Factor Three.

Gorski's Framework

The purpose of this study was to determine if deficit thinking or ideology was present in middle schools in rural, southeastern North Carolina. This study required a conceptual framework that focused on class and poverty. For that reason, Paul Gorski's (2010) Five Strategies for Defeating Deficit Ideology Framework was used to explain the answers to the research questions of this study. I used these strategies to examine the information gleaned from Q-sorts, post-sort surveys, one-on-one interviews, focus group interviews, and high positive and high negative statements for Factors One through Three. First I determined if deficit ideology was present in the study's findings. Next, the limitations associated with class and poverty discourses in education were presented from the data of the study. Third, I looked for data that reflected critically on how and by whom respondents' own class socialization had been trained. After doing that I had to locate any problems associated with the cultures of the students' communities identified by the respondents of the study. Finally, I examined whether or not participants accepted "poverty and class" as a culture rather than an oppressed condition.

Identify

According to Gorski (2010), "to identify deficit ideology there are three discursive signs that alert you that deficit ideology is being employed in conversations about class and poverty in education" (p. 21). These signs include an unnamed assumption of shared

stereotyped thinking; the identification of the "problem" as existing within working class and low-income families and their "cultures"; and the failure or refusal to acknowledge sociopolitical context. Additionally, I have used findings from Research Question 1, "How do middle school educators in rural schools perceive their students' backgrounds role in academic outcomes?" to draw conclusions for this section.

To identify the existence of deficit thinking I used the Q-sorts of participants based on factor loadings and statements that possessed the signs Gorski discussed. Table 5.1 displays statements that share components of "unnamed assumptions of shared stereotypes" (p. 21). If the participants agreed with Statements 3, 15, 16, and 19 they possessed these assumptions. If the participants disagreed with 21, 22, 24, 25, 26, 27, and 28 they possessed these assumptions.

Table 5.1

Unnamed Assumptions of Shared Stereotypes

Number	Statement
3	Children are products of their home environment (e.g., single parent home, living in poverty, primary care giver for siblings, abuse, drug or alcohol dependency).
15	When children are harmed by life (i.e. abuse or abandonment) they cannot perform at the same level as other children.

Table 5.1 Continued

16	When education is not valued in the home students cannot perform at the same level as other children.
19	Students' linguistic deficiencies come from parents' inability to provide language rich home environments.
22	A school community should not be considered at-risk for school failure just because it lacks material wealth.
24	Lack of parental support for low socioeconomic students may not be caused by parents' devalued sense of education.
25	Lack of parental support for low socioeconomic students is sometimes caused by parents' need to work and support the family (i.e. multiple jobs, extended family concerns).
26	Lack of parental support for low socioeconomic students may not be caused by the attitudes and values of their impoverished community.
27	Lack of parental support for low socioeconomic students is not caused by parent linguistic deficiencies.
28	Students can overcome motivational challenges that stem from their disadvantaged experiences (i.e. parents did not complete high school, students have to work inside or outside home).

As shown in Figure 5.1, the Q-sort for participants that loaded on Factor One: Compassion of Educator Motivates "Whole Child" to Succeed, strongly disagreed with Statements 15 and 16. Additionally, the participants disagreed with Statement 3 and slightly disagreed with Statement 19. Statement 27 was placed in the -3 Column denoting moderate disagreement. Based on individual sorts none of the fifteen participants agreed even slightly with either Statement 15 or 16. Only Participants 11CM, 15RM, and 17LH placed any of the Statements 21, 22, 24, 25, 26, 27, and 28 in the strongly disagree column and that was Statement 24. Based on the Factor One and individual participant Q-sorts, the participants that loaded on Factor One do not share the unnamed assumptions of shared stereotypes.

-4	**-3**	**-2**	**-1**	**0**	**+1**	**+2**	**+3**	**+4**
16	23	14	24	5	20	28	40	30
15	27	17	32	4	33	39	36	37
	6	18	29	13	25	11	31	
	7	3	22	38	9	35	8	
		10	19	2	1	12		
			26	21	34			

Figure 5.1 Factor One Model Sort

Figure 5.2 shows the Q-sort for participants that loaded significantly on Factor Two: Authentic understanding between home life and school life leads to student success. The participants that loaded on Factor Two slightly agreed with Statement 16, placing it in the +2 Column. Additionally, Statement 27 was placed in the -4 column, denoting strong disagreement. Statements 24 and 26 were placed in the slightly disagree column of -2. Statement 16 was placed in the +4 Column by 12RJ and in the +3 Column by 23JJ. Participant 26RH placed Statement 15 in the +3 Column. Based on the Factor Two and individual participant Q-sorts, some of these participants that loaded on Factor Two may share the unnamed assumptions of shared stereotypes.

-4	**-3**	**-2**	**-1**	**0**	**+1**	**+2**	**+3**	**+4**
4	38	23	22	3	40	11	20	8
27	34	17	2	21	25	5	13	9
	33	24	37	39	18	30	12	
	6	26	7	10	35	16	28	
		32	1	29	15	14		
			19	36	31			

Figure 5.2 Factor Two Model Sort

The Q-sort for participants that loaded on Factor Three: Collaboration and inclusion for ALL removes barriers to student success, is detailed in Figure 5.3. The participants disagreed with Statement 3 placing in the -3 Column. They slightly disagreed with Statement 16 placing it in the -2 Column. Statement 24 was placed in the -2 column denoting slight disagreement. None of the participants that loaded on Factor Three strongly agreed with Statements 3, 15, 16, nor 19 strongly disagreed with Statements 21, 22, 24, 25, 26, 27, and 28. Based on the Factor Three and individual participant Q-sorts, the Factor Three participants do not share the unnamed assumptions of shared stereotypes.

-4	**-3**	**-2**	**-1**	**0**	**+1**	**+2**	**+3**	**+4**
17	25	24	12	34	8	39	38	35
5	1	23	26	19	36	9	40	37
	4	18	27	31	15	29	21	
	3	33	10	13	22	28	32	
		16	6	11	14	7		
			2	20	30			

Figure 5.3 Factor Three Model Sort

In their post sort surveys Participants 39MK, 16EB, and 22GG identified a problem with the working class and low-income families. 38PB stated, "Many students do not see the

importance of education or hard work, whether that is from parents lack of or due to neighborhoods with high welfare cases." Participant 16EB said, "Most of my students seem destined to fulfill their parents lives, unless they have a great intrinsic motivation to go to college." Participant 22GG suggested, "If parents are doing everything that the children sees as not being correct, then this may have a great impact on what direction a child will go. If parents would begin to show more love to their children at an early age, maybe there will be more success in the child." These statements clearly coincide with the perspective that the problem lies within the people that suffer from the conditions inequality and poverty. This paradigm comes from perpetuators of the "Culture of Poverty" paradigm that blame the victims.

Statements 10, 13, 14, 22, 25, and 29 possess components that identify the "problem" as existing within working class and low-income families and their "cultures." Table 5.2 details the Statements 10, 13, 14, 22, 25, and 29 that possess these problems. Participants that show disagreement with these statements are identifying problems within the working class and low-income families.

Table 5.2

Problems Existing within Working Class and Low-income Families and their Culture

Number	Statement
10	Honoring the multiple forms of literacy (e.g., storytelling, multicultural, technological) that students possess are valued by students.

Table 5.2 Continued

14	Working class parents prepare their children for school (e.g., exposing them to skilled trades, work ethic through going to work each day).
22	A school community should not be considered at-risk for school failure just because it lacks material wealth.

Participants that Loaded on Factor One slightly disagreed with Statements 10 and 14 but were neutral on the other statements. Participants that loaded on Factor Two agreed with Statement 13 and slightly agreed with Statement 14. Participants slightly agreed with Statement 29 and disagreed with Statement 25. The agreement continuum is too far spread to draw a conclusion from the factors' loadings on whether or not participants identify a "problem" as existing within working class and low-income families and their "cultures." It is safe, however to conclude that Participants 39MK, 16EB, and 22GG do identify a problem with the working class and low-income families.

To determine whether or not participants acknowledged sociopolitical contexts I examined the sorting of Statements 6, 7, 22, and 23. Table 5.3 details these statements. Any agreement with these statements would signify that participants failed or refused to acknowledge these contexts.

Table 5.3

Failure or Refusal to Acknowledge Sociopolitical Context

Number	Statement
6	The setting where students congregate within the school building (e.g., in classrooms, cafeteria, after school activities) does not determine the success of students.
7	The culture within the school building related to socioeconomic status does not determine the success of students.
22	A school community should not be considered at-risk for school failure just because it lacks material wealth.
23	A student's social worth comes from their exposure to people, places, and consistency.

Participants that loaded on Factor One disagreed with Statements 6, 7, and 23; and were neutral on Statement 22. Participants that loaded on Factor Two disagreed with Statements 6 and 23; and were neutral on Statements 7 and 22. Participants that loaded on Factor Three agreed with Statement 7 and disagreed with Statement 23; and were neutral on Statements 6 and 22. Respondents from Factors One and Two did not fail to acknowledge sociopolitical contexts. Factor Three participants failed to acknowledge for culture in a school building but not for student exposure.

Limitations of Discourse

In this section I present the limitations associated with class and poverty discourses in education. I used the data from this study to answer the following questions related to the aforementioned discourses of Gorski: (1) How are issues such as the socioeconomic achievement gap being framed in the context of professional development? (2) How is the problem being defined? (3) Do proposed solutions focus on remedying supposed deficiencies in poor and working class families? (4) Are concerns regarding contextualizing factors, including systemic inequities and the ways those inequities are reflected in school policy and practice, suppressed or ignored? In the following paragraphs I answer these questions based on the study's findings. I use findings Research Question 1, "How do middle school educators in rural schools perceive their students' backgrounds role in academic outcomes" to draw conclusions for this section.

There are no concourse statements that deal specifically with professional development and the socioeconomic achievement gap. There are anecdotes, however, from post sort survey questions that speak to professional development in this context. Participant 35JE said that, "I believe that I am conditioned to believe certain ideologies as a teacher." Participant 39MK said that her perceptions come from, "some of my book studies and research given to me in 'Beginning Teacher' meetings." Finally, Participant 36PM stated, "I have attended numerous workshops focusing on teaching kids in poverty." The perspectives of these three educators clearly indicate their professional needs have been justified by trying to understand and fix students that come from poverty.

To answer the question, "how is the problem being defined?," I examined the sorting of statements that deal with the appearance of deficit thinking as a context. Clues to the appearance of deficit thinking are indicated by concepts such as at-risk, remedial, culturally deprived, and disadvantaged. Table 5.4 displays the five statements that help answer the aforementioned question. Below I detail the manner in which participants sorted the statements based on their factor loadings.

Table 5.4

Defining the Problem

Number	Statement
2	Family cultures influence student motivation to learn.
4	The context or setting of a school (e.g., urban, rural, Title 1) influences how students see themselves.
5	The selection process of school programs (e.g., Academically Gifted, Exceptional Children's, AP and Honor Courses) influences how students see themselves.
21	Students should not be considered at-risk for school failure just because they lack material wealth.
22	A school community should not be considered at-risk for school failure just because it lacks material wealth.

Participants that loaded on Factor One sorted all of these statements into the neutral columns -1 to 0. These participants neither agreed nor disagreed with these statements. Factor Two loading participants agreed with Statement 5 and strongly disagreed with Statement 4. For these participants setting does not influence student identity, but the choice of educational programs does influence their identity with a particular group. Participants that loaded on Factor Three sorted the statements all over the continuum. They agreed with Statement 21, disagreed with Statement 4, and strongly disagreed with Statement 5. In conclusion, Factor One participants showed no viewpoints related to "defining the problem." Factor Two participants presented contradicting viewpoints. Participants that loaded on Factor Three defined the problem not with the student but with the "at-risk" construct.

Statements 8, 9, 10, 28, and 29 possess elements that were used to answer the question, "do solutions focus on remedying the low class deficiencies in students?" Table 5.5 details these statements. Agreement with Statements 8, 9, 10, and 28 answers the question in the negative; however, agreement with Statement 29 affirms the question. Below I detail the manner in which participants sorted the statements based on their factor loadings.

Table 5.5

Solutions Focus on Remedying the Low Class Deficiencies

Number	Statement
8	It is important to take the time to listen and learn from students about their experiences.
9	Employing multiple strategies to include parents in the child's education affects the success of students.
10	Honoring the multiple forms of literacy (e.g., storytelling, multicultural, technological) that students possess is valued by students.
28	Students can overcome motivational challenges that stem from their disadvantaged experiences (i.e. parents did not complete high school, students have to work inside or outside home).

Participants that loaded on Factor One agreed with Statement 8 and slightly agreed with Statement 28. These participants slightly disagreed with Statement 10. Factor Two loading participants strongly agreed with Statements 8 and 9, and agreed with Statement 28. Participants that loaded on Factor Three slightly agreed with Statements 9, 28, and 29. Factor One and Two loading participants do not focus on remedies related to the class of the students. By slightly agreeing with Statements 28 and 29, participants that loaded on Factor Three offer contradictory viewpoints. They do not affirm nor reject solutions that focus on remedying the low class deficiencies.

There were insufficient data from the study to answer the question, "Are concerns regarding contextualizing factors, including systemic inequities and the ways those inequities are reflected in school policy and practice, suppressed or ignored?" There are many contextualizing factors throughout the concourse statements, but there are none that mention suppressing or ignoring inequities in school policy or practice. Furthermore, there is no mention of these factors in the post-sort surveys, one-on-one interviews, or focus group interviews. I discuss these items from this section in the Implications for Research section later in this chapter.

Class Socialization

Identifying how and by whom respondents' own class socialization had been trained was particularly challenging. I had to read between the lines of what was said. Knowing intuitively that what is not being said may be more important than what was said, a subjective skill in its own right. To do this I examined whether or not participants' assumptions or biases kept them from demonstrating the highest possible expectations of all of their students. I answered this question by reviewing the Q-sorts of concourse statements that pertained to expectations. These statements are displayed in Table 5.6. I also used anecdotal evidence that indicated what contributed to the development of educators' perceptions to draw conclusions in this section.

Table 5.6

Class Socialization

Number	Statement
20	Students can find success in school even if their parents or siblings could not.
30	Students that know their teachers believe in them are motivated to learn.
31	Students that know their teachers will go the extra mile for them are motivated to try.
32	Students know that their teachers care about them by the teacher's work ethic.
37	High expectations for ALL students no matter where they begin will allow them to experience success.

Participants that loaded significantly on Factor One, "Compassion of Educator Motivates 'Whole Child' to Succeed," identified the theme of expectation as being an important condition of academic success. These participants strongly agreed with Statements 30 and 37, and agreed with Statement 31. Factor Two, "Authentic understanding between home life and school life leads to student success," loading participants agreed with Statement 20 and slightly agreed with Statement 30. In contrast, they slightly disagreed with Statements 32 and 37. Participants that loaded on Factor Three, "Collaboration and inclusion for ALL removes barriers to student success," strongly agreed with Statement 37, agreed with Statement 32, and slightly agreed with Statement 30. Each factor group of participants

perceived that expectations were important to student success. Factor One participants strongly agreed, Factor Three participants agreed, and Factor Two participants slightly agreed with this concept.

Thirteen participants identified three conditions that led to their perceptions of students' backgrounds affecting academic outcomes. These conditions included working in low socioeconomic status schools, personal work experience outside of education, and family background (student and personal). Each of these conditions was generated by class socialization. Participants discussed their experiences that led to these perceptions. Each experience reified the fact that these conditions support middle class values and not necessarily the values of the students in their middle schools.

Problems with Communities

Locating problems associated with the cultures of students' communities by the respondents of the study was an easier task than identifying their own socializations. Identifying with the language or culture of a student as being a problem places blame on the student, his or her family, the community, etc… Basically this practice demonizes the student for being him or herself, a practice which is unfair to the student. Without a deeper understanding of the phenomenon we cannot move closer to equity. To understand the context of potential problems associated with language and culture, I examined sorting of specific statements. Table 5.7 displays problems with language and Table 5.8 displays problems with culture.

Table 5.7

Problems with Communities: Language

Number	Statement
1	Language plays a role in my students' success.
9	Employing multiple strategies to include parents in the child's education affects the success of students.
19	Students' linguistic deficiencies come from parents' inability to provide language rich home environments.
27	Lack of parental support for low socioeconomic students is not caused by parent linguistic deficiencies.
29	Students with limited exposure to academic vocabulary in their homes may struggle to find academic success.

Agreeing with Statements 19, 27, and 29 as well disagreeing with Statements 1 and 9 could illustrate problems with language. Participants that loaded on Factor One disagreed with Statement 27 and placed the other statements in neutral columns. Factor Two loading participants strongly agreed with Statement 9 and strongly disagreed with Statement 27. Participants that loaded on Factor Three slightly agreed with Statements 9 and 29, and disagreed with Statement 1. Based on the manner in which participants sorted these particular statements, they do not place the problems with student's language as affecting student

success. Although Factor Three loading participants disagreed with Statement 1, the statement is slightly ambivalent for placing blame directly on student language.

Table 5.8

Problems with Communities: Culture

Number	Statement
2	Family cultures influence student motivation to learn.
7	The culture within the school building related to socioeconomic status does not determine the success of students.
23	A student's social worth comes from their exposure to people, places, and consistency.
26	Lack of parental support for low socioeconomic students may not be caused by the attitudes and values of their impoverished community.
36	Considering what is "right" with my students instead of what is "wrong" proves that every child can learn.
40	Teachers must learn from students to know how to best serve them academically.

Sorting of the statements found in Table 5.8 provided information that shed light on the potential problem of culture that a student derives. Disagreement with Statements 7, 23, 36, and 40 as well as agreement with Statement 26 may provide evidence that the participants found a problem with students' culture affecting student outcomes. Participants that loaded

on Factor One agreed with Statements 36 and 40 and disagreed with Statements 7 and 23. Factor Two loading participants slightly disagreed with Statements 23 and 26 then placed the remaining Statements in the neutral columns. Participants that loaded on Factor Three agreed with Statement 40 and slightly agreed with Statement 7; the other statements were placed in the neutral columns. Based on the manner in which participants sorted these particular statements they do not find the problem with the culture of their students as affecting student success. A more fair solution is to examine and then develop deeper understandings of the societal problems we are attempting to solve.

Culture versus Oppressed Condition

To determine whether or not respondents framed "poverty and class" as a culture rather than an oppressed condition I referred back to the answers to Research Question 2. This question asked, "What conditions have contributed to the development and persistence of educator perceptions related to student success?" The evidence found in these answers suggested whether or not the participants were complicit with the notions of deficit thinking or hegemonic forces. I further discuss these items from this topic in the Implications for Research later in this chapter.

The thirteen participants that participated in the one-on-one and focus group interviews identified three conditions that led to their perceptions. These conditions included working in low socioeconomic status schools, personal work experience outside of education, and family background (student and personal). These three conditions relate to "culture" as opposed to an "oppressed condition." Participants did not mention any

references to hegemonic forces in any of their post-sort surveys, one-on-one interviews, or focus group interviews.

The thirteen participants that participated in the one-on-one and focus group interviews identified two conditions that led to the persistence of their perceptions. These conditions included "excuses for student failure" and "personal experience of student success." "Excuses for student failure" leans toward the notion of deficit thinking, in that concept educators are blaming the students' backgrounds instead of the stronger hegemonic forces that permeate society. The construct of "personal experience of student success" does not fit into the framing of poverty and class as a culture or an oppressed condition. This phenomenon needs to be studied further to see which side of the debate it fits. My conclusion would be that "personal experience of student success" neither fits as indicative of culture or oppressed condition, but a different paradigm than Deficit Thinking or Ideology. This paradigm could be described as "Asset Thinking or Ideology."

Study Comparisons (between Gorski and me)

Paul Gorski's Five Strategies for Defeating Deficit Ideology Framework (2010) was used to construct the conceptual framework for this study. Gorski is the founder of EdChange and teaches classes on social justice education, economic justice, and environmental justice at George Mason University. He has published three books and more than 30 essays on social justice education. Gorski's focus in researching and writing on the topic of deficit ideology is to inform policy makers, academics, and practitioners. I chose Gorski's framework over Valencia's (year?) deficit thinking framework because Gorski focuses on class and poverty while Valencia paints a much broader interpretation of deficit thinking.

Gorski, along with other contemporary educational thinkers such as Delpit, Nieto, Bomer, and Dudley-Marling are critical of both Ruby Payne's and Oscar Lewis' "Culture of Poverty" discourses. Payne perpetuates the Deficit Thinking mentality by retelling the relationship of low socioeconomic status students and alleged cognitive impairment of poor children (1996). Lewis asserts that the poor "way of life" is handed down from generation to generation; that poor children accept their station in life by 6 or 7 years of age (1966). Gorski wants more attention focused on addressing the ideologies and conditions that underlie and perpetuate the deficit perspective. This deficit perspective is caused by sociopolitical conditions and ideologies that find their genesis in complex socialization processes. Some of these processes include racism, classism, and economic injustice.

Gorski hypothesizes a process by which people in the U.S., including teachers, are socialized to comply with deficit ideology. He then discusses ways to "spot" and interrupt class-based deficit ideology in educational contexts. It is from this concept of interrupting class-based deficit ideology that I develop the conceptual framework for this study:

1. Identify deficit ideology
2. Name the limitations associated with class and poverty discourses in education
3. Reflect critically on how and by whom my own class socialization has been trained
4. Refuse to locate any problem in the "cultures" of the disenfranchised communities

5. Refuse to frame "poverty and class" as a culture rather than an oppressed condition

Gorski concluded that hegemony is a difficult thing to break. To break its hold on society educators must consider their own complicity with it and their socialization for compliance. If educators do not acknowledge their own complicity they ensure and justify the maintenance of inequity.

In this study I hoped to understand how the perceptions of middle school educators related to students' background affected student success. Furthermore I wanted to know what caused their perceptions and why they persisted. I used Q-methodology for the study because it analyzes perceptions. The viewpoints of the middle school educators were most important to me because I wanted to better understand how their subjective thoughts affected their students' educational outcomes. This study did not contain a component of sociopolitical ideologies, because these sociopolitical forces are outside of the control of educators. I did not feel educators' perceptions would require an understanding or even acknowledgement of these forces to solicit their perceptions related to student outcomes.

The thirty-one participants identified three factors relating to middle school educators' perceptions of their students' and schools' academic outcomes. Factor One was "Compassion of Educator Motivates 'whole child' to Succeed." Factor Two was "Authentic understanding between home life and school life leads to student success." Factor Three was "Collaboration and inclusion for 'all' removes barriers to student success." Factor One loading participants identified the themes encourage/expectation, equity, and emotion as impacting student academic outcomes. Participants that loaded significantly on Factor Two

identified the theme of environment relating to academic success. Participants that loaded significantly on Factor Three identified the themes of equity and exposure as impacting student academic outcomes. Thirteen participants identified three conditions that led to their perceptions: working in low socioeconomic status schools, personal work experience outside of education, and family background (student and personal). The participants identified two conditions that led to their perceptions: excuses for student failure and personal experience of student success.

Findings and the Literature

The following paragraphs contain comparisons between the findings of this study and the literature presented in Chapter 2. Information about educators' perceptions along with the development and persistence of these perceptions were taken from Q-sorts, post-sort surveys, one-on-one interviews, and focus-group interviews. The focus of the following paragraphs is to link the findings to the literature and identify how closely the two relate to one another.

Participants identified five themes related to their perceptions of students' backgrounds contributing to their success in school: emotion, equity, environment, encouragement/expectations, and exposure. Participants identified three conditions that led to their perceptions. These conditions included working in low socioeconomic status schools, personal work experience outside of education, and family background (student and personal). Two conditions were identified as having led to their perceptions. These conditions included "excuses for student failure" and "personal experience of student success."

Participants felt that emotion played a role in academic success. Students know when

teachers love and care about them and want them to be safe and secure. Nieto (2010) posits that relationships among teachers and their students are the most important ingredient in successful schools. Participants 17LH and 19SW surmised that, "students don't care how much the teachers know until they know how much the teacher cares." When students believe that the teacher cares for them and is concerned about them, they will frequently rise to the expectations set (Delpit, 2012). Participant 25LW explained emotion in this manner, "I want my children to feel loved and secure so they feel safe and can learn."

Educators exhibit expectations of students: either high ones or low ones. Participant 17LH felt that teachers should teach differently depending on the student's background, but maintain the same expectations for all students. It may be surprising to some that students respond to such high expectations and strong demands (Delpit, 2012). Students have perceptions about their teachers too; students perceive that their teachers have lowered academic expectations and doubt their parents' concerns related to their education (Cooper, 2012). Expectations for student success by district and school level administration hold teachers accountable for that student success (Skrla & Scheurich, 2001).

Teachers encourage students to be successful through motivation and influence. Participant 6BK said, "We must motivate our students and believe in them, while keeping expectations high. As educators, we need to build on their strengths, while not being critical of our students' weaknesses." Participant 36PM said, "My students know I believe in them and they are motivated to learn. This is a huge focal point in my classroom. My students know from day one that I believe in them, and the data, both discipline and state tests, supports this statement." Not only should students be encouraged to participate, parents

should be encouraged and provided the opportunity to participate thoroughly in the educational process (Lott, 2003). The controversial Hart & Risely (2003) study found that the amount of encouraging feedback during the first four years of life differed among classes:

> …the average child in a professional family would have accumulated 560,000 more instances of encouraging feedback than discouraging feedback, and an average child in a working-class family would have accumulated 100,000 more encouragements than discouragements. But an average child in a welfare family would have accumulated 125,000 more instances of prohibitions than encouragements. By the age of 4, the average child in a welfare family might have had 144,000 *fewer* encouragements and 84,000 *more* discouragements of his or her behavior than the average child in a working-class family. (p. 8)

This encouragement or lack thereof contributed to language and vocabulary acquisition and early literacy skills. These literacy skills are an important factor in elementary students' success.

Equity refers to all students having access to the curriculum. Statement 35 reads, "It is the responsibility of all educators in a school building to work collaboratively to help all students reach their full potential." Participant 24GW agreed with this statement. She said, "I do believe that overcoming barriers and affording opportunity to all students is a shared responsibility and happens most effectively with collaboration …" Statement 38 reads, "Ensuring the equity of education for ALL students will prove that they can achieve at their own rate." Participant 9CW strongly agreed with this statement. He said, "I attempt to give

all students an equal chance to learn and perform without much knowledge of their financial background." Scheurich, Skrla, and Joseph (2000) determined "in no other previous historical moment has there ever been a major public commitment to high academic performance for all races and socioeconomic classes by United States' political parties and their candidates for president" (p. 293). When educators possess an equity consciousness they maintain four central beliefs: all children are capable of high levels of academic success; all children means all children; the adults in the school building are primarily responsible for student learning; and all students do not learn the same way requiring us to change our practices (McKenzie & Locke, 2010).

A student's environment consists of the culture, family, and location of school and home. Participants 7KL and 14DD surmised, "A lot of our students come from low socioeconomic families with parents who are very supportive. Many of these speak a different language and have parents with less than a high school education." Participant 26RH, "Home values affect your culture at school, but what is normal at home might be very different than at school and vice a versa." Marx (2006) comments that educators express perceptions about student background in four main ways that can be attributed to environment, perceived deficits in culture, language, families, self-esteem and intelligence. Community type causes an economical and historical bearing on the construction of "rich" and "poor" labels within a community. Schools play a role in that social construction based on the context of sociopolitical forces from the community (Howley & Howley, 2010).

Hollingshead (1949) identified three mechanisms by which rural communities' social stratification were reproduced in the school. First through clicks and recreational activities

for young people replicated the social structure of the adult world. Second those adults who had a direct impact on the children including teachers, school administrators, and community leaders systematically discriminated against children from lower classes. Finally, children from the lower class learn patterns both at home and in school that hampered them in educational and occupational attainment.

Students are exposed to life or the outside world and they may be exposed to harmful events. Statement 23 was a Consensus Statement for this study; participants universally disagreed with this statement. Participant 22GG detailed that "exposure is important but does not determine a student's educational destiny." She said, "When teachers expose them to different cultures outside of their environment and places, students will have something to choose from when they become an adult." Moll et al. (2001) refer to the exposures of children in their homes as "Funds of Knowledge". For teachers to take advantage of these "Funds of Knowledge" they should visit homes and learn from students and their families about their culture, traditions, and life experiences. Then teachers can use children's funds of knowledge to connect with them in the classroom (2001). When we listened to the children, we seemed to hear their parents speaking; when we watched the children play at parenting their dolls, we seemed to see the futures of their own children based on the exposure the parents have provided (Hart & Risely, 2003, p .7).

Participants identified three conditions that led to their perceptions. These conditions included working in low socioeconomic status schools, personal work experience outside of education, and family background (student and personal). Working in low socioeconomic status schools created the perceptions for some of the participants. Participant 36PM said,

> I have worked at a Title I school my entire teaching career. The majority of my students live in poverty or have a disability to address. I have attended numerous workshops (Payne) focusing on teaching kids in poverty. Another factor is that I am a minority at my school, most of my students are a different race than me.

Participant 39MK stated, "My personal experiences with working with high poverty students are what have created my perceptions. Also some of my book studies (Payne) and research given to me in 'Beginning Teacher' meetings reinforce these perceptions." These educators' perceptions reinforce the ideas that Payne is trying to sell to her many customers, that it is the responsibility of educators and others who work with children of poverty to teach children the differences and skills/rules that will allow them to make a better choice.

Payne's *Framework for Understanding Poverty (1996)* consists of the role of language, hidden rules, characteristics of poverty, role models, support systems, and creating relationships to educate children of poverty. Payne asserts that hidden rules are class bound, originate from cause and effect situations, and serve as survival mechanisms. She claims that poor and minority students lack access to the formal register of language like the one used in school and middle class life. Payne also claims that discipline is about penance and forgiveness, not necessarily change.

The condition personal work experience outside of education led to the perceptions of two participants. They worked in the private sector before becoming educators at the same school. Participant 26RH stated "that her experiences from working in public health for twelve years led to her perceptions." Participant 9CW worked in the business world for a few years before he lost his job due to the recession. He claimed, "Personal experience in

education and various other business related fields are the sole factors" for his perceptions. Flora and Flora (2008) found that

> In communities in other parts of the country particularly in low-income areas in the South and Appalachian parents see limited job opportunities for their children. Dropout rates are high and teenage pregnancy is more prevalent. Parents and young people do not see any immediate advantage in remaining in school. Consequently the sense of independence created by going to work even at a low paying job or becoming a parent is not offset by what seems to be the remote chance that education will lead to higher earnings. Unfortunately high school dropouts experience higher unemployment rates. (p. 73)

Sonia Nieto (2010) concluded that students need to be prepared with the skills and attitudes necessary to live, work, and interact with others in an increasingly diverse, complex, and interdependent world. Garcia & Guerra (2004) conceptualized five themes related to educators' perceptions of deficit thinking. These themes included overgeneralizing about family background; writing students off before they came to school; absence of a critical lens; a mono-cultural view of child-rearing practices and success; and the system works students and parents need to change.

Family background (student and educator) created the perceptions for some of the participants. Participant 6BK has developed her perceptions from her students. She said, "Student home life and circumstances do play an important role in student success. However, rather than determine their ability, these circumstances bring them into our classrooms with real-life experiences, experiences that shape their educational experience and expectations."

Participant 25 LW claimed the greatest factor for the development of her perceptions was her father. He always told her that "if you work hard enough you can accomplish anything." "Funds of Knowledge" as defined by researchers Moll et al. (2001) refers to the historically accumulated and culturally developed bodies of knowledge and skills essential for household or individual functioning and well-being. All students possess these funds, in fact all people in general do. Singham (year?) found that higher socioeconomic status has its attendant advantages in favor of higher educational outcomes. From this affluence component family does have a powerful influence on academic performance. An implicit assumption underlying this discourse appears to be that the opportunity structure is relatively solid, that the playing field is relatively level, and that the system is relatively equitable but it is not (Gorski, 2010).

Two conditions were identified as having led to the persistence of participants' perceptions. These conditions included "excuses for student failure" and "personal experience of student success." Participants 17LH and 19SW listed children being raised by grandparents, shuffled around in foster homes, frequently changing schools, and instability and lack of a family life as reasons for student failure. According to them, the persistence of these perceptions has come after years of witnessing these situations. Participant 25LW cited the manner in which her colleagues mistreat students as the condition for the persistence of her perceptions. These students were labeled as failures based on their past performance in school. Participant 6BK had similar feelings; she felt that students were labeled with excuses by her colleagues. If teachers have preconceived notions about student backgrounds because

of stereotypes then student outcomes can be affected by these stereotype threats (Steele, 2010).

Ruby Payne (1996) perpetuates the deficit thinking mentality by retelling the relationship of low socioeconomic students and academics, the alleged cognitive impairment of poor children, and how to build learning structures in the heads of these students. Bomer et al. (year?) and Delpit (year?) agree that creating relationships between teachers and students is critical. Bomer et al found that teachers with a deficit perspective lowered the quality of education; these teachers offered less instruction to poor children; the teacher interacted not with a person of dignity and possibility but with an instance of made up faults and absences. Delpit found that what Payne labels as culture is actually the response to oppression.

Participants 7KL, 14DD, 12RJ, and 24GW cited a very different condition for the persistence of their perceptions, one of student success. Participant 12RJ stated,

> I have worked in schools where the majority of students have free and reduced lunch and schools where many of students' parents had college degrees. The graduation rate in those Title I schools was lower, but a lot of students made it out of their situations and made a great life for themselves. Seeing those students succeed is a great reward as an educator.

Ready and Wright (2011) found that teachers' perceptions influence their interactions with and expectations of their students. "They drive important decisions, especially those related to student placements into academic programs; and they have meaningful consequences for children's immediate and long-term opportunities" (p. 354). Nieto (2010) agreed, she concluded that in order to provide all students with an equal and high quality

education, we need to begin with the belief that all students are capable and worthy of learning to high levels of achievement. The American Dream is the idea that anything can happen and good things might. An essential element of the American Dream is the idea that anyone can be successful (Hochchild, 1995).

The results of this study reinforced my personal beliefs related to educators' perceptions of student backgrounds. I believe that educators perceive their actions in regard with the best interests of the students in mind. Participants' views on student background, for the most part, were consistent with the literature. The participants whose perceptions differed from the literature discussed in the literature review were influenced by their personal experiences within rural, Title 1 middle schools in southeastern North Carolina as opposed to different K-12 school makeups with other educational locales within the United States.

Personal Reflection

Conducting the dissertation study has been one of the most challenging and rewarding experiences of my life. There are many lessons that I have learned from this study. Table 5.9 provides a summary of some of the important points. I wanted to know middle school educators' perceptions of student background affecting student outcomes. I have learned that many middle school educators believe that student motivation and high expectations yield academic success. They also feel that environment has positive and negative effects on student success. Emotional attachments and exposure to the outside world are important to academic outcomes. Ensuring equity across all programs lends itself to finding success for students in middle school.

I wanted to know where middle school educators developed their perceptions. I have learned that their perceptions mostly come from experiences either at work or in life. A few garnered their perceptions from family members. I also wanted to know why middle school educators' perceptions persist. I have learned that their perceptions continue based on excuses for student failure (pros and cons) and personal experiences of students finding success.

On a more personal note, I wanted to know if my experience with deficit thinking could be found in other middle schools in rural, southeastern North Carolina. After reviewing concourse statements, Q-sorts, post-sort surveys, one-on-one interview transcripts, and focus group interview transcripts through the lens of the Gorski's (2010) conceptual framework, I have learned that deficit thinking is present in each group of the participants that loaded on the study's factors. Because of the limitations of the methodology one cannot quantify the amount of deficit thinking that permeates through the study's P-sample; however, there is enough evidence to qualify the presence of deficit thinking. That is the beauty of studying subjectivity; it can change as you have more and more experience with the phenomenon. My own subjectivity related to deficit thinking has changed throughout my seventeen-year career in public education. I have shifted from a deficit perspective to one of an asset thinking paradigm. As I move forward in my career I will take lessons from this study to better meet the needs of ALL students and staff under my educational care.

Table 5.9

Summary of Lessons Learned from this Study

	Participants from Factor One	Participants from Factor Two	Participants from Factor Three
Perceptions affecting student success	Encourage/expectation, equity, and emotion	Environment	Equity and exposure
Development of perceptions	Working in Title 1 schools; family background (student and personal)	Working in Title 1 schools; personal work experience outside of education	Working in Title 1 schools; personal work experience outside of education
Persistence of perceptions	Excuses for student failure	Personal experience of student success	Excuses for student failure; Personal experience of student success
Identify with deficit ideology	Some participants	Some participants	Some participants
Limitations	Some participants; others neutral	Contradictory	At-risk construct; contradictory
Class socialization has been trained	Middle class values	Middle class values	Middle class values

Table 5.9 Continued

Problems with disenfranchised communities	None	None	Ambivalent or none
Framed poverty as a culture rather than oppressed condition	Culture	Culture	Culture

Implications

In the following section, I recommend possible educational policy changes at the local, state, and national governmental level. Additionally, I provide future research recommendations that emerged as I conducted this study. Finally, I outline the implications of this study for practitioners in schools and school district offices.

Implications for Policy Makers

This study focused on the perceptions of educators related to academic outcomes. Student outcomes are measured by accountability measures that are directed by educational policy. These policies are crafted at the national, state, and local levels. There was no mention of educational policy or policy makers in any of the concourse statements. This policy absence in the concourse could have caused the absence of any discussion of educational policy in the post-sort surveys, one-on-one interviews, or focus group interviews. Educational policies

were not present in this study, still policy makers could glean implications from the study. Policies govern funding, testing, and educator evaluation systems. These areas represent ongoing debates within the policy realm that this study could inform. In the following paragraphs I outline suggestions for policy makers related to deficit thinking.

The No Child Left Behind (NCLB) Act of 2001 is the reauthorization of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act. It is the primary federal program related to promoting equity and excellence. NCLB requires states to create accountability systems that monitored student proficiency in the core subjects of math and reading (No Child Left Behind [NCLB], 2002). Students' test results are measured and reported as Adequate Yearly Progress. Originally, each state was to meet the 100% proficiency mark in both math and reading by 2014. Additionally, schools had to report their results by subgroups of demographics: race, exceptionality, socio-economic status, and English proficiency. Schools were subject to sanctions if they did not meet certain criteria.

The United States Department of Education decided to allow states some flexibility in this requirement. States could apply for a waiver against the 100% proficiency mark and submit to two provisions: include student data in teacher evaluations and designate schools under the categories of Reward, Priority, and Focus. Under the waiver system, Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) was replaced with Annual Measurable Objectives (AMO), and states could establish their criteria based on subgroups. The subgroups' reporting was a subject of controversy for years and a perpetuator of deficit thinking for many critics of NCLB. When schools failed to meet AYP it was almost certain to be based on minority, socioeconomic status, or exceptionality subgroup, thus again perpetuating deficit thinking.

In 2012 North Carolina applied for and received a waiver thus accepting the two provisions. For the first time in the history of North Carolina, student data were included in teacher evaluations and principal evaluations, as the now infamous Standards Six and Eight. To designate schools under the categories of Reward, Priority, and Focus, North Carolina chose to use an A, B, C, D, and F categorical system to report school quality to the public. North Carolina set criteria based on demographic subgroups. Table 2.3 in Chapter 2 detailed the different proficiency percentages required for each subgroup. This table illuminated the vast difference between races, socio-economic status, and student exceptionality.

These accountability standards perpetuate deficit thinking. Instead of promoting equity and excellence they focus the problem onto disenfranchised communities. Tying educational outcomes to educator evaluations is a good idea for increasing equity. However, by having different expectations for different demographic groups only increases the likelihood that the powerless will continue to be passed over. Designating schools under the categories of Reward, Priority, and Focus would increase the likelihood of stereotype threats being realized. The extra effort it takes students to dispel stereotype threat interferes with academic performance, which could increase the likelihood that targets would be missed, which in turn creates more labels and facilitates more stereotype threats.

It would behoove policy makers to focus on removing obstacles for all children in schools. Officials should strive to create socially and academically diverse school contexts and to limit practices that isolate traditionally disadvantaged students. To meet these challenges, policy-makers should expand low-income children's welfare and health programs, especially their early learning opportunities. The increasing practice of re-

segregation of schools has caused the unequal allocation of school resources (Darling-Hammond, 2010). Officials should maintain equal funding for all schools regardless of their location, tax base, or racial make-ups. Instead of punishing educators with school report cards or evaluation standards, policy-makers should focus on providing high-quality teachers and teaching to all children in all communities. Poor, rural school districts have real difficulty completing this last task.

Implications for Practitioners

Public education in North Carolina has seen some dramatic changes within the past four years. Educator evaluations are being tied to student outcomes, a practice meant to ensure equity but that will surely lead to further episodes of deficit thinking. The number of charter schools has almost doubled in this time span. A more conservative North Carolina government has made sweeping changes to how charter schools are managed. Funds originally meant for public school education is being rerouted for private schools by way of vouchers. There are record low enrollments in some of the Schools of Education within North Carolina Universities and Colleges. Career level status or tenure will be removed by 2018 for all teachers in North Carolina.

With public educators under attack from several angles, it seems like a good time to re-evaluate our praxis. My research has illuminated possible implications for practitioners. Delpit (2005) suggests what we typically label as culture is actually a response to oppression by disenfranchised groups. How can educators facilitate and sustain an equitable classroom environment if they do not fully comprehend the very inequities they are attempting to

unravel? Educators must continue efforts to create socially and academically diverse school contexts and limit practices that isolate traditionally disadvantaged students.

Teachers with a deficit perspective lower the quality of education; these teachers offer less instruction to poor children (Bomer et al., 2009). For children of poverty, good teachers and powerful instruction are imperative. One approach would be to implement "the Funds of Knowledge" framework. Funds of Knowledge are defined by researchers as the historically accumulated and culturally developed bodies of knowledge and skills essential for household or individual functioning and well-being in the child's home (Moll et al., 2001). If teachers visit students' homes and learn from students and their families about their culture, traditions, and life experiences, they can use these children's funds of knowledge to connect with the children in their classroom.

Educators must view their classrooms and schools as communities of learners who are capable of success. Haberman (1991) suggests that the pedagogy of poverty does not work and that an emphasis on basic skills is an insult to low socioeconomic status students. Educators must raise their expectations to the teaching of critical thinking, problem solving, and even creativity for students from impoverished backgrounds. When the themes of expectation/encouragement, emotion, environment, and equity are known and appreciated by educators, the sky is the limit for their students.

School leaders have tremendous influence over the teachers in their building. These leaders should hire teachers with the expectation of success for ALL students. When principals discover teachers that possess the deficit perspective in their buildings they should try and rehabilitate them before dismissing them. School leaders should have those teachers

visit other classrooms that have found success with their type of students, thus using master teachers to promote success. Additionally, school leaders should find and implement professional development activities that link equity knowledge to classroom practice and that practice to student learning. Student learning is the end result that we expect from students, teachers, and school leaders.

For these changes to effectively take place in schools, we first must make changes to our teacher and principal preparation programs. Teacher preparation programs focus on educational philosophy and methods. Pre-service teachers also need to be able to acknowledge their own deficit perspectives thus bringing attention to the contradictions between their personal experiences and learned philosophical viewpoints. These future teachers must recognize and admit their own deficit thinking and take responsibility for their part in perpetuating it. Finally, pre-service teachers must move beyond their beliefs before they are licensed to teach in our schools. This cannot be accomplished by merely integrating a social justice course into a teacher prep program. It has to be systemic changes for the educational program. These implications will be challenging to implement in educational colleges and universities. These types of programs are moneymakers for the colleges and universities. These types of controversial courses would no doubt affect enrollments and completion of degrees, causing these schools to be hurt financially; however, they are a necessity to influence futures teachers' perceptions of their students being able to achieve.

School leader or principal preparatory programs must change as well. The challenge is not just changing the perception of the principal but also giving her/him the ability to change teachers' perceptions. Educational preparatory programs focus on school

management especially human resources, school finance, and law. Rarely if ever do they delve into social justice areas of school leadership. Principal preparatory programs must give school leaders the ability to influence others to adopt instructional practices that support students' needs and influence other educators in the school building to be leaders in their own right. The ability to empower, energize, and engage others is a difficult skill to learn, but, it is possible. One must simply be willing to take a risk and reach for those people.

Implications for Researchers

As discussed in Chapter 2, this study added to a growing body of research regarding the link between educational contexts of equity, success, and place. Chapter 2 presented a synthesis of relevant literature related to the topics of equity, success, and place including the relevance of the conceptual framework to these contexts. There were parts of the conceptual framework that were not practical to include in this study, but these components could be used to make relevant and reliable studies focusing on deficit thinking and equity. Parts of the conceptual framework that were omitted from this study included "suppressing or ignoring systemic inequities in policy and/or practice; and "framing the study within a sociopolitical context for an oppressed condition."

"Are concerns regarding contextualizing factors, including systemic inequities and the ways those inequities are reflected in school policy and practice, suppressed or ignored?" is the fourth component from the section of "Limitations of Discourse." This topic would make a fascinating research study. A school district office or possibly a community organization would make suitable locations for a study pertaining to systemic inequalities.

Finding a deeper understanding of the phenomenon of potential problems associated with language and culture was not included in the "Problems with Communities," as the focus of this study was educators' perceptions related to student success. However, a more in-depth study could produce salient results that identify perceptions specifically related to communities instead of school settings. These perceptions may or may not reinforce the findings of this study.

The final component of the conceptual framework, "Culture versus Oppressed Condition," was examined. This study primarily focused on "culture." The concourse statements were geared toward student backgrounds of which culture is a big component. The results of this study indicated that the participants framed "poverty and class" as a culture rather than an oppressed condition. If there were more of a mixture of the two conditions there might be very different results.

Also in the section, "Culture versus Oppressed Condition," personal experience of student success was listed as a reason for the persistence of educators' perceptions. It really does not fit into framing "poverty and class" discourse, however, I find the concept extremely interesting. Nowhere in the literature did I find a mention of perceptions coming from success. Never the less, it is an important point to make and requires further study.

The participants identified five themes related to their perceptions of students' backgrounds contributing to their success in school: emotion, equity, environment, exposure, and encouragement/expectations. These participants were all located in low socioeconomic middle schools in southeastern North Carolina. One way to assess the findings of this study would be to conduct future studies in different locales around the state. An interesting

dichotomy might be the Appalachian region or the metropolis of the Charlotte-Mecklenburg school system. Another variation of the study could be examining private or charter school educators' perceptions of student background in southeastern North Carolina.

Personal Implications

As I complete this dissertation study there are two questions yet unanswered from my research, "how do we create conversations that engender meaningful dialogue around deficit thinking?" and "how do we move beyond deficit thinking to a new consciousness of reduced stereotype threats?" I am currently a principal of a Title One elementary school in southeastern North Carolina. The demographics of the school, both students and staff, are similar to the middle school I discussed at the beginning of this dissertation. I have the same concerns or struggles at this elementary school that I had at the middle school level. The following is a timeline that I implement to dissolve deficit thinking and create a new paradigm, in my school.

- In June, I will conduct the card sort from this dissertation study with the faculty and staff (Pre-Test). I will use the data to create Book Clubs using our Balanced Literacy Protocol, see Appendix N.
- In July and August, faculty and staff will read Claude Steele's book *Whistling Vivaldi*, use Title One funds to purchase.
- Throughout the month of September during weekly PLC's, faculty and staff will discuss *Whistling Vivaldi* using Book Club Protocol.
- Throughout the month of October during weekly PLC's, faculty and staff will read

and discuss *Equity traps: A useful construct for preparing principals to lead schools that are successful with racially diverse students* article.

- Throughout the months of November and December, faculty and staff will read and discuss *Equity audits: A principal leadership tool for developing equitable and excellent schools.*
- During the month of January, the MTSS team will conduct Equity Audits using End of Grade tests, student disciplines, rates of PEP's, rates of Special Education referrals, and rates of Gifted and Talented referrals.
- During the month of February, the MTSS team will present data from equity audits during weekly PLC meetings.
- During the month of March, the MTSS team will present data from equity audits Parent Advisory Committee to solicit assistance and to engage community.
- During the months of April and May the MTSS team will engage the community with data and leverage community support to create a true multicultural school community.
- During June, we will conduct the card sort from this dissertation study with the faculty and staff (Post-Test).

Conducting this series of staff development activities will create conversations that engender meaningful dialogue around deficit thinking. I believe these staff development activities will create cognitive dissonance for the participants that possess the deficit-thinking paradigm. This will cause them to challenge their beliefs and their assumptions thus causing them to adopt a culturally responsive pedagogy. These educators will be confronted with the

task of resolving their assumptions. This last accomplishment will allow these educators to move beyond deficit thinking to a new consciousness that will reduce stereotype threats and increase student learning.

I began this dissertation study with the intent of understanding the teachers in my former middle school. I wanted to know if the phenomenon of deficit thinking had any impact on student learning as I suspected it did in my middle school. By tying teachers' perceptions of student background with stereotype threat and academic outcomes, I can truly proclaim that deficit thinking does affect student learning in low socioeconomic status middle schools in southeastern North Carolina.

I believe that deficit thinking is ever present because of the lack of understanding of a student's culture and the impact of sociopolitical forces. These forces are outside the control of our students, their families, and educators. This dissertation found that middle school educators perceive that emotion, equity, environment, exposure, and encouragement/expectations affect student learning. If educators have a genuine affection for their students within an equitable school setting, then the effects of exposure and environment can be mitigated to yield favorable educational outcomes. If educators encourage their students utilizing high expectations while respecting the student's values then expected academic results would be achieved. If there are sociopolitical forces within a school creating an uneven playing field, then the educators in that building should be courageous and remove those forces if within their control. These axioms are inexpensive and credible strategies for improving student learning. While they may not be easily implemented they are necessary to provide the appropriate education every child deserves.

Conclusion

The purpose of this Q-methodology study was to understand educators' perceptions of their students' backgrounds in their middle school, and consequently what led to the development and persistence of their perceptions. This was done whether they believe the deficit model or that each child has inherent talents. The study focused on middle schools because of the lack of relevant literature pertaining to deficit thinking within middle schools.

Completion of this study has increased the body of literature on the topic of deficit thinking in middle schools. This study's findings may assist school districts and teacher/principal preparation programs in increasing the knowledge base for educators dealing with these conditions in their schools. Additionally, these findings may aid state and local policy makers as well as instructional leaders in school districts in creating relevant policies and procedures to ensure a balanced "field of play" for all students. Finally, this study has allowed educators a chance to reflect on their experiences and practice as they continue to deal with deficit thinking in their schools.

I summarized the relevant literature and critiqued the appropriateness of research methods as well as critiqued practical and scholarly significance of the research. I examined equity in schools and the interplay of equity and place. I discussed how equity plays a role in student success. There were seven themes that emerged from the literature related to deficit thinking: the concept of deficit thinking, the culture of poverty, at-risk students, the Ruby Payne phenomenon, student interactions with deficit thinking, teacher interactions with deficit thinking, and school leadership interactions with deficit thinking. I then synthesized the current literature as it related to each of this study's research questions.

To answer the research questions I used Q-methodology. I discussed the background and rationale for using Q-methodology. Later, I explained how the Q-statements were created and who comprised the P-sample. I described both the quantitative and qualitative portions of the data collection and analysis. My personal subjectivity related to deficit thinking and the limitations of this study were then discussed. Lastly, I detailed ethical considerations for the study.

Factor One was titled, "Compassion of Educator Motivates 'Whole Child' to Succeed." Fifteen participants loaded significantly on Factor One. The highest scoring statements related student success to caring teachers that motivate their students. Common themes included students know teachers believe in them, high expectations lead to success, "what" is "right" with students, and teachers go the extra mile. Participants did not perceive that the setting or the culture of the school determined success. They also felt that students that are harmed by life or live in homes that do not value education could still succeed in school.

Factor Two was titled, "Authentic Understanding between Home Life and School Life Leads to Student Success." Eleven participants loaded significantly on Factor Two. The highest scoring statements related student success to bridging the gap between home and school. Common themes included listening to students, involving parents, honoring home values at school, and developing trusting relationships between home and school. These participants did not perceive school leaders could influence teachers to create inclusive environments that create equitable classrooms. They also felt that school leaders could not

improve student outcomes by fostering relationships with them. Lastly, they disagreed that parents' linguistic abilities hampered their participation in their children's education.

Factor Three: "Collaboration and Inclusion for ALL Removes Barriers to Student Success." Four participants loaded significantly on Factor Three. These participants agreed that student success comes from educators giving all students a chance. Common themes included equity in education, collaboration between all vested parties, teachers working hard for students, and teachers learn best practices from students. The four participants disagreed that students believed in themselves based on the type of school or types of programs they belonged. They also disagreed that parents do not take an active role at school because they need to work or that language plays a role in student success.

The participants identified five themes related to their perceptions of students' backgrounds contributing to their success in school: emotion, equity, environment, encouragement/expectations, and exposure. Participants felt that emotion plays a role in academic success, students know teachers love and care about them. Educators exhibit expectations of students, either high ones or low ones. Teachers encourage students to be successful through motivation and influence. Equity refers to all students having access to the curriculum. A student's environment consists of the culture, family, and location of school and home. Finally, students are exposed to life or the outside world, or they may be exposed to harmful events.

Thirteen participants identified three conditions that led to their perceptions. These conditions included working in low socioeconomic status schools, personal work experience outside of education, and family background (student and educator). These conditions were

not consistent according to the three factors of this study. This meant that the development of the perceptions was not limited to participants that loaded on the same factor.

These same participants identified two conditions that led to their perceptions. These conditions included "excuses for student failure" and "personal experience of student success." These two conditions were not consistent according to the three factors of the study. This meant that the persistence of the perceptions was not limited to participants that loaded on the same factor.

The results from this study reinforced my personal beliefs related to educators' perceptions of student backgrounds. I believe that educators perceive their actions in regard with the best interests of the students in mind. Unfortunately we cannot measure student success with educator intentions but rather with measurable student outcomes. While I believe in a "funds of knowledge" philosophy other middle school educators follow the "deficit thinking" paradigm. Participants' views on student background, for the most part, were consistent with the literature. The participants whose perceptions differed from the literature discussed in the Literature Review were impacted by their personal experiences within rural, Title 1 middle schools in southeastern North Carolina. The findings of this study offers insight into the body of literature related to middle school educators' perceptions.

In conclusion there are three lessons gleaned from this study. First, middle school educators perceive that emotion, equity, environment, encouragement/expectations, and exposure play a significant role in academic outcome of students. Second, middle school educators' perceptions mostly come from experiences either at work or in life. A few garnered their perceptions from family members. These perceptions continue based on

excuses for student failure (pros and cons) and personal experiences of students finding success. Finally, I have learned that deficit thinking is present in each group of the participants that loaded on the study's factors.

Epilogue

Following the completion of data collection, I completed a Q-sort using the forty statement cards, a post Q-sort survey, and interview questions, to examine my perceptions related to student background affecting academic outcomes. I spent eleven years of my career as a middle school educator. I taught math, science, and/or social studies for nine years, and served as a middle school principal for two years. All of my middle school experience was served in Title 1 schools, in urban or rural locales. Figure 5.4 displays my Q-sort.

-4	**-3**	**-2**	**-1**	**0**	**+1**	**+2**	**+3**	**+4**
3	19	17	10	31	40	33	30	35
15	2	18	27	26	32	12	36	34
	29	9	22	11	1	28	38	
	16	5	6	21	25	20	37	
		4	2	7	14	39		
			13	25	8			

Figure 5.4 My Q-sort

The highest and lowest placed cards for my sort are listed in Table 5.1. I placed Statements 35 and 34 in the "Strongly Agree" column. Statement 35 reads, "It is the responsibility of all educators in a school building to work collaboratively to help all students reach their full potential." Statement 34 reads, "School leaders can assist teachers with developing an inclusive school culture for ALL students." I truly believe in a fully inclusive school construct. ALL means just what it says, every child is given an equal chance based on their abilities. As a school leader I feel it is my responsibility to focus the culture of my building on inclusion.

I placed Statements 15 and 3 in the "Strongly Disagree" column. Statement 15 reads, "When children are harmed by life (i.e. abuse or abandonment) they cannot perform at the same level as other children." Statement 3 reads, "Children are products of their home environment (e.g., single parent home, living in poverty, primary care giver for siblings, abuse, drug or alcohol dependency)." As I child I was labeled a "migrant" because my family moved around so much from ages five to seven. That negative connotation has stayed with me my entire life. I was labeled by my school based on issues far removed from a seven year old's control, and this left a pretty big chip on my shoulder that I continue to deal with as a forty year old. Every child brings to school unique experiences that make them special. These situations should not create an educational impasse for the child.

As I sorted the cards, I did not feel that any statement about my beliefs was missing. Most of the relevant information about student backgrounds and educational outcomes were present in the Q-sample. I did not have difficulty placing any statements. I have lived with the Q-sample for so long, it was almost memorized.

My perceptions of middle school students' backgrounds affecting their educational outcomes are based on an "asset thinking" paradigm. In that paradigm all students have inherent strengths and talents, it is the challenge of the educator to find those strengths and talents. While there are many duties I perform on a daily basis, the most important one is that of instructional leader. I believe that all children can and will learn given the proper instruction for their academic level in a caring and student-centered environment. This education should be delivered by professionals that make learning relevant to their lives, create relationships with them, and give them rigorous learning activities that follow research-based practices yielding the results required for students to be college and/or career ready adults.

Table 5.10

My High-Positive and High-Negative Statements

Score	Card #	Statement
+4	35	It is the responsibility of all educators in a school building to work collaboratively to help all students reach their full potential.
+4	34	School leaders can assist teachers with developing an inclusive school culture for ALL students.

Table 5.10 Continued

+3	30	Students that know their teachers believe in them are motivated to learn.
+3	36	Considering what is "right" with my students instead of what is "wrong" proves that every child can learn.
+3	38	Ensuring the equity of education for ALL students will prove that they can achieve at their own rate
+3	37	High expectations for ALL students no matter where they begin will allow them to experience success.
-3	19	Students' linguistic deficiencies come from parents' inability to provide language rich home environments.
-3	2	Family cultures influence student motivation to learn.
-4	15	When children are harmed by life (i.e. abuse or abandonment) they cannot perform at the same level as other children.
-4	3	Children are products of their home environment (e.g., single parent home, living in poverty, primary care giver for siblings, abuse, drug or alcohol dependency).

In comparison to the three factors studied, my sort was not identical to any of the factors. My sort was most similar to Factors One and Three, with more similarities to One. Three of my High Positive Statements, 30, 36, and 37 were shared with Factor One sorts. Two of my High Negative Statements were shared with Factor One sorts: Statements 15 and

16. None of my High Positive or High Negative Statements was found in the opposite position on the continuum for Factor One. Three of my High Positive Statements were shared with Factor Three sorts, Statements 35, 37, and 38. None of my High Positive was found in the opposite position on the continuum for Factor Three. I differed with Factor Three in that I had Statement 29 in the High Positive Statements, and Factor Three had it in the High Negative end of the continuum.

I differed the most with the Factor Two sort. Only one of my High Positive Statements was shared with the Factor Two sort: Statement 30. I had Statements 34 and 38 in the High Positive Statements while Factor Two sorts had the two statements in the High Negative end of the continuum. We shared no common High Negative Statements. I also had Statements 5 and 16 in the High Negative end of the continuum while Factor Two sorts placed them in the High Positive end of the continuum.

After looking at the model factor array, the high-positive statements and high-negative statements, I observed the theme of "Inclusion, Expectations, and Collaboration." The statements in the high-positive end of the model factor array represent me as an educator. Disagreeing with the statements in the high-negative end of the model factor array also represents me as an educator, because those statements coincide with deficit thinking.

The conditions that have contributed to the development of my perceptions related to students' backgrounds continue to evolve. My upbringing in a single parent home during the 1980s is a major contributor to my beliefs. I have had so many distractions in my life and have overcome them, for the most part to become a successful human being. This renews my hope in the students I see each day in my school. The persistence of my perceptions comes

from the belief that I want my students to have an educational experience that I was not provided. I want them to have an experience of inclusion and acceptance because they cannot be held liable for the happenstance of their birth.

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Appendices

Appendix A. Literature Review Table

Kozol, J. (1991). *Savage inequalities.* New York: Random House.	
Literature Typology	Conceptual
Research Questions	Why has there been so little improvement in diversifying poor inner city schools since Brown vs Board of Education? These schools are attended primarily by very poor, non-white students. The claim was that this segregation issue was handled many years ago, and no one wants to relive the past social upheavals.
Research Design Qual., Quant., Mixed & Procedure; Unit of Analysis & Sample	The author visited 30 schools in inner city neighborhoods all over the country. He summarizes his experiences in 6 vignettes (small case studies) that comprise the six chapters of his book. The vignettes tell the stories of poor school children from East St. Louis, South Chicago, New York City, Camden, NJ, Washington D. C., and San Antonio.
Main Findings (Theoretical Foundation)	• The fact of ghetto education as a permanent American reality appears to be universally accepted. • While Ronald Reagan era social policies set concerns for poor and minority children back decades, it set back their education almost 100 years. • The urban schools the author visited were extraordinarily unhappy places. • No educators, politicians, parents, or community members are asking the students their opinions of the schools or their neighborhoods. • Through the author's experiences, he paints a very sad state of the equity or lack there of in the lives of poor and minority children with respect to their white, middle class counterparts.
Leithwood, K., & Jantzi, D. (2006). A review of transformational school leadership research 1996-2005. *Leadership and Policy in Schools,* 4, 177-199.	
Literature Typology	Empirical and Literature Review
Research Questions	How leadership influences student learning?
Research Design Qual., Quant., Mixed & Procedure; Unit of Analysis & Sample	The report summarizes a broad range of empirical research and related literature that serves as starting points to understand the links between leadership and student learning.
Main Findings	• Leadership provides a critical bridge between reform

(Theoretical Foundation)	initiatives and their consequences on students. • Leadership is second only to classroom instruction in factors that contribute to student learning. • Effective leadership has the greatest impact on "schools in trouble." • Educational leadership comes from many sources not just the "usual suspects" school administrators.
Harris, A., & Spillane, J. (2008). Distributed leadership through the looking glass. *Management in Education, 22*(1)*,* 31-34.	
Literature Typology	Conceptual
Research Questions	N/A
Research Design Qual., Quant., Mixed & Procedure; Unit of Analysis & Sample	A distributed leadership perspective recognizes that there are multiple leaders and that leadership activities are shared within and between organizations.
Main Findings (Theoretical Foundation)	Distributed leadership is popular because it has normative power, representational power, and empirical power. Some limitations for using distributed leadership include conceptual confusion/overlap and tension between theoretical and practical interpretations. Distributed leadership could be used as a analytical frame for understanding leadership practice or looking at leadership through a new and alternative lens.
Shields, C. N. (2009). *Courageous leadership for transforming schools: Democratizing practice.* Norwood, MA: Christopher-Gordon Publishers, Inc.	
Literature Typology	Conceptual/Theoretical
Research Questions	The author describes what constitutes democratic educational practice in schools and the necessary steps toward achieving social justice.
Research Design Qual., Quant., Mixed & Procedure; Unit of Analysis & Sample	The author combines theoretical approaches in critical democracy, with current data, anecdotes, and research. She explains the historical legacy of civil, political, and social inequities in America. Shields give solutions for utilizing our democratic society to overcome discrimination and exclusion in schools.
Main Findings (Theoretical	pp. 195-196: "Leadership in democratized schools focuses on creating inclusive

Foundation)	and empowering learning environments for the education of all students. To educate all students requires that educational leaders effect change that levels the playing field of schooling, that recognizes the rich cultural capital of students from other than middle-class or upper-class backgrounds, that respectfully considers perspectives other than those represented in the formal curriculum." " Educational leaders should therefore be deliberate and intentional about transformation- a goal that, require both collective action and moral courage." "Collective activism on the part of courageous leaders is therefore an essential component of being a good leader."
Howley, C. B., & Howley, A. (2010). Poverty and school achievement in rural communities: A social-class interpretations. In K. Schafft & A. Youngblood-Jackson (Eds.), *Rural education for the twenty-first century* (pp. 34-50). University Park, PA: The Pennsylvania State University Press.	
Literature Typology	Conceptual
Research Questions	N/A
Research Design Qual., Quant., Mixed & Procedure; Unit of Analysis & Sample	In this chapter the authors discuss the relationship between social class and achievement. They examine rural identity and rural community those so-called poor in the contexts of global society and rural community.
Main Findings (Theoretical Foundation)	p. 35 "Accepting at least for the sake of argument that poverty is socially constructed it make sense to investigate the context was the poor learn who they are and thereby accept poverty as a marker of their identities. People called poor are diminished, our rural students and neighbors say I grew up poor but I didn't know until that is until I went to school. Such confessions may strike residents of the metro or cosmopolis odd. The imposition of deficiency is very much the issue even if one argues that some or many cosmopolitans or suburbanites understand the rule." p. 38 " Community type determined historically and economically does in fact have a bearing on the construction of "rich" and "poor" and on the schools role in that social construction."
Flora, C. B., & Flora, J. L. (2008). *Rural communities: Legacy and change* (3rd ed.). Boulder, CO: Westview Press.	
Literature Typology	Conceptual

Research Questions	N/A
Research Design Qual., Quant., Mixed & Procedure; Unit of Analysis & Sample	This book focuses on various capitals in rural areas: natural, cultural, human, social, political, financial, and built. The authors provide the reader with a framework for understanding rural society based on the concepts and explanations of social science.
Main Findings (Theoretical Foundation)	pp. 72-74 "Role of the school the family is not the only institution that transmits legacy. Funded and staffed by community members schools play an important role in orienting children with their future position in society. In turn the legacy's parents have for their children influences the schools character." "In communities in other parts of the country particularly in low income areas in the South and Appalachian parents see limited job opportunities for their children. As discussed earlier they also see little connection between hard work and success. Consequently their investment education is not nearly as great. Dropout rates are high and teenage pregnancy is more prevalent. Parents and young people do not see any immediate advantage in remaining in school. Consequently the sense of independence created by going to work even at a low paying job or becoming a parent is not offset by what seems to be the remote chance that education will lead to higher earnings. Unfortunately high school dropouts experience higher unemployment rates." "Hollingshead identified three mechanisms by which rural communities' social stratification were reproduced in the school. First through clicks and recreational activities for young people replicated the social structure of the adult world. Second those adults who had a direct impact on the children including teachers, school administrators, and community leaders systematically discriminated against children from lower classes. Finally, children from the lower class learn patterns both at home and in school that hampered them in educational and occupational attainment." "As social institutions that transmit legacy culture, schools are an enigma. Rural communities have fought long and hard to maintain local control of schools, in part to ensure the values and attitudes of the community are respected and transmitted through education." "Some rural communities are looking very carefully at who succeeds and who does not succeed in school and asking themselves to what extent the school serves all students fairly."
Darling-Hammond, L. (2010). *The flat world and education: How America's commitment*	

to equity will determine our future. New York: Teachers College Press.	
Literature Typology	Conceptual
Research Questions	The author describes specific policies and school reforms that must be implemented to halt the nation's academic decline and re-establish it as a global educational leader.
Research Design Qual., Quant., Mixed & Procedure; Unit of Analysis & Sample	The author documents the educational crisis in the United States. She describes specific actions that school districts, states, and the federal government can take to actualize educational equity and close the gap between ideals and realities.
Main Findings (Theoretical Foundation)	The five major building blocks that create unequal and inadequate educational outcomes in the United States: 1. The high level of poverty and low levels of social supports for low-income children's welfare and health, including their early learning opportunities. 2. The unequal allocation of school resources, which is made politically easier by the increasing resegregation of schools. 3. Inadequate systems for providing high-quality teachers and teaching to all children in all communities. 4. Rationing of high-quality curriculum through tracking and interschool disparities. 5. Factory-model school designs that have created dysfunctional learning environments for students and unsupportive settings for strong teaching.
McKenzie, K. B., & Locke, L. A. (2010). On becoming a leader for educational equity and excellence: It starts with instruction. In S. D. Horsford (Ed.), *New Perspectives in Educational Leadership: Exploring Social, Political, and Community Contests and Meaning* (pp. 47-66). New York: Peter Lang Publishing, Inc.	
Literature Typology	Conceptual/Theoretical
Research Questions	Focuses on the principalship and how it embraces difference and finds that differences should be embraced and not considered deficits. The problem is to overcome the concept of "diversity as an obstacle."
Research Design Qual., Quant., Mixed & Procedure; Unit of Analysis & Sample	The authors review relevant literature and research, including detailing their own recent research on the subject of equity. They also discuss instructional and transformational leadership.
Main Findings	• Instructional leadership is characterized as direct principal

(Theoretical Foundation)	involvement in curriculum and instruction: monitoring classroom instruction and student progress, and working with teachers to improve teaching and student outcomes. Transformational leadership is characterized by charismatic and inspirational leaders that have followers that trust, admire, are loyal, and respect them. • The authors developed a conceptual framework for instructional leadership for social justice. This framework was based on a synthesis of many researchers over a twenty-year period. The instructional leader for social justice focuses on the business of teaching and learning that is done through attention to equity consciousness and high quality teaching skills. • Equity consciousness 4 central beliefs: all children are capable of high levels of academic success; all children means all children; the adults in the school building are primarily responsible for student learning; all students do not learn the same way requiring us to change our practices. • To help teachers develop and maintain these skills requires leadership specifically instructional leadership. Robinson et al.'s meta-analysis revealed that instructional leadership effect on student outcomes was 3 to 4 times the effect of transformational leadership.
Ryan, J. (2006). *Inclusive leadership.* San Francisco, CA: Jossey Bass.	
Literature Typology	Conceptual/Theoretical
Research Questions	N/A
Research Design Qual., Quant., Mixed & Procedure; Unit of Analysis & Sample	The author draws on his research to present a concept of leadership as an intentionally inclusive practice that values all cultures and types of students, teachers, and parents.
Main Findings (Theoretical Foundation)	• Inclusive leadership is a collective process of social influence that is aimed at a particular end. The 3 key elements of inclusive leadership: leadership implies some sort of influence; it is a process, an array of practices, procedures, understandings, and values that persist over time; it is organized to achieve particular ends. All members (students, teachers, and parents) of the community should be involved in the influence processes. Leadership should promote inclusive practices generally.

	• Some leadership strategies are exclusive such as managerial/technical, humanistic, and transformational approaches. These approaches are individualistic and hierarchical enterprises. Members of school communities work best when they are not separated by hierarchy. • Strategies that encourage inclusion are making inclusion a nonnegotiable reality, creating cognitive dissonance and discomfort in regard to exclusive practices and a sense of urgency about inclusion, share theoretical/ethical/research-based rationale for inclusive education and leadership, track and bargain, stall and maneuver, establish links between educators and disadvantaged groups, and involve stakeholders in formulating objectives for schooling that supports all students. • For inclusion to become a normal part of school practice, education must be critical in its approach. This requires school communities to reflect on their ideas and practices.
Shields, C. M. (2010). Transformative leadership: Working for equity in diverse contexts. *Educational Administration Quarterly, 46(*4), 558-589.	
Literature Typology	Conceptual and Empirical
Research Questions/ Purpose	1. To delineate a theory of transformative leadership, distinct from other theories. 2. To assess the utility of the theory for guiding the practice of educational leaders who want to affect both educational and broader social change.
Research Design Qual., Quant., Mixed & Procedure; Unit of Analysis & Sample	Using a predetermined research sample, the author selected 2 principals from a wider study of educators' pedagogical conceptions of social justice. The two were studied, using multiple interviews, confirmatory interviews with others, and observations in situ, to identify practices that might conform to categories of transformative leadership theory.
Main Findings (Theoretical Foundation)	From the literature- major elements of transformative leadership 1. A combination of both critique and promise 2. Attempts to affect both deep and equitable changes 3. Deconstruction and reconstruction of the knowledge frameworks that generate inequity 4. Acknowledgement of power and privilege 5. Emphasis on both individual achievement and the public goods 6. A focus on liberation, democracy, equity, and justice 7. Evidence of moral courage and activism

	Figure 1. p 563 Distinctions among three theories of leadership (good information). "Rejecting deficit thinking and blame, each is convinced that it is essential to differentiate between what children have or have not been taught to do and what they are able to do." The key values of liberation, emancipation, democracy, equity, and justice were evidenced in the study of the two principals by their words and practice.
Marshall, C. (2004). Social justice challenges to educational administration: Introduction to a special issue. *Educational Administration Quarterly, 40*(1), 3-13.	
Literature Typology	Conceptual
Research Questions	N/A
Research Design Qual., Quant., Mixed & Procedure; Unit of Analysis & Sample	The author challenges the field of educational administration to take an activist and pro-social justice stance.
Main Findings (Theoretical Foundation)	• Traditional training for educational leadership reflects a culture that has marginalized issues and concerns of social justice. • Professors and scholars educational administration have the ability to shape the social justice values stances and skills of practicing and future administrators and scholars. • Educational leaders possess credential but lack the value stances to blow the whistle when policies and programs cause harm. • The knowledge base for educational administration has traditionally emphasized management and a narrow view of leadership theory/ • Equity concerns garner lip service in textbooks and lectures but not in action. • Educational administrator scholars should take the momentum of accountability to focus on social justice. • Most reform proposals merely tighten with accountability and narrowed curriculum.
Skrla, L, Scheurich, J. J., Garcia, J., & Nolly, G. (2004). Equity audits: A principal leadership tool for developing equitable and excellent schools. *Educational Administration Quarterly, 40*(133), 133-161.	
Literature Typology	Conceptual

Research Questions/ Purpose	The purpose of this article is to increase the likelihood of equity-positive leadership responses within the context of increasing high-stakes accountability policy systems by proposing a new tool, a reconceptualized form of equity audits for school leaders to use in their equity focused work.
Research Design Qual., Quant., Mixed & Procedure; Unit of Analysis & Sample	Based on their research of schools and districts that have narrowed achievement gaps, the authors have developed a simplified reconceptualized equity audit.
Main Findings (Theoretical Foundation)	• Teachers, administrators, school board/community members, and policy makers may be aware of inequities in various aspects of their schools, but they rarely have systematically examined these areas and then devised ways to eliminate the inequities. • There are three dimensions of equity: teacher quality equity, programmatic equity, an achievement equity. A simple formula for equity auditing is TQE + PE = AE. • Four variables operationalize teacher quality equity, they are teacher's education, teacher experience, teacher mobility, and alternative certification or experience. • Four potential indicators of program equity are special education, gifted and talented, bilingual education, and student discipline. • In response to a need for broader definition of achievement equity the four indicators are state achievement test results, dropout rates, high school graduation rates, and ACT/SAT/AP results. The process for using equity audits: 1. Develop a committee of relevant stakeholders 2. The numbers and percentages of key indicators must be discussed by the committee 3. The discussion must include the gaps 4. The group needs to discuss potential solutions 5. Implementation of proposed solution 6. Monitor results and report results
Shields, C. M. (2004). Dialogic leadership for social justice: overcoming pathologies of silence. *Educational Administration Quarterly, 40*(1), 109-132.	
Literature Typology	Conceptual/Empirical
Research Questions	How does the status quo marginalize large numbers of students and their families, and prevents them from being heard and/or

	acknowledged? Can transformational educational leaders foster the academic success of ALL students.
• Research Design • Qual., Quant., Mixed & Procedure; • Unit of Analysis & Sample	• Through her research and reviewing extant research the author: • Examines the status quo • Accounts for the status quo • Finally challenges the status quo.
• Main Findings • (Theoretical Foundation)	• Based on socially constructed and stereotypical images, educators may unknowingly, and with the best of intentions, allocate blame for poor school performance to children from minoritized groups based on generalizations, labels, or misguided assumptions. • Transformative leadership is deeply rooted in moral and ethical values in a social context. • Pathologies of silence are misguided attempts to act justly, to display empathy, and to create democratic and optimistic educational communities. • To overcome pathologies of silence one must acknowledge race, recognize class, and become inclusive. In recognizing class, one must remember that social class is hidden in schooling but is central to social inequality. • Great quote, " on the other hand, rejecting deficit thinking and adopting student-centered pedagogies opened doors for increased achievement and success. In other words they found that attitudes and relationships are more important than funding or facilities to students achievement."
McKenzie, K. B., & Scheurich, J. J. (2004). Equity traps: A useful construct for preparing principals to lead schools that are successful with racially diverse students. *Educational Administration Quarterly, 40*(5), 601-632.	
Literature Typology	Conceptual /Empirical
Research Questions/ Purpose	To offer a useful, pragmatic construct to professors in educational administration departments to help them prepare their principal candidates to be able to identify equity traps, understand them, and be able to implement strategies to avoid or overcome these traps.
Research Design Qual., Quant., Mixed &	A qualitative research project: in-depth discussions with 8 experienced white teachers about their PERCEPTIONS of their students of color, their own racial identity, and the relationship

Procedure; Unit of Analysis & Sample	between their perceptions of their students and their identity: 1 hour individual interviews and six 2-hour group sessions From their research the authors offer a research-based construct for preparing principals to overcome equity traps.
Main Findings (Theoretical Foundation)	Equity traps are thinking or assumptions that prevent educators that their students of color can be successful learners. These traps stop or hinder our ability to move toward equity in schooling. Equity traps strategies for addressing them: 1. A deficit view- based on Valencia's definition (these kids). School leaders need to help teachers reframe thinking (neighborhood walks). 2. Racial erasure-based on bell hook, "racism would cease to exist if everyone failed to see color. School leaders could have teachers conduct book studies on "racial others" or equity audits. 3. Avoidance and employment of the gaze, taken from Foucalt, trying to fly under the radar from administrators and scrutiny. 4. Faulting other teachers for being lack of deficit perspective. Leaders could hire teachers with the expectation of success for ALL students. 5. Paralogical beliefs and behaviors- from medical literature: exists when a conclusion is drawn from premises that logically do not warrant that conclusion. "The anger of kids has caused me to act this way." 6. School leaders could have teachers visit other teachers' classrooms that have found success with their type of students, using master teachers to promote success, and developing a critical mass of advocates for equity among teachers. Ultimately, the best route to influence teachers is through the principal who, research repeatedly has shown to be the key to school change.
Garcia, S. B., & Guerra, P. L. (2004). Deconstructing deficit thinking: Working with educators to create more equitable learning environments. *Education and Urban Society, 36,* 150-168.	
Literature Typology	Conceptual/Empirical
Research Questions/ Purpose	The authors present a conceptual framework for deconstructing deficit thinking through staff development.
Research Design Qual., Quant., Mixed &	Working the ODP at the SEDL, using sociocultural framework the authors challenged teachers' and administrators' deficit views of minority students.

Procedure; Unit of Analysis & Sample	
Main Findings (Theoretical Foundation)	-Framework of operating assumptions about PD focused on equity-oriented pedagogy: 1. Deficit thinking permeates society. 2. PD for diversity is not just for white educators. 3. Intercultural communication permeates every aspect of schooling. 4. Cultural sensitivity and awareness do not automatically result in equity practices. 5. PD activities must systematically and explicitly link equity knowledge to classroom practice. -Deconstructing deficit thinking through PD concluded 5 general themes: overgeneralizing about family background; writing students off before they came to school; absence of a critical lens; a monocultural view of child-rearing practices and success; and the system works students and parents need to change. -Because the staff development experiences created cognitive dissonance for some participants between their beliefs and their assumptions and those reflected in culturally responsive pedagogy, they were confronted with the task of resolving them.
Cooper, B. (2012). Deficit thinking. *Learn NC.* Retrieved from http://www/learnnc.org/lp/pages/990	
Literature Typology	Conceptual
Research Questions	N/A
Research Design Qual., Quant., Mixed & Procedure; Unit of Analysis & Sample	N/A
Main Findings (Theoretical Foundation)	○ Deficit thinking accounts for students' academic and social struggles at school by pointing out those desirable attributes students or their families' lack. ○ 3 distinct categories of DF: neohereditarianism, the culture of poverty paradigm, and cultural & environmental deficits. ○ At-risk children are often described as victims of racism, poverty, and inferior school conditions, the central focus of the at-risk rhetoric are family and individual characteristics. ○ Student PERCEPTIONS of their teachers include lowered

	academic expectations, disproportionally retained, tracked into vocational education programs, and lack of parent concerns for their children's education. o Critics of DF blame the school for not recognizing the social capital within the student and families. o Teachers can recognize that students have inherent strengths and value, and establishing a better relationship with the student and family. o Funds of Knowledge approach: Luis Moll at University of Arizona o Teachers can avoid DF by considering what is right with their students as opposed to what is wrong with them.
Lewis, O. (1966, October). The culture of poverty. *Scientific American*, *215*(4), 19-25.	
Literature Typology	Empirical
Research Questions	Does membership in a group that has been poor for generations constitute belonging to a separate culture?
Research Design Qual., Quant., Mixed & Procedure; Unit of Analysis & Sample	He combines the traditional techniques of sociology, anthropology, and psychology that includes questionnaires, interviews, and psychological tests. His study is conducted on Puerto Ricans living in Puerto Rico and the United States.
Main Findings (Theoretical Foundation)	The Culture of Poverty: • A way of life handed down from generation to generation. • It provides them with design for living. • The setting is a cash economy with wage labor and production for profit, high rates of unemployment and underemployment, at low wages for unskilled labor. • Dominant class asserts a set of values, stresses the possibility of upward mobility, low SES results in personal inadequacy and inferiority. • Poor children accept their station in life by 6 or 7 years of age. • There is an awareness of middle class values. • 70 traits characterize the culture of poverty, comprised into 4 dimensions: relationship between subculture and larger society; the nature of the slum community, the nature of the family; and the attitudes, values, and character structure of the individual.
Gorski, P. (2008, April). The myth of the culture of poverty. *Educational Leadership 67* (7).	
Literature	Conceptual

Typology	
Research Questions	N/A
Research Design Qual., Quant., Mixed & Procedure; Unit of Analysis & Sample	N/A
Main Findings (Theoretical Foundation)	"There is no such thing as a culture of poverty." The four myths of a culture of poverty: Poor people are unmotivated and have weak work ethics, poor parents are uninvolved in their children's learning, largely they do not value education, poor people are linguistically deficient, and poor people tend to abuse drugs and alcohol. "There is such a thing as classism." It defines students by their weaknesses instead of their strengths. It draws on stereotypes and ignores systemic conditions. We must consider how our own biases affect our interactions with and expectations of our students.
Singam, K. (2010). Achievement gap: Caused by deficit thinking or a thinking deficit? *DC Gifted Education Examiner*. Retrieved from http://www.examiner.com/article/achievement-gap-caused-by-deficit-thinking-or-a-thinking-deficit	
Literature Typology	Conceptual
Research Questions	N/A
Research Design Qual., Quant., Mixed & Procedure; Unit of Analysis & Sample	Online article
Main Findings (Theoretical Foundation)	• Students from lower SES backgrounds, activists will assert, tend to attend schools that are underfunded, overcrowded, non-white, and poorly managed. • Deficit thinking is a term that blames a student's academic and social struggles on the lack of desirable qualities in a student or his/her family. Such sweeping generalizations are akin to that old adage, akin to throwing out the baby with the bathwater. • Higher SES does have its attendant advantages in favor of higher educational outcomes. The failure to recognize that as a reality is a thinking deficit. It is also a thinking deficit to

	ignore reality that family does make a difference in academic achievement. Family does have a powerful influence on academic performance.
Valencia, R. R. (Ed). (1997). *The evolution of deficit thinking.* London: The Falmer Press.	
Literature Typology	Conceptual/Theoretical
Research Questions	N/A
Research Design Qual., Quant., Mixed & Procedure; Unit of Analysis & Sample	The author argues that deficit thinking is a pseudoscience founded on racial and class bias.
Main Findings (Theoretical Foundation)	The 6 characteristics of deficit thinking in relation to schooling: • The DT framework is rooted in a student's alleged cognitive and motivational deficits, while institutional structures and inequitable schooling arrangements that exclude students from learning are held exculpatory. The model is largely based on imputation and little documentation. • The victim-blamers' nature of deficit thinking and the lop-sided power arrangements between DT and economically disadvantaged students, can be oppressive. The DT paradigm holds little hope of addressing the possibility of school success for those students. • DT is a form of pseudoscience, where researchers approach their work with deeply embedded biases, using methodologically flawed procedures, and communicate their findings in proselytizing manners. • The alleged deficits are transmitted through low grade genes, inferior culture and class, or inadequate familial socialization. • DT is a prescriptive model based on the educability of low SES students. • Historically DT has rested on orthodoxy- the dominant, convenient scholarly, and ideological climates of the time. CH. 6 Contemporary DT- good reference, nothing needs to be cited or quoted, but section on at-risk. The construct of the at-risk label: came from the excellence movement of the 1980s. The critics sought to distance educators and policy makers away from the belief that success and failure hinged primarily on individual effort. 1. At-risk is a resurrected metaphor of the cultural deprivation

	and culturally disadvantaged terms of the 1960s. 2. At-risk holds structural inequalities absolved in creating problems. 3. Scholars have been quick name, identify, and ossify students with "risk" factors. 4. This movement is influenced by politics. 5. This movement fails to acknowledge the strengths, competencies, and promise of low SES children and parents. Those with deficits have their Catch-22: they are denied rights because they have deficits, and because they have deficits they are not allowed to participate in the conversations on those rights such as expression, privacy, due process, and not to be a captive audience. In sum, DT vis a vis any deconstruction of the notion remains an intellectual war over the more credible theory of school failure and school reform.
Payne, R. K. (1996). *A framework for understanding poverty.* Highlands, TX: aha! Process, Inc.	
Literature Typology	Conceptual
Research Questions	N/A
Research Design Qual., Quant., Mixed & Procedure; Unit of Analysis & Sample	Literature review that borrows from a 30-year, qualitative ongoing case study. It relies heavily on anthropological approach. She also draws from many scholarly works such as Oscar Lewis and other culture of poverty proponents
Main Findings (Theoretical Foundation)	• The framework consists of the role of language, hidden rules, characteristics of poverty, role models, support systems, instruction, and creating relationships dealing with children of poverty. • Payne asserts that hidden rules are class bound, originate from cause and effect situations, and serve as survival mechanisms. • Payne claims that poor and minority students lack access to the formal register of language the one used in school and middle class life. • Discipline is about penance and forgiveness, not necessarily change. • Payne perpetuates the DT mentality by retelling the

	relationship of low SES students and academic, alleged cognitive impairment of poor children, and to build learning structures in the heads of these students. • For some alcoholism, laziness, lack of motivation, drug addiction, etc… are the reasons they do not choose a better life. It is the responsibility of educators and others who work with children of poverty to teach children the differences and skills/rules that will allow them to make a better choice.
Valencia, R. R. (2010). *Dismantling contemporary deficit thinking.* New York: Random	
Literature Typology	Theoretical
Research Questions	N/A
Research Design Qual., Quant., Mixed & Procedure; Unit of Analysis & Sample	The author compiled a comprehensive computerized literature search using "deficit thinking" as the primary descriptor and numerous secondary descriptors (e.g., "deficit thinking paradigm"), and he received 436 hits of scholarly writings.
Main Findings (Theoretical Foundation)	He updates research and concepts that have occurred since his landmark 1997 book. He focuses on 7 components of the ongoing conversation about deficit thinking: the construct of DT, Neohereditarianism, Ruby Payne's mindsets of Poverty dealing with middle class and wealth, at-risk students or at-risk schools, deconstructing DT, the bankruptcy of the standards based school reform movement, and the construction of meaningful school reform movement. In light of the pervasiveness of deficit thinking in schools, it is important to discuss how some individuals have attempted to eliminate the pathologization of poor students and students of color. In this chapter, he provides examples of a number of proactive, anti-deficit thinking suggestions that many readers can utilize to help promote a more equitable and democratic schooling for all students. In particular, I draw from the literature that speaks to deconstructing deficit thinking in five areas of pre-service teacher education, parental engagement, educational leadership, social justice, and ethnography of schools.
Marx, S. (2006). *Revealing the invisible: Confronting passive racism in teacher education.* New York: Routledge.	
Literature Typology	Empirical
Research	N/A

Questions	
Research Design Qual., Quant., Mixed & Procedure; Unit of Analysis & Sample	A case study of A small group of White, English-speaking students in her teacher education classes (Second Language Acquisition) who primarily tutor low-SES Mexican-origin English learners in elementary school participated in her research. For her methodology, Marx (2006) incorporates field notes taken during observations of the tutors, in-depth interviews (audiotaped and transcribed) of the tutors, and analysis of the tutors' reflective journals.
Main Findings (Theoretical Foundation)	Marx draws from the theoretical perspectives of critical White studies and critical race theory. Marx comments that the women express deficit thinking in four main ways—that is, perceived deficits in (a) culture; (b) language; (c) families; (d) self-esteem and intelligence. Marx developed an intervention program that sought to confront and change her students' racism via seven discrete steps, as follows: (a) acknowledging one's own racism; (b) bringing attention to contradictions; (c) catching a glimpse of the shaky evidential base students relied on to attest to their lack of racism; (d) challenging easy answers that might alleviate any racist beliefs that may affect the students teaching; (e) drawing attention to the larger context of White racist effects on children of color; (f) recognizing and admitting their own racism and taking responsibility for their part in perpetuating it; (g) moving past the guilt associated with White racism.
Lott, B. (2003). Recognizing and welcoming the standpoint of low-income parents in the public schools. *Journal of Educational & Psychological Consultation, 14, 91–104.*	
Literature Typology	Conceptual
Research Questions	N/A
Research Design Qual., Quant., Mixed & Procedure; Unit of Analysis & Sample	Journal article
Main Findings (Theoretical Foundation)	First, schools should consider families and their children as positive resources and that they constitute the foundation for educational improvement. Second, school officials need to encourage parents and provide them the opportunity to participate thoroughly in the

	educational process. "Helping Parents Deal with Obstacles to School Participation" Lott discusses a number of obstacles that thwart low-SES parents' educational involvement, such as: parents believe that schools are external to their field of influence; parents worry about teachers' reprisals if they advocate for their children; many low-SES parents' economic plight (e.g., child care problems; job insecurity) create obstacles to school participation. "Expanding Parental Roles in the Schools" Lott notes that schools provide low-SES parents few opportunities to participate in their children's schooling, and often limit these opportunities to quite minimal roles. This reminds me of "funds of knowledge," from González et al. (2005, pp. 91–92).
Theoharis, G. (2007a). Social justice educational leaders and resistance: Toward a theory of social justice leadership. *Educational Administration Quarterly, 43*, 221–258.	
Literature Typology	Empirical
Research Questions	How does leadership for social justice differ from educational leadership?
Research Design Qual., Quant., Mixed & Procedure; Unit of Analysis & Sample	In his qualitative study (using purposeful sampling) involving seven principals of elementary, middle, and high schools, Theoharis (2007a) interviewed individuals deeply committed to social justice leadership. He identifies four strategies in which the participants enacted leadership for social justice.
Main Findings (Theoretical Foundation)	o First, the social justice area focuses not only on the characteristics of the educational leader (typically the school principal), but also very much on how to bring about institutional change. o Second, the social justice area, although emphasizing race and class concerns, is more inclusive, covering other marginalized groups (i.e., gender; disability; language; sexual orientation). o Third, scholars make a number of relatively sharp distinctions between a "good leader" and a "social justice leader" Theoharis comments, for example, that a good leader "works long and hard to make a great school," while a social justice leader

	"becomes intertwined with the life, community, and school. He identifies four strategies in which the participants enacted leadership for social justice: Increasing student academic achievement. Improving the structure of schools. Recentering and strengthening staff capacity; Strengthening school culture and community. "Via these efforts, Theoharis reports that not only did marginalized families' school involvement increase, but the negative stereotypes exhibited by White, middle-class parents began to change, and the school staff gained insights that there are ways to comprehend, find, and value participation of marginalized parents other than the conventional parent–teacher methods (e.g., parent–teacher conferences at the school)."
Theoharis, G. (2007b). Navigating rough waters: A synthesis of the countervailing pressures against leading for social justice. *Journal of School Leadership, 17*, 4–27.	
Literature Typology	Conceptual
Research Questions	N/A
Research Design Qual., Quant., Mixed & Procedure; Unit of Analysis & Sample	He provides a comprehensive analysis of obstacles to the attainment of social justice in a journal article
Main Findings (Theoretical Foundation)	Countervailing Pressures against Leadership for Social Justice He notes that some scholars use "barriers" or "resistance" to social justice, but he prefers "countervailing pressures," which "refer to all of the situations, incidences, issues, and people that apply pressure against leaders who are trying to enact a social-justice agenda" Based on his review of pertinent social justice literature, Theoharis (2007b) identifies and synthesizes countervailing pressures. Deficit thinking as status quo. Marginalization of types of difference. Value of technical leadership over that of moral and courageous leadership, social justice issues seldom surface in school leadership professional training. Specific national and local policies: via high-stakes testing—represents a good example of policy as a

	countervailing pressure to social justice leadership
Poverty and education: A critical analysis of the Ruby Payne phenomenon. *Teachers College Record.* Retrieved from https://www.tcrecord.org	
Literature Typology	Conceptual/Empirical
Research Questions	What is the extent to which Ruby Payne's work accurately reflects a contemporary research-based comprehension of the issue?
Research Design Qual., Quant., Mixed & Procedure; Unit of Analysis & Sample	The authors examine the conceptual and empirical foundations of Ruby Payne's, "Framework for Understanding Poverty" and vignettes in the accompanying teacher workbook that depict the lives of poor children and their families. They situate the work within decades of scholarship conceptualizing poverty.
Main Findings (Theoretical Foundation)	• Payne's work essentializes the values, behaviors, and orientations of poor people; reinforcing stereotypes and misconceptions that suggest that poor people have a choice to remain in poverty. • Her popularity reflects growing concern about poverty and its effect on children's educational experiences. • Hidden rules that distinguish poor from middle class. Teachers must teach the middle class rules. • Payne states individuals remove themselves from poverty by delaying gratification and having personal restraint. • Payne uses educators as the primary role models for poor children • She appeals to many people's common sense approach of how poverty works. However this thought pattern is not supported by contemporary social science research. • Recent research suggests that poor people's social environment is considerable more influential that Payne suggests. • Payne's portrayal of the poor with monolithically values and behaviors is reminiscent of the Culture of Poverty thesis of the 60s & 70s. • Her program is well-intentioned, but it is not based on sound or thorough understanding of poverty and its causes.
Dudley-Marling, C., & Lucas, K. (2009, May). Pathologizing the language and culture of poor children. *Language Arts, 86*(5), 362-370.	
Literature Typology	Conceptual
Research Questions/	To help teachers resist deficit discourses that pathologize the language and culture of children living in poverty.

Purpose	
Research Design Qual., Quant., Mixed & Procedure; Unit of Analysis & Sample	An examination of literature and research related to pathologizing the language and culture of children living in poverty
Main Findings (Theoretical Foundation)	• Claims in the Hart & Risely literacy study of poor children and their families are unwarranted. • The acceptance of this study by mainstream education is emblematic of trend to embrace a deficit stance that pathologizes the language and culture of children living in poverty. • The study had methodological flaws, ethnocentric bias, and failure to make explicit the theory of language and culture that frames their analysis. • It is the job of teachers to teach poor students the language of schooling –not parents.
Harris, F. (2008). Critical engagement with the deficit construction of Maori children as learners in the education system. *Critical literacy: Theories and practices, 2*(1).	
Literature Typology	Conceptual
Research Questions/ Purpose	The paper illuminates the varying deficit constructs that have played out since the early 1800s European settlement to the present day on Maori students.
Research Design Qual., Quant., Mixed & Procedure; Unit of Analysis & Sample	The author challenges the employment of western epistemologies to define and defictize Maori children as indigenous learners in the education system. These children have continually been defined by the parameters of a colonial lens magnifying a range of deficits.
Main Findings (Theoretical Foundation)	• Maori children have been continually depicted as deficit learners: race deficiency, genetically inferior intelligence deficit, environmental and cultural deficits, Culture of Poverty deficit, cultural and accumulated environmental deficit, and at-risk deficit. • Maori children should viewed from a post-colonial eye-glass, that challenges the colonial lens that they have been identified in the past. • Need to abandon the vantage of western ideology, it is not what is best for Maori children.
Dudley-Marling, C. (2007). Return of the deficit. *Journal of Educational Controversy, 2*(1). Retrieved from	

http://www.wce.wwu.edu/Resources/CEP/eJournal/v002n001/a004.shtml	
Literature Typology	Conceptual
Research Questions/ Purpose	Resisting the deficit model
Research Design Qual., Quant., Mixed & Procedure; Unit of Analysis & Sample	Literature review
Main Findings (Theoretical Foundation)	• He cites the Hart & Risley study as well as Payne for perpetuating DT. • A deficit gaze that pathologizes students, families, and communities is instantiated in pedagogical practices and dispositions that are primarily responsible for disproportionate levels of school failure among poor and minority populations. • The deficit gaze renders students' background knowledge and experiences irrelevant, or worse, risk factors. • A price for these students, the price of success in school is to reject their language and culture. • Providing rich, engaging curricula that is respectful of the linguistic and cultural backgrounds of all American children is in everyone's best interest.
Bomer, R., Dworin, J. E., May, L., & Semingson, P. (2009, June 3). What's wrong with a deficit perspective? *Teachers College Record*. Retrieved from http://www.tcrecord.org	
Literature Typology	Conceptual
Research Questions	N/A
Research Design Qual., Quant., Mixed & Procedure; Unit of Analysis & Sample	The authors present areas that they agree and disagree with Ruby Payne's response to their critique.
Main Findings (Theoretical Foundation)	Points of agreement: Poverty & social class are importantly impact children; educators must understand that impact; educators are important in the lives of children.

	Points of disagreement: Teachers with a deficit perspective lower the quality of education; these teachers offer less instruction to poor children; the teacher interacts not with a person of dignity and possibility, but with an instance of made up faults and absences. The authors believe that Payne reproduces social givens by reinforcing prejudices toward those in poverty that would be better termed social determinism. Poverty and its effects need to be meliorated, but that will not happen the continual reproduction of ancient bigotries in explanations of the reasons of poverty.
Skrla, L., & Scheurich, J. J. (2001). Displacing deficit thinking in school district leadership. *Education and Urban Society, 33*(235), 235-259.	
Literature Typology	Empirical
Research Questions	What role did the accountability model in the Texas Education System have in transforming the districts in the study?
Research Design Qual., Quant., Mixed & Procedure; Unit of Analysis & Sample	Four school districts with student populations ranging from 8,000 to 50,000 served as the study site. The districts had all shown significant improvement on the TAAS for children from low-income homes and had decreased the achievement gap, one third of the campuses had to high poverty and the free and reduced lunch rate had to be greater than 50%. Interviews of BOE members and superintendents, administrators, teachers, and community members, qualitative software was utilized as well *Folio Views 4.2*.
Main Findings (Theoretical Foundation)	• Used Valencia's DT book to establish theoretical framework. • Because of the insidiously pervasive deficit thinking in which superintendents, along with the vast majority of other educators including teachers and principals, have been more or less marinated throughout their careers, these superintendents tend to view the board-scale underperformance of children of color and from low-income homes in their schools as inevitable, something that is not within the power of change. 5 major ways accountability operated to accomplished a substantial displacement of deficit thinking: 1. Accountability makes educational inequity visible 2. State accountability reduces risk for superintendents 3. Accountability forces superintendents to seek success exemplars 4. Accountability develops anti-deficit leadership orientations

	5. Accountability drives successively higher expectations The findings suggest that accountability's displacement of deficit thinking for the study district superintendents was of major importance in moving the entire districts in a positive direction toward equity ideals.
Leonardo, Z. (2004). Critical social theory and transformative knowledge: The functions of criticism in quality education. *Educational Researcher, 3*(6), 11-18.	
Literature Typology	Theoretical
Research Questions	How a critical social theory based movement in education produces a relationship between social systems and people? How critical social theory can contribute to the emancipation of both?
Research Design Qual., Quant., Mixed & Procedure; Unit of Analysis & Sample	Review of related research
Main Findings (Theoretical Foundation)	• CST has produced many generative critiques of educational processes such as parental involvement, curriculum formation, and popular culture. • Dewey & Freire contributed to the formation of CST. • In CST understanding the nature of oppression is central to its internal logic. That is it proceeds from the assumption that oppression is real and formidable, oppression is simultaneously social and lived. • Quality education means having to confront the reality of inequality. • In order to provide students with a sustainable education, educators are encouraged to forge a language of transcendence.
Levinson, B. A. U. (2011). Symbolic domination and the reproduction of inequality Pierre Bourdieu and practice theory. In B. A. Levinson (Ed.), *Beyond critique: Exploring critical* Boulder: Paradigm Publishers.	
Literature Typology	Theoretical
Research Questions/ Purpose	The authors discusses the influence of Antonio Gramsci on critical theory and education
Research Design Qual., Quant., Mixed & Procedure;	N/A

Unit of Analysis & Sample	
Main Findings (Theoretical Foundation)	• Order and domination are maintained through constant interplay of consent and coercion. • Previous theories of power did not account for the ways in which the ruled consented to the rulers. • The hegemonic bloc preserved with minimal use of direct force on the part of the state. • Critical consciousness a key element of Gramsci's theory, is a vehicle for challenging ideology and hegemonic consensus. Through critical education workers can be helped to question the legitimacy of the ruling bloc. • The theory of hegemony and its constituent parts are an important tool not only to help scholars make sense of the world around them but also, perhaps more significantly, to help activists develop strategies and tactics for challenging the hegemonic order. • Gramsci helps us to see that power is exercised in many subtle ways… the task before us is to engage in counterhegemonic education for critical consciousness.
Gross, J. P. K. (2011). Education and hegemony: The influence of Antonio Gramsci. In B. A. Levinaon (Ed.), *Beyond critique: Exploring critical social theories and Education* (pp. 51-79). Boulder: Paradigm Publishers.	
Literature Typology	Theoretical
Research Questions	The authors discusses the influence of Pierre Bourdieu on critical theory and education
Research Design Qual., Quant., Mixed & Procedure; Unit of Analysis & Sample	N/A
Main Findings (Theoretical Foundation)	Bourdieu's influence on education has been through his theoretical concepts of habitus, capital, and field. His main concern is to elucidate the relationship between culture and power. He focused on the symbolic mechanisms by which inequality was produced and legitimated. He rarely used the terms hegemony and ideology preferring to use misrecognition the kind of false consciousness produced by the structuring of privilege in different social fields.
Bourdieu, P., & Passeron, J. C. (1977). *Reproduction: In education, society, culture.* Beverly Hills, CA: Sage.	
Literature	Theoretical

Typology	
Research Questions	N/A
Research Design Qual., Quant., Mixed & Procedure; Unit of Analysis & Sample	N/A
Main Findings (Theoretical Foundation)	The process of schooling imposes a kind of symbolic violence on students of lower social standing. It does this by utilizing instruments of knowledge: selection of curriculum, teachers' attitudes toward students, and modes of evaluation. As products of presumably rationalistic state development, schools have the pedagogic authority to impose this symbolic violence on children and youth. As they develop a sense of their own low social position, and the relatively degraded value of their own cultural-linguistic resources in given social situations, non-elite students also tend to develop a sense of their own social limits.
Freire, P. (1970). *Pedagogy of the oppressed*. New York: Continuum International Publishing Group	
Literature Typology	Theoretical
Research Questions	N/A
Research Design Qual., Quant., Mixed & Procedure; Unit of Analysis & Sample	N/A
Main Findings (Theoretical Foundation)	Ch. 1 …is not a given destiny but the result of an unjust order that engenders violence in the oppressors, which in turn dehumanizes the oppressed. Oppressed must not, in seeking to regain their humanity (which is a way to create it), become in turn oppressors of the oppressors, but rather restorers of the humanity of both Death, despair, and poverty. That is why the dispensers of false generosity become desperate at the slightest threat to its source That the oppressed, at a certain moment of their existential experience, adopt an attitude of "adhesion" to the oppressor. Under

	these circumstances they cannot "consider" him sufficiently clearly to objectivize him – to discover him "outside" themselves Thus is illustrated our previous assertion that during the initial stage of their struggle the oppressed find in the oppressor their model of "manhood." The "fear of freedom" which afflicts the oppressed, a fear which may equally well lead them to desire the role of oppressor or bind them to the role of oppressed, should be examined. Freedom would require them to eject this image and replace it with autonomy and responsibility. Yet, although they desire authentic existence, they fear it. The central problem is this: How can the oppressed, as divided, unauthentic beings, participate in developing the pedagogy of their liberation? Not as a closed world from which there is no exit, but as a limiting situation which they can transform. To deny the importance of subjectivity in the process of transforming the world and history is naïve and simplistic. It is to admit the impossible: a world without people. This objectivistic position is as ingenuous as that of subjectivism, which postulates people without a world. Reflection and action upon the world in order to transform it. This is the case of a purely subjectivist perception by someone who forsakes objective reality and creates a false substitute The oppressor know full well that this intervention would not be to his interest Coincides with our affirmation of the need for the critical intervention of the people in reality through the praxis How then is it possible to carry out the pedagogy of the oppressed prior to the revolution? It is only the oppressed who, by freeing themselves, can free their oppressors An act is oppressive only when it prevents people from being more fully human However, the moment the new regime hardens into a dominating "bureaucracy" the humanist dimension of the struggle is lost and it is no longer possible to speak of liberation. Ch. 2 Education thus becomes an act of e=depositing, in which the students are the depositories and the teacher is the depositor. In the banking concept of education, knowledge is a gift bestowed by those who consider themselves knowledgeable upon those whom they consider to know nothing.

	Those who use the banking approach, knowingly or unknowingly (for there are innumerable well-intentioned bank-clerk teachers who do not realized that they are serving only to dehumanize), fail to perceive that the deposits themselves contain contradictions about reality. The teacher's task is to organize a process which already occurs spontaneously, to "fill" the students by making deposits of information which he or she considers to constitute true knowledge. Whose tranquility rests on how well people fit the world the oppressors have created, and how little they question it. "biophily" & "necrophily" Banking education (for obvious reasons) attempts, by mythicizing reality, to conceal certain facts which explain the way human beings exist in the world; problem-posing education sets itself the task of demythologizing. Whereas the banking method directly or indirectly reinforces men's fatalistic perception of their situation, the problem-posing method presents this very situation to them as a problem. As the situation becomes the object of their cognition, the naïve or magical perception which produced their fatalism gives way to perception which is able to perceive itself even as it perceives reality, and can thus be critically objective about that reality. To that end, it enables teachers and students to become Subjects of the education process by overcoming authoritarianism and an alienating intellectualism; it also enables people to overcome their false perception of reality.
Friere, P. (2005). *Teachers as cultural workers: Letters to those who dare teach.* Boulder, CO: Westview Press.	
Literature Typology	Theoretical
Research Questions	N/A
Research Design Qual., Quant., Mixed & Procedure; Unit of Analysis & Sample	N/A
Main Findings (Theoretical Foundation)	From the 6th Letter: - What can be expected from teachers who protest against the administration's restrictions on their freedom to teach but who at the same time dishonorably restrict the freedom of the learners? The saying "Do what I say, and not what I do" is an

	almost vain attempt to remedy the contradiction and the incoherence—"Almost vain" because what is said and is being contradicted by what is done is not always completely oppressed. - It should be said that they are conditioned by the culture of the class, by the reality of those with whom and to whom we speak and testify. One of the mistakes made by educators, a mistake generated by an exorbitant self-esteem that does not make them very humble, is to feel hurt by the behavior of the learners, that is, to fail to admit that anyone could doubt them. - To ask them to talk about how they experience their days in school would make it possible for them to engage in an education of the senses. It would demand that[…]" "do the same with the teacher. From the 8th Letter: • "educators must take neither a position of revenge nor of submission but the position of one who assumes responsible authority as an educator; nor, in the second case, may educators take a paternalistic or scornful attitude toward the lower-class children. The point of departure for this comprehensive practice is knowing, is being convinced, that education is a political practice. • …the culture in which their students' language, syntax, semantics, and accent are found in action, in which certain habits, likes, beliefs, fears, desires are formed that are not necessarily easily accepted in the teachers' own worlds. • …the educated norm should be taught to lower-class children but that in so doing it should also be stressed that: their language is as rich and beautiful as the educated norm and that therefore they do not have to be ashamed of the way they talk. • In conclusion, the democratic school should not only be permanently open to its students' contextual reality in order to understand them better and to exercise its teaching activity better, but it should also be disposed to learn of its relationship with the concrete context.
Scheurich, J. J., Skrla, L., & Joseph, J. F. (2000). Thinking carefully about equity and accountability. *Phi Delta Kappan, 82*(4).	
Literature	Conceptual

Typology	
Research Questions	N/A
Research Design Qual., Quant., Mixed & Procedure; Unit of Analysis & Sample	Literature review of highly successful schools and districts with low-income children and children of color. Three significant and historic possibilities have emerged in light of the accountability of NCLB measures.
Main Findings (Theoretical Foundation)	1. In what previous historical moment has such high level public attention been applied to public school's lack of success with low-income and children of color? 2. In what previous historical moment has there ever been a major public commitment to high academic performance for all races and SES classes by US political parties and their candidates for president? 3. The substantially improved academic success of children of color and low-income students and improved equity in some schools and districts in some states. Thinking carefully about equity and accountability you must examine the following components of system, curriculum, teaching, assessment, and other issues.
McNeil, M. (2013), NBC news tackles race-based goals in states' NCLB waiver plans. Education Week Blog. Retrieved from http://blogs.edweek.org/edweek/campaign-k-12/2013/03/NBC_News_tackles_race_goals_in_NCLB_waivers.html	
Literature Typology	Conceptual
Research Questions	N/A
Research Design Qual., Quant., Mixed & Procedure; Unit of Analysis & Sample	NBC created an interactive map that displays states' waivers for race.
Main Findings (Theoretical Foundation)	Which States Have Academic Performance Targets That Vary By Race? To date, the Department of Education has approved waivers from No Child Left Behind (NCLB) for 34 states and the District of Columbia. These waivers allow states to set new academic performance targets for their students, as long as they make substantial gains in reducing the achievement gap in six years. Because of this, 23 states have now set targets that vary by race.

	In the map below: States that have academic performance targets that do not vary by race. States that have academic performance targets that do vary by race. States that do not currently have a waiver. They are still required by NCLB to have 100% of their students test proficient in reading and math by 2014.
McNeil, M, & Klein, A (2013). Frequently asked questions about No Child Left Behind. Retrieved from http://dailynightly.nbcnews.com/_news/2013/03/06/17088280-frequently-asked-questions-about-no-child-left-behind?lite	
Literature Typology	Conceptual
Research Questions	N/A
Research Design Qual., Quant., Mixed & Procedure; Unit of Analysis & Sample	N/A
Main Findings (Theoretical Foundation)	**1. What are the arguments for and against the race-based academic goals that many states are using?** The argument against using race-based targets is that a state is setting different expectations for kids based on their race or their family's income level, as opposed to having the same high expectations for all students. Some civil rights organizations have raised questions about whether the waivers are unfair to racial minorities, students in special education, or students who are still learning English. But some state and district officials point out that those groups of students are often farther behind their non-minority, more- advantaged peers, and say their waiver plans set high, but achievable goals for closing the gap. What's more, these new goals often require schools to make faster progress for students who are the farthest behind than for other students. **2. Historically, why are there such drastic differences in achievement among various groups of students, such as racial minorities, low-income populations, and those in special education?** Sociologists and educators could spend years debating this question, but there appear to be several reasons. First, students from low-income families tend to struggle more than their peers, no matter what their racial ethnicity. Students from low-income families may come to school hungry, for example, or not have access to high-quality medical care. And schools have long struggled with certain

	subgroups of students who may or may not be members of an ethnic minority, including students in special education and English-language learners. Generally, however, students tend to do better in school if they are from stable communities, if their parents are educated, and if they had some sort of early-learning opportunity, either at home, or in a more formal setting. Lower income students – including racial minorities, as well as white students – don't always have access to those resources.
North Carolina Department of Public Instruction/Accountability Services. (2012). Determining Annual Measureable Objectives (AMOS). Retrieved from http://www.ncpublicschools.org/docs/accountability/reporting/abc/2011-12/amo.pdf	
Literature Typology	Conceptual
Research Questions	N/A
Research Design Qual., Quant., Mixed & Procedure; Unit of Analysis & Sample	N/A
Main Findings (Theoretical Foundation)	The immediate changes to federal accountability reporting that will be effective with the 2011-12 and the 2012-13 school years include the following: 1. The NCDPI will no longer designate each school as having met or not met Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP). For each school, the NCDPI will report the number of Annual Measureable Objectives (AMOs) and the number of those targets met as well as the percentage of targets met. 2. The ESEA waiver specified AMO targets will be used for reporting. These targets are (1) based on 2010-11 data and (2) identified for each federally reported subgroup for reading and for mathematics. Per the flexibility waiver, the AMO targets were set with the goal of reducing the percentage of non-proficient students by one-half within six years. The targets are available at http://www.ncpublicschools.org/accountability/reporting/abc

	/2011-12/. 3. To meet the criteria for an Honor School of Excellence per the ABCs of Public Education, a school will have to meet all of its AMO targets. Meeting all of the AMO targets replaces the previous requirement of having met AYP. Meeting expected growth and having a performance composite of 90 percent of higher continue to be required for the Honor School of Excellence designation. 4. The Cohort Graduation Rate (CGR) for 4-year and 5-year will be reported by subgroups. Definition of AMOs Annual Measureable Objectives (AMOs) is defined as a series of performance targets that states, school districts, and specific subgroups within their schools must achieve each year to meet the requirements of No Child Left Behind (NCLB). In each public school and Local Education Agency (LEA) in North Carolina, the ten student subgroups are: Students with Disabilities (SWD) (based on the April 1 Headcount of Exceptional Children collected via CECAS). Elementary and Middle School AMO Targets 1. Participation rate of 95 % in End-of-Grades Tests of Reading Comprehension (grades 3-8) 2. Participation rate of 95 % in End-of-Grade Tests of Mathematics (grades 3-8) 3. Proficiency rate in End-of-Grades Tests of Reading Comprehension (grades 3-8) 4. Proficiency rate in End-of-Grade Tests of Mathematics (grades 3-8) 5. Other academic indicator (OAI), attendance for schools in grades 3 to 8.

High School AMO Targets (grade 10)

1. Participation rate of 95 % in End-of-Course Test of English I or its alternate (NCEXTEND1/NCEXTEND2)

2. Participation rate of 95 % in End-of-Course Test of Algebra I or its alternate (NCEXTEND1/NCEXTEND2)

3. Proficient rate in End-of-Course Test of English I or its alternate

4. Proficient rate in End-of-Course Tests of Algebra I or its alternate

5. Other academic indicator (OAI), 4-year and 5-year cohort graduation rate (if the high school does not graduate seniors, then attendance is the OAI).

Annual Measurable Objectives (AMOs)

For grades 3 through 8 and high school, the new AMOs targets by subgroups, the reading AMO targets for 2011-12 are:

Reading

Subgroup	3-8	HS
Total (All students)	73.0	87.2
Native American	61.8	75.5
Asian	80.8	88.4
Black	57.8	77.8
Hispanic	61.1	80.2
Two or More Races	75.5	89.5
White	83.2	93.0
Economically Disadvantaged	61.4	78.9
Limited English Proficient	42.4	42.0

	Students With Disabilities	44.5	50.9
	For grades 3 through 8 and high school, the new AMOs targets by subgroups, the mathematics AMO targets for 2011-12 are:		
	Math		
	Subgroup	3-8	HS
	Total (All students)	83.7	84.0
	Native American	77.5	75.9
	Asian	92.4	92.2
	Black	71.4	72.0
	Hispanic	80.2	80.8
	Two or More Races	84.9	84.7
	White	90.4	90.1
	Economically Disadvantaged	76.2	75.7
	Limited English Proficient	71.1	56.2
	Students With Disabilities	59.9	51.1
James-Wilson, S., & Hancock, M. (2011, June 11). 5 Stages on the path to equity. *Journal of Staff Development.*			
Literature Typology	Empirical		
Research Questions	How district-sponsored programs provide a context for the empowerment of teacher-leaders within an equity framework?		
Research Design Qual., Quant., Mixed & Procedure; Unit of Analysis & Sample	Interviews and focus groups were used to gather data.		
Main Findings (Theoretical Foundation)	Three factors that contribute to an equity focused change by school leaders: the ability to influence others to adopt instructional practices that support students' needs; the influence to change operational structures that were not in the best interest of students;		

	and being willing to share power and champion the work of teacher leaders. The 5 stage empowerment trajectory: Enabling, exploring, engaging others, energizing others, and achieving empowerment.
Javious, E. L. (2009). Skills for courageous leaders: School leaders can develop a culture of equity and excellence for all students by improving the quality of instruction. *Leadership 38*(3), 30. Gale Group.	
Literature Typology	Conceptual/Empirical
Research Questions/ Purpose	Provide a schema for Courageous Equity Leadership that leaders possess to lead results-driven schools.
Research Design Qual., Quant., Mixed & Procedure; Unit of Analysis & Sample	Data was collected from the author's coaching experience, site-level observations, and principal interviews.
Main Findings (Theoretical Foundation)	The skills of CEL's: captured results, developed a culture of equity and excellence, and have tightly linked coherence, congruency, and commitment as leaders. School leaders must overtly share with their staff members the fact that equity is for everyone, and improving what we do is our initiative.
Allyn, P. (2013). Raising learning warriors. ASC*D Express: The Faces of Poverty*, 8(16),	
Literature Typology	Conceptual
Research Questions	N/A
Research Design Qual., Quant., Mixed & Procedure; Unit of Analysis & Sample	N/A
Main Findings (Theoretical Foundation)	There are 5 ways educators can equip children and schools to fight poverty: get books, power up, meet the parents, value the relationship, and focus on strength.
Faircloth, S. C. (2009). Re-visioning the future of education for native youth in rural schools and communities. *Journal of Research Education 24*(9), 3. Retrieved from	

Proquest.	
Literature Typology	Conceptual
Research Questions	N/A
Research Design Qual., Quant., Mixed & Procedure; Unit of Analysis & Sample	N/A
Main Findings (Theoretical Foundation)	Great quote: "For me the future of our rural communities is dependent upon our ability and willingness to revision, repurpose, and restructure education in ways that will enable our youth to utilize the skills they are taught locally as well as globally."
Delpit, L. (2012). *Multiplication is for white people: Expectations for other people's children.* New York: The New Press.	
Literature Typology	Conceptual/Theoretical
Research Questions	N/A
Research Design Qual., Quant., Mixed & Procedure; Unit of Analysis & Sample	N/A
Main Findings (Theoretical Foundation)	"Another excuse for poor performance has been the rationale that African Americans are part of a "culture of poverty." This is a model of deficit thinking, popularized by the work of Ruby Payne: something is wrong with the children who are in the classroom, if not in their genes, then in their culture. The Payne "culture of poverty" model as the cause of poor school performance by low-income children and children of color has now been adopted by school districts around the country. Indeed, in order to meet the demand, Payne in 2006 employed twenty-five trainers and provided additional work for fifty consultants nationwide. It is convenient to choose poverty as the reason for poor performance—attaching poor academic performance to factors such as the number of parents in the household, the educational background of the mother, or the level of poverty in the community. These are things we in the schools cannot change, and, as Jawanza Kunjufu suggests

	in An African Centered Response to Ruby Payne's Poverty Theory, blaming poverty works out for school systems because then you don't have to change your lesson plans! This kind of thinking harkens back to the old cultural-deficit arguments of the 1960s and 1970s. William Ryan, in his 1971 book Blaming the Victim, forcefully critiqued this notion: In education we have compensatory education to build up the skills and attitudes of the ghetto child rather than structural changes in the schools. In race relations we have social engineers to think up ways to strengthen the Negro family rather than methods of eradicating racism. I don't disagree with all of Payne's suggestions, such as creating relationships between teachers and students, which, of course, is critical. Many of the suggestions are good schools should adopt. But I disagree with her overall analysis and therefore find the solutions she offers very limited. What Payne is labeling culture is actually the response to oppression." "For children of poverty, good teachers and powerful instruction are imperative. While it is certainly true that inequity, family issues, poverty, crime, and so forth all affect poor children's learning opportunities, British educator Peter Mortimore found that the quality of teaching has six to ten times as much impact on achievement as all other factors combined." "Students were also very aware of the culture of their schools, the attitudes their teachers have toward teaching, and the effort those teachers put into their craft: ♦It's bad when they say you go to a bad school. It's like then they think you are automatically a bad person. Even when it's just one bad seed that acts crazy, people think everyone in the school is like that. • Sometimes the teachers won't give you help. Some of them say things like, "I got mine; all I have to do is get my paycheck." • In high school a lot of teachers are about occupying us, not teaching us. • The bookwork and the tests have nothing to do with us. • Our teachers don't understand how much impact they have. It's hard when they act about as serious about what they're doing as our little sisters or brothers. • One teacher said she didn't want to teach today because she was having a bad day. But then she would have about four or

	five bad days in a row! • I also asked them to describe a good teacher they had encountered in their school lives: • A good teacher takes time, makes sure you understand. • One who enjoys being there. • One who doesn't put on a movie when they're tired. • A teacher who asks questions to help get the students closer to the answers. • For each chapter there should be a lecture, activities and games, and reading outside of the text from different sources (from a future teacher, perhaps?). • One who has a sense of humor, but can be serious when necessary. • Someone you can find outside of class for help. • Someone who is patient, understanding, ready to teach if you're ready to learn. • One who is willing to learn about you and about new things. • A good teacher inspires you and pushes you to the point of no return." "It may be surprising to some that the students respond to such high expectations and strong demands. It is important to point out, however, that high expectations and strong demands are insufficient. The other necessary components are care and concern. When students believe that the teacher cares for them and is concerned about them, they will frequently rise to the expectations set. When students believe that teachers believe in their ability, when they see teachers willing to go the extra mile to meet their academic deficiencies, they are much more likely to try."
Delpit, L. (2005). *Other people's children: Cultural conflicts in the classroom.* New York: The New Press.	
Literature Typology	Conceptual/Theoretical
Research Questions	N/A
Research Design Qual., Quant., Mixed & Procedure; Unit of Analysis & Sample	N/A
Main Findings	"In thinking through these issues, I have found what I believe to be

(Theoretical Foundation)	a connecting and complex theme: what I have come to call "the culture of power." There are five aspects of power I would like to propose as given for this presentation: 1. Issues of power are enacted in classrooms. 2. There are codes or rules for participating in power; that is, there is a "culture of power." 3. The rules of the culture of power are a reflection of the rules of the culture of those who have power. 4. If you are not already a participant in the culture of power, being told explicitly the rules of that culture makes acquiring power easier. 5. Those with power are frequently least aware of - or least willing to acknowledge - its existence. Those with less power are often most aware of its existence. The first three are by now basic tenets in the literature of the sociology of education, but the last two have seldom been addressed. The following discussion will explicate these aspects of power and their relevance to the schism between liberal educational movements and that of non-white, non-middle-class teachers and communities." "When acknowledging and expressing power, one tends towards explicitness (as in yelling at your ten-year-old, "Turn that radio down!"). When deemphasizing power, there is a move toward indirect communication. Therefore, in the interview setting, those who sought to help, to express their egalitarianism with the East Indian applicant, became more and more indirect - and less and less helpful - in their questions and comments." "To provide schooling for everyone's children that reflects liberal, middle-class values and aspirations is to ensure the maintenance of the status quo, to ensure that power, the culture of power, remains in the hands of those who already have it. Some children come to school with more accouterments of the culture of power already in place—"cultural capital," as some critical theorists refer to it 4 - some with less" "I suggest that students must be taught the codes needed to participate fully in the mainstream of American life, not by being forced to attend to hollow, inane, decontextualized subskills, but rather within the context of meaningful communicative endeavors; that they must be allowed the resource of the teacher's expert knowledge, while being helped to acknowledge their own "expertness" as well; and that even while students are assisted in

	learning the culture of power, they must also be helped to learn about the arbitrariness of those codes and about the power relationships they represent. I am also suggesting that appropriate education for poor children and children of color can only be devised in consultation with adults who share their culture." "I am proposing a resolution for "the skills/process debate. In short, the debate is fallacious; the dichotomy is false. The issue is really an illusion created initially not by teachers but by academics whose worldview demands the creation of categorical divisions - not for the purpose of better teaching, but for the goal of easier analysis." "The clash between school culture and home culture is actualized in at least two ways. When a significant difference exists between the students' culture and the school's culture, teachers can easily misread students' aptitudes, intent, or abilities as a result of the difference in styles of language use and interactional patterns. Secondly, when such cultural differences exist, teachers may utilize styles of instruction and/or discipline that are at odds with community norms. "The discussion of this issue is complex, but, in brief, many of the difficulties teachers encounter with children who are different in background from themselves are related to this underlying attitudinal difference in the appropriate display of explicitness and personal power in the classroom." "Teacher education usually focuses on research that links failure and socioeconomic status, failure and cultural difference, and failure and single-parent households. It is hard to believe that these children can possibly be successful after their teachers have been so thoroughly exposed to so much negative indoctrination." "When instruction allows no opportunity for children to use their minds to create and interpret texts, then children will only focus on low-level thinking and their school-based intellect will atrophy. Skills-oriented approaches that feature heavy doses of readiness activities also contribute to the "teaching less" phenomenon. Children are typically assigned to these activities as a result of low scores on some standardized test. However, they end up spending so much time matching circles and triangles that no one ever introduces them to actually learning how to read."

	"To begin with, our prospective teachers are exposed to descriptions of failure rather than models of success. We expose student teachers to an education that relies upon name calling and labeling ("disadvantaged," "at-risk," "learning disabled," "the underclass") to explain its failures, and calls upon research study after research study to inform teachers that school achievement is intimately and inevitably linked with socioeconomic status" "In other words, we teach teachers rationales for failure, not visions of success. Is there any wonder that those who are products of such teacher education (from classroom teachers to principals to central office staff) water down the curriculum for diverse students instead of challenging them with more, as Woodson says, of what school has to offer? A second reason problems occur for our culturally diverse students is that we have created in most schools institutions of isolation. We foster the notion that students are clients of "professional" educators who are met in the "office" of the classroom where their deficiencies are remediated and their intellectual "illnesses" healed" "we must work to remove the blinders built of stereotypes, monocultural instructional methodologies, ignorance, social distance, biased research, and racism. We must work to destroy those blinders so that it is possible to really see, to really know the students we must teach."
Nieto, S. (2010). *Language, culture, and teaching*. New York: Routledge.	
Literature Typology	Conceptual/Theoretical
Research Questions	N/A
Research Design Qual., Quant., Mixed & Procedure; Unit of Analysis & Sample	N/A
Main Findings (Theoretical Foundation)	"In order to provide all students with an equal and high quality education, we need to begin with the belief that all students are capable and worthy of learning to high levels of achievement." "What often stands in the way of learning are the attitudes

	concerning what children living in difficult conditions are capable of doing: If they do not speak English, it's as if they do not speak at all; if they live in poverty, they are treated as if their minds are also impoverished; and the darker their skin, the lower their intelligence is thought to be." "In order to expand their horizons, the education of young people must begin where they are, using their knowledge, experiences, cultures, and languages as the basis for their learning." "An alternative approach is to accept student differences as valid and valuable, and build on them. In fact, a number of studies have demonstrated that students who are encouraged to retain close ties to their ethnic cultures while adapting to mainstream U.S. culture are not only more academically successful but also more emotionally secure" "Students need to be prepared with the skills and attitudes necessary to live, work, and interact with others in an increasingly diverse, complex, and interdependent world." "Students need to be provided with an apprenticeship in democracy if they are to become critical and productive citizens." "Relationships among teachers and their students are the most important ingredient in successful schools." "But teaching our children well also means affirming and honoring who they are, and believing that they are capable of doing great things." "It is too convenient to fall back on deficit theories and continue the practice of blaming students, their families, and their communities for educational failure. Instead, schools need to focus on where they can make a difference, namely, their own instructional policies and practices." "This would suggest that we need to shift from a single-minded focus on low- or high-achieving students to the conditions that create low- or high-achieving schools." "In proposing a shift from coercive to collaborative relations of power, Cummins argues that traditional teacher-centered

	transmission models can limit the potential for critical thinking on the part of both teachers and students, but especially for students from dominated communities whose cultures and languages have been devalued by the dominant canon.3" "Martin Haberman is especially critical of what he calls "the pedagogy of poverty," that is, a basic urban pedagogy used with children who live in poverty and which consists primarily of giving instructions, asking questions, giving directions, making assignments, and monitoring seat work. Such pedagogy is based on the assumption that before students can be engaged in creative or critical work, they must first master "the basics." "I have often been struck by how little young people believe they deserve, especially those who do not come from economically privileged backgrounds." "Our students have a lot to teach us about how pedagogy, curriculum, ability grouping, and expectations of ability need to change so that greater numbers of young people can be reached."
Sharma, M. (2009). *Inner city students: Stamped, labeled, and shipped out! Deficit thinking and democracy in an age of neoliberalism (Doctoral dissertation).* Available from Library and Archives Canada. (ISBN: 978-0494-59675-3)	
Literature Typology	Dissertation
Research Questions	1. What are the different frameworks that create and support deficit thinking and deficit practices and are there philosophical inconsistencies or overlap against them? 2. Why is deficit thinking toward inner city students philosophically problematic and inconsistent with creating true democratic education possibilities?
Research Design Qual., Quant., Mixed & Procedure; Unit of Analysis & Sample	This thesis is organized as a philosophical investigation about deficit thinking in public education by examining how deficit thinking is defined/conceived with respect to practical effects; describing the relevant scholars responses to the different frameworks and conditions of deficit thinking; exploring the ethical implications of the different frameworks for sustaining deficit thinking practices in schools; addressing the anti-democratic nature of the current schooling that perpetuates, maintains, and sustains deficit thinking practices; and addressing how true critical inquiry provides a framework towards the process of transforming the public education system.

Main Findings (Theoretical Foundation)	From his research study the principle investigator concludes with three arguments for to create truly democratic education possibilities: **1.** The critical lens is the philosophical stance that is needed in order to identify and acknowledge the problems of deficit thinking. **2.** We all must be morally responsible for our actions and behaviors. **3.** We must all work to overcome the struggles that a critical democratic stance will encounter.
Dalley, C. X. M. (2012). *Teacher caring, efficacy, deficit thinking, engagement of students, involvement of parents, and the relationship of at-risk students (Doctoral dissertation).* Available from Proquest database. (UMI 3532527)	
Literature Typology	Dissertation
Research Questions	1. How did middle school teachers describe their own dispositions of caring, efficacy, deficit thinking, engagement of students, and teacher involvement of parents within their school environment? 2. How did the dispositions of teachers concerning teacher caring, efficacy, deficit thinking, engagement of students, and teacher involvement of parents within their school environment differ? 3. What relationships existed among the school status for academic achievement level, gender, level of education, years of experience, and teacher descriptions of their own dispositions of caring, efficacy, deficit thinking, engagement of students, and teacher involvement of parents within their school environment? 4. How did teachers' own dispositions of caring, efficacy, deficit thinking, engagement of students, and teacher involvement of parents within their school environment predict teacher placement in the three school types?
Research Design Qual., Quant., Mixed & Procedure; Unit of Analysis & Sample	Survey: subjects consisted of 6th, 7th, & 8th grade teachers in the 4 core subjects from 12 suburban middle schools in New York. The schools had a FRPL greater than 33%, this was identified from the NYSTART database. The variables of caring, efficacy, deficit thinking, engagement of students, and teacher involvement of parents within their school environment were evident on all research sites.
Main Findings (Theoretical Foundation)	An ANOVA determined that there was no significant difference among the groups of caring, efficacy, deficit thinking, engagement of students, and teacher involvement of parents within their school

	environment. Personal teacher efficacy, in this study, defined by self-reflected and self-regulating behaviors on part of the teachers, was determined to be an important teacher disposition associated with achievement among students in high poverty schools.
Williams, A. (2010). *Teacher self-efficacy and shared leadership: Portraits of teachers in high poverty schools (Doctoral dissertation).* Available from Proquest database. (UMI 3409059)	
Literature Typology	Dissertation
Research Questions	**1.** How does the experience of being a member of a school leadership team in a high-poverty school affect a teacher's self-efficacy? **2.** How does a shared leadership model within a school partnership affect a teacher's perception of the culture of a high poverty elementary school? **3.** How do teacher leadership high poverty schools view the students and parents of their school community?
Research Design Qual., Quant., Mixed & Procedure; Unit of Analysis & Sample	Portraiture: the focus of portraiture was intended to be on narrative and the use of metaphors and symbols with the intent to address a wider more eclectic audience. The writer wrote to inform and to inspire the reader and to entice readers to think more deeply about the issues that concern them.
Main Findings (Theoretical Foundation)	Link between poverty and student achievement: the background and level of empathy of the teachers contributed to their feelings towards educating children of poverty Link between poverty and school culture: poverty plays a role in school culture but the SES level of the school should not determine he culture of the school. Link school culture and shared leadership: shared leadership had a positive effect on school culture, the leadership team helped teachers develop within the profession; teachers valued shared leadership. Importance of teacher self-efficacy: they a difference in the lives of students despite the challenges; students had to held to high expectations; teachers were motivated and desired to support student learning.
Edwards, T. L. (2007). *Classroom teacher perceptions of leadership in the classroom. School, and educational community (Doctoral dissertation).* Available from Proquest database. (UMI 3274957)	

Literature Typology	Dissertation
Research Questions	1. What perceptions do teachers have about their own leadership in the classroom, in the school, and in their educational community? 2. In what ways do these perceptions relate to their ideal leadership self? 3. What demographic patterns might assist in understanding teacher's varying perceptions of leadership?
Research Design Qual., Quant., Mixed & Procedure; Unit of Analysis & Sample	Q-methodology: 300 concourse statements came from a similar study these were winnowed down to 45 q-sort statements consisting of ten guiding principles; 36 teacher participants.
Main Findings (Theoretical Foundation)	Using the statements loadings on each factor, the factors were named classroom oriented teachers, collaborative teachers, and collegial teachers.
Izzo, R. T. (2012). *Teachers' deficit and dynamic thinking in advanced placement classes: Exploring the nature of teacher-student classroom interactions (Doctoral dissertation).* Available from Proquest database. (UMI 3528775)	
Literature Typology	Dissertation
Research Questions	1. What are the expectancy themes that emerge from teachers' sense-making of their interactions with students in their classroom? 2. How do teachers manifest differential expectations for students through classroom interactions? 3. Are these expectations situated in the conceptual frameworks of deficit and dynamic thinking and critical race theory?
Research Design Qual., Quant., Mixed & Procedure; Unit of Analysis & Sample	He followed four teachers from the AP Challenge Program for 3 months. He observed classroom interactions, interviewed teachers about their expectations, specifying targeting beliefs and attitudes. He analyzed the data through an interpretivist paradigm using deductive and sequential analysis.
Main Findings (Theoretical Foundation)	RQ 1- teachers stated that students would likely pass their exams, others modified their beliefs after receiving student assessment data. RQ 2- Appropriate expectations incorporated information from assessment data. Inappropriate expectations drew upon student characteristics such as age, experience, and prior academic experience.

	RQ 3- Teachers did consider demographics in developing predictions about performance thus offering support that teachers' expectations are grounded inn deficit and dynamic thinking.
Gear, M. G. (2011). *Addressing the academic achievement of at-risk students through a leadership team approach (Doctoral dissertation).* Available from Proquest database. (UMI 3488468)	
Literature Typology	Dissertation
Research Questions	What are the perceptions of school leaders that have led to the academic achievement of at-risk students in an urban high school with a majority of economically disadvantaged students?
Research Design Qual., Quant., Mixed & Procedure; Unit of Analysis & Sample	A single case study, the author explored the perceptions of a team of school leaders as they worked to establish an educational environment and instructional practices that influenced, promoted, and sustained the academic achievement of at-risk students.
Main Findings (Theoretical Foundation)	There was a presence of a close-knit leadership team that diligently worked at creating both an educational environment and instructional practices centered on the belief that all students could achieve success in one form or another. Meeting student needs was made possible due in-large part to the interactions school leaders had stakeholders and their steadfast drive to improve academic achievement.
Lacey, J. S. (2012). *Leadership strategies used to equitably educate at-risk learners (Doctoral dissertation).* Available from Proquest database. (UMI 3506037)	
Literature Typology	Dissertation
Research Questions	1. How do school administrators distinguish the effectiveness of the strategies used to help promote, ensure, and improve education equity for students considered at-risk? 2. What, if any as perceived by the classroom teachers, are considered special teaching and learning strategies to ensure education equity among at-risk populaces? 3. How can the findings of these questions assist school administrators and classroom teachers in meeting the academic needs of at-risk students?
Research Design Qual., Quant., Mixed & Procedure; Unit of Analysis & Sample	Qualitative: open-ended survey questions; data analysis used the grounded theory approach using the open coding technique.

Main Findings (Theoretical Foundation)	1. Individualized, one-on-one instruction is needed for the populace to succeed academically and socially. 2. Instructional interventions, small group teaching, differentiated instruction, and open lines of communication are vital in the success of equitably educating students considered at-risk. 3. School administrators and teachers must work coherently and collaboratively so that these students become more confident life-long learners and in turn demonstrate to society that they can be positive contributors to society.
Eldridge, C. M. (2012). *Principals leading for educational equity: Social justice in action (Doctoral dissertation).* Available from Proquest database. (UMI 3517667)	
Literature Typology	Dissertation
Research Questions	How do principals promote educational equity in their schools?
Research Design Qual., Quant., Mixed & Procedure; Unit of Analysis & Sample	Case studies of three principals in one school district: purposeful sampling, data collection through structured interviews, analysis of each case, and a cross case analysis.
Main Findings (Theoretical Foundation)	- Leadership: shared leadership, developing vision, setting expectations, and creating a trusting environment. - Furthermore they practiced an equity focus, developed school culture and relationships, created structures for enhancing equity, analyzing data, monitoring instruction, and utilizing student feedback.
Simone, J. A. (2012). *Addressing the marginalized student: The secondary principal's role in eliminating deficit thinking (Doctoral dissertation).*	
Literature Typology	Dissertation
Research Questions	1. How do secondary school principals define deficit thinking? 2. How do principals understand the impact of deficit thinking? 3. What strategies do secondary school principals employ to eliminate deficit thinking? 4. What challenges do principals face in eliminating deficit thinking? 5. What do principals describe as the impact of eliminating deficit thinking?
Research Design Qual., Quant., Mixed &	A qualitative case study consisting of interviews, anonymous teacher surveys, and observations of two secondary principals from a purposeful sampling method.

Procedure; Unit of Analysis & Sample	
Main Findings (Theoretical Foundation)	- Defined deficit thinking as power imbalances - Understand deficit thinking as prejudices
Donmoyer, L. A. (2009). *Principal perceptions of their preparedness and the preparedness of their staff to deal with students in poverty in the classroom (Doctoral dissertation).*	
Literature Typology	Dissertation
Research Questions	1. To what extent do principals understand what must occur in the classroom to meet the needs of students of poverty? 2. To what extent do principals perceive that they have received appropriate preparation to provide leadership to classroom teachers to meet the needs of students of poverty? 3. To what extent do principals perceive that classroom teachers understand what must occur in classrooms to meet the needs of students of poverty?
Research Design Qual., Quant., Mixed & Procedure; Unit of Analysis & Sample	Qualitative research approach: data will be collected from 31 K-12 principals through confidential interviews.
Main Findings (Theoretical Foundation)	• Principals do understand what must occur in classrooms to meet the needs of students of poverty: high expectations, monitoring student progress, and differentiated instruction. • Principals did not receive appropriate preparation to provide leadership to classroom teachers to meet the needs of students of poverty, but the principals did not find it important to seek out this type of professional development. • Principals perceived that teachers realize not all students come to school with what they need to be successful.
Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development. (2008, January). Ten steps to equity in education. OECD Observer- Policy Brief. Retrieved from www.oecd.org/publications/policybriefs.	
Literature Typology	Conceptual
Research Questions	What are the challenges for equity in education?
Research Design Qual., Quant.,	N/A

Mixed & Procedure; Unit of Analysis & Sample	
Main Findings (Theoretical Foundation)	• two domains of inequity: inclusion & fairness • three key policy areas: the design of education systems, practices in and out of school, and how resources are allocated?
Tooley, C. D. (2003). *Putting class in the classroom: What the Ruby Payne phenomenon says about how class is understood in the classroom (Doctoral dissertation)*.	
Literature Typology	Dissertation
Research Questions	N/A
Research Design Qual., Quant., Mixed & Procedure; Unit of Analysis & Sample	Analysis of Ruby Payne's book by reviewing research on the topic and examining critical social theories.
Main Findings (Theoretical Foundation)	• Payne's book brings class to the forefront of the conversation. • The book reproduces the very structure it hopes to undo. • The book is based on the idea that everyone desires mobility. • In the end her success comes from lower class students buying into capitalist ideology.
Benitas, A. M. (2012). *Overcoming program improvement status: A strength based approach to school improvement (Doctoral dissertation)*.	
Literature Typology	Dissertation
Research Questions	1. What instructional and non-instructional practices or programs were used to drive the school improvement process in an urban elementary school that has been able to successfully exit and move beyond its program improvement status? 2. What perceptions about school's environment and interpersonal relationships exist within an urban elementary school that promotes positive systemic school change? 3. What role does leadership and the self-perceived value of school personnel have in a urban elementary school that has been able to successfully exit and move beyond its program improvement status?
Research Design	This mixed-methods research study was directed towards a

Qual., Quant., Mixed & Procedure; Unit of Analysis & Sample	California public urban elementary school with a large at-risk population of English Language Learners located just fifteen minutes from downtown Los Angeles. This study was guided by two strength-based theoretical models "Appreciative Inquiry" (inquiry framework) and "Positive Deviance" (behavioral framework). Strength-Based or Asset-Based theoretical models focus on successes, "what is working" rather than failures "what is wrong or broken." Strength-based or asset-based pedagogical models are framed around personal, social, or community assets and focus on unique talents, strengths, qualities and positive experiences.
Main Findings (Theoretical Foundation)	This study suggest that in order to effectively meet the needs of the ever changing and evolving world, educators, educational leaders, policymakers, and legislators must begin to move beyond, simply treating the symptoms of program improvement; they must begin to investigate and understand the factors that create and influence successful systemic school improvement. Furthermore, the findings of this study indicate that the true answers to the program improvement dilemma can be sought; if future researchers can move beyond problem solving, and break free from the bondage of the traditional deficit model of school improvement. By continuing to examine the schools that have been able to succeed in beating the odds by successfully exiting and moving beyond their program improvement status, future researchers could prove to be the catalysts in a strength-based movement; thereby, creating a paradigm shift in the future of educational research.
Haberman, M. (1991, December). The pedagogy of poverty versus good teaching. *Phi Delta Kappan*, 290-294.	
Literature Typology	Conceptual
Research Questions	The author defines and describes alternatives teaching children of poverty
Research Design Qual., Quant., Mixed & Procedure; Unit of Analysis & Sample	N/A
Main Findings (Theoretical	Why can't urban teaching be improved? The assumptions: 1. We assume we know what good teaching is.

Foundation)	2. Since most teachers cannot be changed anyway there must be other teacher proof strategies for change. 3. Why bother teaching anyway if research shows that socioeconomic status causes poor test scores. Core functions of urban teaching: giving information, asking questions, giving directions, making assignments, monitoring seatwork, reviewing assignments, giving tests, reviewing tests, assigning homework, reviewing homework, settling disputes, punishing noncompliance, marking papers, and giving grades. Four syllogisms that undergird the pedagogy of poverty. 1. Teaching is what teachers do. Learning is what students do. 2. Teachers are in charge and responsible. Students are those who still need to develop appropriate behavior. 3. Students represent a wide range of individual differences. Therefore, ranking of some sort is inevitable; some students will end up at the bottom of the class while others will finish at the top. 4. Basic skills are a prerequisite for learning and living. Unfortunately, the pedagogy of poverty does not work. Youngsters achieve neither minimum levels of life skills nor what they are capable of learning. Reformers of urban schools are now raising their expectations beyond an emphasis on basic skills to the teaching of critical thinking, problem solving, and even creativity. The students' stake in maintaining the pedagogy of poverty is of the strongest possible kind: it absolves them of responsibility for learning and puts the burden on the teachers, who must be accountable for making them learn. Graduates who lack basic skills may be unemployable and represent a personal and societal tragedy. However, graduates who possess basic skills but are partially informed, unable to think, and incapable

	of making moral choices are downright dangerous.
Moll, L., Amanti, C., Neff, D. and Gonzalez, N. (1992). Funds of knowledge for teaching: Using a qualitative approach to connect homes and classrooms. *Theory Into Practice, XXXI*, 2, 132-141.	
Literature Typology	Empirical/Conceptual
Research Questions	N/A
Research Design Qual., Quant., Mixed & Procedure; Unit of Analysis & Sample	N/A
Main Findings (Theoretical Foundation)	Funds of knowledge is defined by researchers Moll et al. (2001) to refer to the historically accumulated and culturally developed bodies of knowledge and skills essential for household or individual functioning and well-being. Teachers visit homes and learn from students and their families about their culture, traditions, and life experiences. Then teachers can use the child's funds of knowledge to connect with their children in the classroom.
Hart, B., & Risely, T. (2003, Spring). The early catastrophe: The 30 million word gap by age 3. *American Educator, 27*(1), 4-9.	
Literature Typology	Empirical
Research Questions	To understand the disparate developmental trajectories we saw. We realized that if we were to understand how and when differences in developmental trajectories began, we needed to see what was happening to children at home at the very beginning of their vocabulary growth.
Research Design Qual., Quant., Mixed & Procedure; Unit of Analysis & Sample	2 1/2 years of observing 42 families for an hour each month to learn about what typically went on in homes with 1- and 2-year-old children learning to talk. On the basis of occupation, 13 of the families were upper socioeconomic status (SES), 10 were middle SES, 13 were lower SES, and six were on welfare. There were African-American families in each SES category, in numbers roughly reflecting local job allocations. One African-American family was upper SES, three were middle, seven were lower, and six families were on welfare. Of the 42 children, 17 were African American and 23 were girls. Eleven children were the first born to the family, 18 were second children, and 13 were third or later-born children.
Main Findings (Theoretical Foundation)	By the time the children were 3 years old, trends in amount of talk, vocabulary growth, and style of interaction were well established and clearly suggested widening gaps to come. Even patterns of parenting were already observable among the children. When we listened to the

	children, we seemed to hear their parents speaking; when we watched the children play at parenting their dolls, we seemed to see the futures of their own children. A linear extrapolation from the averages in the observational data to a 100-hour week (given a 14-hour waking day) shows the average child in the professional families with 215,000 words of language experience, the average child in a working-class family provided with 125,000 words, and the average child in a welfare family with 62,000 words of language experience. In a 5,200-hour year, the amount would be 11.2 million words for a child in a professional family, 6.5 million words for a child in a working-class family, and 3.2 million words for a child in a welfare family. In four years of such experience, an average child in a professional family would have accumulated experience with almost 45 million words, an average child in a working-class family would have accumulated experience with 26 million words, and an average child in a welfare family would have accumulated experience with 13 million words. By age 4, the average child in a welfare family might have 13 million fewer words of cumulative experience than the average child in a working-class family. This linear extrapolation is shown in the graph below. Extrapolated to the first four years of life, the average child in a professional family would have accumulated 560,000 more instances of encouraging feedback than discouraging feedback, and an average child in a working-class family would have accumulated 100,000 more encouragements than discouragements. But an average child in a welfare family would have accumulated 125,000 more instances of prohibitions than encouragements. By the age of 4, the average child in a welfare family might have had 144,000 *fewer* encouragements and 84,000 *more* discouragements of his or her behavior than the average child in a working-class family.

Appendix B. Development of Statement 6

Interview Data Statement	Interview Data Source	Review of Literature Statement	Review of Literature Source	Final Statement
Exposure to life, learning, and experiences develops background knowledge and a context for student learning.	Teacher	Schools play an important role in orienting children with their future position in society.	Flora & Flora, 2008	I understand the selection process of school programs (e.g., Academically Gifted, Exceptional Children's, AP and Honor Courses) can influence how students see themselves.

Appendix C. Initial Q Statement List

#	Final Statement	Interview Source	Literature Sourc
1	I must understand how language plays a role in my students' success.	School Level Administrator 1	Delpit, 2005
2	It is important to know how family cultures influence student motivation to learn.	District Level Administrator 1	Singham, 2010
3	I know that children are products of their home life (e.g., single parent home, living in poverty, crime).	School Level Administrator 2	Dudley-Marling & Lucas, 2009
4	I know that children are products of their home environment (e.g., care giver for siblings, abuse, drug or alcohol dependency).	School Level Administrator 2	Dudley-Marling & Lucas, 2009
5	I understand the context or setting (e.g., urban, rural, Title 1) can influence how students see themselves.	Teacher	Flora & Flora, 2008
6	I understand the selection process of school programs (e.g., Academically Gifted, Exceptional Children's, AP and Honor	Teacher	Flora & Flora, 2008

	Courses) can influence how students see themselves.		
7	It is important to ensure that the culture within the school building (e.g., in classrooms, cafeteria, after school activities) does not determine the success of my students.	Curriculum Specialist 1	Williams, 2010
8	It is important to ensure that the culture within the school building related to socioeconomic status does not determine the success of my students.	Curriculum Specialist 5	Williams, 2010
9	It is important for me to take the time to listen and learn from students about their experiences.	District Level Administrator 3	Nieto, 2010
10	I must include multiple strategies to include parents in the child's education.	District Level Administrator 1	Lott, 2003
11	I must honor the multiple forms of literacy (e.g., storytelling, multicultural, technological) that my students possess.	Teacher	Lott, 2003
12	Students must feel loved by the adults in their	Curriculum	Moll et al.,

	schools to be successful academically.	Specialist 1	1992
13	Students must trust and be trusted by the adults in their schools to be successful academically.	Curriculum Specialist 1	Moll et al., 1992
14	I must honor the values that students receive from their families.	Curriculum Specialist 2	Lott, 2003
15	I know that working class parents prepare their children for school (e.g., exposing them to skilled trades, work ethic through going to work each day).	District Level Administrator 3	Moll et al., 1992
16	I know that when children are harmed by life they cannot perform at the same level as other children.	School Level Administrator 1	Garcia & Guerra, 2004
17	I know that when education is not valued in the home students cannot perform at the same level as other children.	School Level Administrator 1	Garcia & Guerra,. 2004
18	I understand that students may not be passive bystanders at home as they maybe at school.	District Level Administrator 1	Moll et al., 1992
19	I understand that in their homes students are motivated to learn and play by their interests	District Level Administrator	Moll et al, 1992

	and questions unlike in school.	1	
20	I know students' linguistic deficiencies come from parents' inability to provide language rich home environments.	Teacher	Dudley-Marling & Lucas, 2009
21	I know that students can find success in school even their parents or siblings could not.	Teacher	Dudley-Marling & Lucas, 2009
22	I know students should not be considered at-risk for school failure just because they lack material wealth.	School Level Administrator 1	Cooper, 2012
23	I know a school should not be considered at-risk for school failure just because it lacks material wealth.	School Level Administrator 1	Cooper, 2012
24	I know a community should not be considered at-risk for school failure just because it lacks material wealth.	School Level Administrator 1	Cooper, 2012
25	I know a student's social worth comes from their exposure to people, places, and consistency.	School Level Administrator 1	Cooper, 2012
26	I know that lack of parental support for low socioeconomic students is not caused by	Counselor	Gorski, 2008

	parents' devalued sense of education.		
27	I know that lack of parental support for low socioeconomic students is sometimes caused by parents need to work and support the family (i.e. multiple jobs, extended family concerns)	Counselor	Gorski, 2008
28	I know that lack of parental support for low socioeconomic students is not caused by the attitudes and values of their impoverished community.	Counselor	Gorski, 2008
29	I know that lack of parental support for low socioeconomic students is not be caused by parent linguistic deficiencies.	Counselor	Gorski, 2008
30	I know that students can overcome motivational challenges that stem from their disadvantaged experiences (i.e. parents did not complete high school, have to work inside or outside home)	School Level Administrator 4	Valencia, 1997
31	I know that students with limit exposure to academic vocabulary in their homes may struggle to find academic success.	District Level Administrator 3	Hart & Risely, 2003

32	I understand when my students know I believe in them they are motivated to learn.	Curriculum Specialist 2	Delpit, 2012
33	I understand when my students know I believe in them they are motivated to try.	Curriculum Specialist 2	Delpit, 2012
34	I show my students I care about them by my work ethic.	District Level Administrator 2	Delpit, 2012
35	I know that when I show my students that I will go the extra mile for them they will work hard for me.	District Level Administrator 3	Delpit, 2012
36	I know school leaders can improve student outcomes by creating relationships with all stakeholders.	School Level Administrator 1	Gear, 2011
37	I know school leaders can assist teachers with developing an inclusive school culture for ALL students.	District Level Administrator 1	James-Wilson & Hancock, 2011
38	It is the responsibility of both administrators and teachers to work collaboratively to help all students reach their full potential.	School Level Administrator 2	Lacey, 2012
39	I must consider what is "right" with my students instead of what is "wrong" because	Teacher	Cooper, 2012

	every child can learn.		
40	I know that high expectations for ALL students no matter where they begin will allow them to experience success.	Curriculum Specialist 1	Skrla & Scheurich, 2001
41	I must ensure the equity of education for ALL my students so that they can achieve at their own rate	District Level Administrator 3	James-Wilson & Hancock, 2011
42	I must create strong positive relationships with students to ensure their academic success.	Teacher	Nieto, 2011
43	I must learn from my students to know how to best serve them academically.	Counselor	Nieto, 2011

Appendix D. Questions for Concourse Clarification and Development by Middle School Educators

1. Are the statements worded clearly? If not, what changes would you suggest?
2. Are there any statements that are similar in nature and you feel could be combined?
3. Would you remove any of the statements from the list?
4. Would you add any statements that are not currently on the list?

Appendix E. Card Sort Instructions

Card Sort Instructions

Thank you again for willingness to participate in this research study. In this process, you will sort and rank statements on a continuum from the statements you most agree to those you most disagree.

Instructions:

1. Lay out the column titles from -4 to +4 across the top of the table or desk.
2. Please read through all 40 statement cards to become familiar with the statements.
3. Please read through the statements for a second time. As you read the statements, please organize them into three piles:
   - On the right, place the cards with the statements of which you believe **most describes activities/behaviors that will lead to your success in this course**.
   - On the left, place the cards with the statements of which you believe **least describes activities/behaviors that will lead to your success in this course**.
   - In the middle, place the cards that you feel more undecided about or you neither agree nor disagree with the statement.
4. Beginning with the pile on the right (strongly agree), place the 2 cards that you most strongly agree with in the far right column in any order.
5. Next, turning to your left side (strongly disagree), place the 2 cards that you most strongly disagree with in the far left column in any order.
6. Returning to the pile on the right, choose 3 cards that represent the next statements with which you agree and place these cards under marker +4, in any order.
7. Do the same with the pile on the left, following this pattern as you work your way to the center pile.
8. You are free to change your mind during the sorting process and switch items around as long as you maintain the requested number of items under each marker
   - You should have 2 cards under markers +4 and -4
   - You should have 4 cards under markers +3 and -3
   - You should have 5 cards under markers +2 and -2
   - You should have 6 cards under markers +1 and -1
   - You should have 6 cards under marker 0
9. Your sorted cards should match the diagram on the handout. After sorting the cards, please record each card's number onto the diagram in the same design as you sorted the cards.
10. After sorting the cards, complete the post-sort survey. If you are willing to be interviewed about your card sort, please provide your contact information on the bottom of the page provided.

Appendix F. Post Card Sort Survey

1. Tell me about the statement(s) you placed in the "Strongly Agree" column. What do those statements mean to you?

2. Tell me about the statement(s) you placed in the "Strongly Disagree" column. What do those statements mean to you?

3. As you sorted the cards, did you feel that any statement about your beliefs were missing? If so, what? Where would you place that card and why?

4. Which statement, if any, did you have difficulty placing? Why? Which statement(s) were the easiest to place? Why?

5. What are your perceptions of your students' backgrounds affecting their educational outcomes?

Demographic Information

1. How many years, including this school year, have you been a middle school educator? Check the appropriate response.

   ___ 0-4 years ___ 5-9 years ___ 10-14 years ___ 15 or more years

2. What role do you currently serve in this middle school? Check the appropriate response.

___ Teacher ___ Paraprofessional ___ Administrator ___ Counselor/Specialist

3. How long have you been at your current school?

4. What was your socio-economic status while you attended middle school?

   Check the appropriate response: ___ Impoverished ___ Lower Middle Class

   ___ Middle Class ___ Upper Middle Class ___ Wealthy.

5. What is your highest earned degree? Check the appropriate response. ___

   Associate's ___ Bachelor ___ Master ___ Doctorate _____ Other

Appendix G. Interview Protocol

1. Looking at the model factor array, the high-positive statements, and high-negative statements, conceptualize into one to five words what you observe as a pattern or theme in the statements.
2. Are the statements in the high-positive end of the model factor array representative of you as an educator? Why?
3. Are the statements in the high-negative end of the model factor array representative of you as an educator? Why?
4. What factors have contributed to the development of your perceptions related to students' backgrounds?
5. What factors have contributed to the persistence of these perceptions?

Appendix I. Card Sort Consent

North Carolina State University
INFORMED CONSENT FORM for RESEARCH

Title of Study: Deficit Thinking: Middle School Educators' Perceptions in Rural Coastal North Carolina

Researcher: James H. Parker IV, under the guidance of Dr. Matthew Militello and Dr. Susan Faircloth

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 this Q-methodology study is to understand educators' perceptions of deficit thinking in their middle school and the types of leadership that can be used to overcome deficit thinking. You are not guaranteed any personal benefits from being in this study. 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. If you wish, 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 named above.

Purpose of the Study:
The purpose of this Q-methodology study is to understand educators' perceptions of deficit thinking in their middle school and the types of leadership that can be used to overcome deficit thinking.

What will happen if you take part in the study?
If you agree to participate in this stage of the study, you will be asked to sort 40 cards. These cards have statements printed on them. Your task will be to sort them according to your own beliefs. This process should take no more than 20-45 minutes. During the process, I will ask you questions about why you placed certain statements in certain areas on the continuum. After sorting the cards, you will be asked to complete a brief questionnaire about the statements and some general demographic data. Your card sort and your responses to the questionnaire will remain anonymous.

Risks: There are no known risks to sorting the cards.

Benefits: Aside from adding to the body of knowledge about deficit thinking, participants may enjoy thinking about and expressing their own opinions.

Confidentiality: The information in the study will be kept confidential to the full extent allowed by law. Data will be stored securely on a computer and in a locked file cabinet of which only the researcher has access. No reference will be made in oral or written reports, which could link you to the study.

Compensation You will not receive anything for participating.

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, James H. Parker IV, 224 Eastwood Dr. Wallace, North Carolina 28466; 910-850-5520; jhparker@ncsu.edu.

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 J. Post Card Sort Interview Consent

North Carolina State University
INFORMED CONSENT FORM for RESEARCH

Title of Study: What Works? Principals' Perceptions of Professional Development

Researcher: James H. Parker IV, under the guidance of Dr. Matthew Militello and Dr. Susan Faircloth
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 this Q-methodology study is to understand educators' perceptions of deficit thinking in their middle school and the types of leadership that can be used to overcome deficit thinking. You are not guaranteed any personal benefits from being in this study.. 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. If you wish, 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 named above.

Purpose of the Study:
The purpose of this Q-methodology study is to understand educators' perceptions of deficit thinking in their middle school and the types of leadership that can be used to overcome deficit thinking.

What will happen if you take part in the study?
If you agree to participate in this stage of the study, you will be asked to participate in an interview to explain your rationale for placing the cards in the order you chose. This process should take no more than 30-45 minutes. After sorting the cards, you will be interviewed briefly to discuss in more depth your opinions about the statements and some general demographic data. The interviews will be recorded with a digital hand-held recording device. Your card sort and your responses during the interview will remain anonymous.

Risks: There are no known risks to participating in this interview.

Benefits: Aside from adding to the body of knowledge about professional development, participants may enjoy thinking about and expressing their own opinions.

Confidentiality: The information in the study will be kept confidential to the full extent allowed by law. Data will be stored securely on a computer and in a locked file cabinet of which only the researcher has access. No reference will be made in oral or written reports, which could link you to the study.

Compensation: You will not receive anything for participating.

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, James H. Parker IV, 224 Eastwood Dr. Wallace, North Carolina 28466; 910-850-5520; jhparker@ncsu.edu.

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 _____