

A QUALITATIVE INVESTIGATION OF THE CAREER DEVELOPMENT OF URBAN,  
MINORITY ADOLESCENTS

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Doctor of Philosophy

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by  
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The undersigned, appointed by the dean of the Graduate School, have examined the dissertation entitled

A QUALITATIVE INVESTIGATION OF THE CAREER DEVELOPMENT OF  
URBAN, MINORITY ADOLESCENTS

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# A QUALITATIVE INVESTIGATION OF THE CAREER DEVELOPMENT OF URBAN, MINORITY ADOLESCENTS

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## ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study was to provide an in-depth understanding of the career development experiences of urban minority adolescents from their own perspectives. The investigation used the Structured Career Development Interview (SCDI), a 48-item, open-ended questionnaire based on the nine career constructs critical in the formation of vocational self-understanding. The SCDI was developed for use with 6th through 12th graders at varying stages of career development. Consensual Qualitative Research Methodology (CQR), a rigorous and standardized approach to qualitative research, was employed to analyze the descriptive data in a highly systemic way. Controlling for researcher bias, this methodology uses multiple researchers and the process of consensus to examine the representativeness of the results across cases. CQR is a discovery oriented approach where the conclusions are built from the responses of the participants. Twelve 8th, 10th and 12th grade students (4 Hispanics, 7 African Americans, and 1 Somalian/ African; 10 females; 2 males) from an urban public middle and high school in Kansas City, Missouri participated in the study.

The results suggested a progressive career maturity among the participants. Older students displayed more direction and focus about their career interests. While ten of the twelve participants reported above average grade point averages, only eight students had a 3.0 gpa or better; only two of those eight had a gpa above 3.5. Many of the students reported high career expectations and aspirations despite demographic, social, economic, and political challenges. The participants offered parental support as the primary source of emotional, but not instrumental support; teachers, counselors, and school administrators were less supportive and were reported to be more focused on those students who

presented more of a challenge to the school learning environment. Premature foreclosure to diverse career interests was characteristic of all the participants.

Recommendations include: (1) interventions must be early and must proceed through K12 years; (2) school counselors and teachers must collaborate to develop curriculum and experiences that connect current behavior with future achievement; and (3) parents must be encouraged to become more instrumentally involved in the career interests of their students.



## Chapter 1

### Introduction

Career development researchers and practitioners have made meaningful contributions to understanding the principles that influence career development. Career development theories (e.g., Gottfredson, 1981; Holland, 1981; Lent, Brown & Hackett, 1994) recognize the importance of individual experiences, interests, family and personal values, self-efficacy, and successes and failures on a host of tasks, and how all these interact to shape career aspirations, expectations, and choices. However, not as much has been learned about the urban minority's perspective neither on the career development process nor on the individual's view of the school-to-work transition. It seems prudent that career theories not be informed only by the observations of researchers and the external experiences of participants who engage in career development exercises-- job shadowing, career counseling, and interest inventories and assessments. Career theories must also take into account students' internal experiences of their own career development process. In order to facilitate positive vocational outcome and to approach a more comprehensive understanding of adolescent career development, practitioners and theorists must be able to ascertain adolescents' perspectives on those exchanges and experiences that have been most significant, most influential in shaping their lives and understanding of the world of work. Career development researchers and practitioners should consider the story that students have to tell, in their own words. Super (1954) noted that in order to achieve effective career guidance and counseling, researchers would have to address fundamental questions about career development, including the identification of the "traits and trends of development observed in adolescence" that predict future vocational development patterns (p.18). Career development researchers will be better able to identify and verify the "traits

and trends of development observed in adolescence" if adolescents' perspectives are taken more fully into account.

There has been significant research that has examined the career development of adolescents (e.g., Super, 1957; Gottfredson & Lapan, 1997), and some have explored this process for minority populations (e.g., McNair & Brown, 1983; Evans & Herr, 1994; Rojewski, 1994). In fact, much has been learned about the barriers that minority youth encounter in the career development process. It is desperately clear that arriving at an appropriate career choice without premature foreclosure (selection of a career path based on limited or narrow options without exploring other potential interests) is an especially difficult task for minority youth residing in the inner city (e.g., Brown, 1997; Worthington & Juntunen, 1997; Lingg, 1995). These adolescents encounter obstacles in their personal, educational, and career development that extend well beyond those met by their non-minority group peers. Brown (1997), Lingg (1995), D' Andrea (1995) and others posit that African American youth face lower educational attainment, higher unemployment rates, ~ propensity for limited parental support and involvement, discrimination (real and perceived), and few positive role models.

While the literature submits that minority youth have career aspirations that are equivalent to their non-minority counterparts, and many go on to pursue these aspirations, the aforementioned obstacles work to negatively affect the career maturity and occupational expectations of these students (e.g., McNair & Brown, 1983; Rojewski, 1995). Thus, because of the multiple obstacles that urban minority adolescents face, they are typically unable to master developmentally appropriate vocational tasks, and they often prematurely narrow their exploration of educational and career paths that fit their goals and skills (e.g., Wilson, 1996; Cook, et al., 1996). The odds against securing a satisfying and socially suitable career may so frustrate some minority youth that they resolve to seeking less constructive, alternative jobs (D' Andrea, 1995).

Cook et al. (1996) investigated the vocational aspirations and expectations of boys growing up in urban community settings where a large percentage of the adult men were not strongly attached to the labor force. The authors found that as early as the second grade (also noted at grades 4, 6, and 8) inner city boys report a much greater gap between the careers they would prefer and aspire to enter versus those they actually expected to enter as adults. This gap approximated the actual differences by race and socioeconomic class in adult employment patterns in their community. Cook et al. offered that the lowered vocational expectations of economically poorer African American boys in their sample emerge from their perception of the realities of the world in which they live. Just as Wilson (1996) argued, early aspirations are quickly foreclosed upon in favor of expectations that unwittingly perpetuate the same vocational patterns for the next generation (Cook et al., 1996). Cook et al. further noted that these lowered vocational expectations were substantially related to lowered expectations for being able to be successful in school. Interestingly, these lowered expectations were not related to either a lack of positive role models or beliefs by these children that success in school would not be rewarded in the future (Cook et al., 1996).

Schneider and Stevenson (1999) might argue that one way to identify the "traits and trends observed in adolescence", and thus extend the our understanding of adolescent career development is to consider the ambitions voiced by today's youth. Schneider and Stevenson (1999) noted that today's adolescents are very concerned about their futures and have high occupational expectations. Most adolescents expect to enter the higher echelons of the world of work-- they expect to graduate from college and work as professionals in our society. However, Schneider and Stevenson (1999) suggest that without a clear educational or career path, many adolescents find it difficult to reach their goals. Unfortunately, many aspiring students have not "anchored (their) ambitions in an understanding of the relationship between educational credentials and later employment

opportunities" (p. 22). And without such an understanding or a plan, students find themselves floundering in unsatisfying vocational or educational paths. Thus, the task for students is to develop complementary educational and occupational goals. Schneider and Stevenson (1999) stated that students who have aligned ambitions-- know what kind of job they want, as well as the educational requirements-- possess more accurate knowledge of the world of work and of the educational pathways to valued occupations. These students are able to sustain higher levels of motivation and make meaningful and carefully orchestrated choices about how to use their time and invest their efforts. The question, then, is: how aware are students of the relationship between the choices they make during their high school years and the availability of options they have in the world of work? Further, what is their perspective about their transition from school to work?

Current career development research has not sufficiently addressed these questions for urban minority youth. Much of the work in career research has been devoted to investigating career theories that are primarily applicable to White college students, or those who are college-bound (Fitzgerald & Betz, 1994). While exploring career issues that are relevant for this population is important in helping college students select personally relevant majors and career paths, researchers and theorists must also address the career concerns of a wider range of individuals (e.g., students who plan to immediately transition into the world of work, urban youth, rural youth) (Worthington & Juntunen, 1997). Further, in order to understand the career needs of all students and to better aid them in identifying educational and vocational options that are appropriate to their personal goals and characteristics, researchers must also explore the experiences of adolescents from diverse backgrounds. The influence of demographic, social, economic, and political contexts significantly shape and help to explain an individual's vocational self-- understanding and orientation to the world or work (Lapan & Kosciulek, 2001; Blustein, Phillips, Jobin-Davis, Finkel berg, & Roarke, 1997). Thus, to ignore any of these

differences will profoundly limit our understanding of the career development process experienced by adolescents.

Another criticism of the current research in career development is that it is limited in its scope. In order to access the rich, descriptive information found at the heart of adolescent career development, career development researchers must venture beyond the traditional quantitative paradigms. Researchers and theorists in this area must be willing to employ qualitative approaches that allow them to explore the phenomena as they naturally occur so that they are able to organize and describe phenomena with depth and richness (Hill, Thompson, & Williams, 1997). Blustein, Phillips, Jobin-Davis, Finkelberg, and Roarke (1997) used such an approach in their attempt to achieve a better understanding of the transition from school to work for students who entered the work-force immediately after high school. Their research approach was "a qualitative discovery-oriented, hypothesis-generating investigation" (p. 368) intending to identify the characteristic of students who were able to successfully transition into the world of work (Blustein, et al., 1997). The researchers found that students who successfully transitioned from school to work were more purposeful, active, and assertive in managing the rapid series of challenges that confronted them in late adolescence and early adulthood. Blustein and his colleagues' (1997) theory-building endeavor expanded the boundaries and assumptions of current theories, and reflected the experiences of work-bound youth. They also proposed ways in which a host of factors work to facilitate a successful, adaptive transition into the world of work for adolescents (Blustein, et al., 1997).

Qualitative research methodology is a useful method for examining the complex issues found in career development. Pearson and Bieschke's (2001) research of the familial influences on the career development of African American women further highlights the strengths of qualitative research approaches. These investigators employed a qualitative method called consensual qualitative research (CQR) to ascertain how African

American women make meaning of the influence of their family-of-origin experiences on their career development. CQR allowed them to systematically, rigorously, and intensely study the open-ended responses of their small sample (Pearson & Bieschke, 1997). They found that the career development of the African American women in their study was significantly influenced by the emphasis the family placed on education, participants' relationships with family members, and the family's social and economic resources (Pearson & Bieschke, 2001). These researchers suggested that exploratory research seeking to understand the perspectives of participants about a certain phenomenon or experience would find CQR a very appropriate research method.

Arguably, one of the main goals of career development research is to secure an in-depth understanding of the career development process such that interventions can be designed and implemented to assist students in making successful post- high school transitions. Lapan and Kosciulek (2001) proposed that an approach to servicing students and equipping them for the transition from school to work should be both measurable and responsive to the concerns of parents, educators, businesses, trade unions, and community leaders. These stakeholders want students who can display career maturity in their approach to an array of educational and training opportunities; students who are equipped to make well-informed choices as they travel through various vocational and educational paths. As a result, adolescents should approach the world of work possessing a unique understanding of themselves, particularly in relation to this new arena, without prematurely narrowing their educational and career paths (Lapan & Kosciulek, 2001). In order to facilitate positive vocational outcome and vocational self-understanding, Lapan and Kosciulek (2001) echoed other researchers (e.g., Lent, Brown & Hackett, 1994) who offered that career development interventions should be multi-fold in their approach to addressing the needs of adolescents, including: provide growth in purpose and direction; increase perceived opportunities and choice; strengthen personal agency and empowerment;

encourage perseverance and foster an ability to overcome; help develop a sense of commitment, as we enhance maturity; and aid in the maintenance of motivation and hope.

Lapan and Kosciulek (2001) argued that vocational self-understanding can be positively enhanced by six primary constructs: academic achievement, vocational interests, person-environment fit, work readiness behaviors and social skills, and identity development, and positive expectations. According to Bandura (1997), expectations are the cognitive self-regulatory processes which contribute to the ability people have to create meaning and exercise control and direction over their lives. Individual freedom and agency are rooted in one's ability to weigh possibilities and plot a more self-determined course of action. Bandura's research offered that self-efficacy expectations and outcome expectations collaborate together to encourage successful performance of critical life tasks and project future anticipations of the benefits and rewards of achieving long term goals.

For Erikson (198), a successful transition into young adulthood is accomplished through the successful resolution of the identity crisis in late adolescence. Exploration and goal formation are interrelated processes essential in making a self-directed commitment to a vocational direction. Flum and Blustein (2000) proposed that internalizing a self-constructed identity would give both direction and adaptive advantages across the individual's life span. In the process of creating a self-constructed identity, individuals actively seek out career-related information and internalize new insights and self-understandings. In addition to engaging in processes of career exploration, individuals also need to form intrinsically-valued goals that provide a sense of purpose, organization, and well-being throughout their lives (Lapan, 2005).

In order to be successful in both the work and personal roles they will assume, young people will need to utilize a complex array of work-readiness behaviors and social skills. These will allow them adaptive advantages across their life span by preparing them to be sensitive to the interpersonal and environmental community building needs of the



increasingly global and cross-cultural world-wide community (Lapan, 2005). Young people will need to possess such skills as the ability to work cooperatively with others as part of a team and be able to demonstrate entrepreneurial initiative and independent action. Moreover, socially competent individuals will be able to balance an ability to secure their self-interest with the need to care for others and the environment (Lapan, 2005).

In order to make effective career decisions, individuals need to better understand both themselves and the world of work. If an appropriate match between the individual and the world of work can be identified, trait and factor theories argue that career choices should be expanded rather than unnecessarily limited. These theories have emphasized the importance of an active search process that prompts an individual to locate work environments that allow them to best express what is important to them ( e.g., Holland, 1959). Holland's (1997) RIASEC model connects successful career decisions to a more optimal match between one's personality and unique "ways of life" (p.8) found in different occupations. Further, Dawis and Lofquist's (1984) theory of work adjustment identified the importance of the match between the needs an employee desires to satisfy and the possible reinforcers actually available in a work environment for promoting more successful occupational outcomes.

Part of the foundation of career development psychology is the study of vocational interests. Instrumental research in the area of vocational interests has underscored the match between one's pattern of interests and the interests expressed by those employed in specific careers (Harmon, Hansen, Borgen, & Hammer, 1994; Strong, 1927, 1943). The important role that interests play in career and life satisfaction and success has emerged in several different areas. Ryan and Deci (2000), for example, found that being engaged in work that one is intrinsically interested in is an essential component to attaining such satisfaction and success. The development of vocational interests is said to be primarily determined by four factors: genetics, self-efficacy expectations, personality, and abilities

and aptitudes. Lykken, Bouchard, McGue, and Tellegen (1993) proposed that one's environment provides a variety of experiences that shape opportunity and choice, thus encouraging or discouraging the expression of career interests. Career counseling, then, is a tool used to increase the match between one's preferences and available opportunities for the expression of interests in specific work environments.

Lapan (2000) asserts that opportunities for career development without achievement are disappearing. This sentiment echoes Sells' (1973) conclusion that academic achievement is the decisive passageway through which one can attain a desired future and achieve economic well-being. For example, according to an investigation conducted by former Secretary of Education Riley (1997), if a young person does not successfully complete an Algebra course by 8th or 9th grade, they are three times less likely to pursue a four-year college degree after high school. The situation becomes more bleak for adolescents who come from financially disadvantaged homes: if Algebra is not successfully completed by the 8th or 9th grade, the individual is six times less likely to pursue a bachelor's degree after high school. Zimmerman and Schunk (2001) discussed the role of self-regulated learning in promoting the academic achievement of all students. Students who are self-regulated learners are proactively engaged in attempts to improve their learning, as is reflected in the planning, performance, and outcome phases of important learning events.

Lapan and Kosdulek (2001) proposed that the aforementioned constructs, the relationships among them, their connection to vocational self-understanding, as well as their interface with surrounding demographic, social, economic and political contexts all collaborate to influence adolescents' orientation to the future-- how an adolescent might define his purpose and outline his direction; how she identifies and considers her goals and values; how he determines which educational and vocational options are viable; how motivated and hopeful she is about pursuing and achieving her goals; how tenacious he is

in working through obstacles and challenges that confront him. Then, as these factors are framed within various contexts, the complexity of the career development process is realized. Grasping how these factors interrelate and how they are impacted by various contexts to shape adolescents' view of the future will direct the construction of career development interventions.

### Purpose of this Study

The purpose of the current research study was to better elucidate the career development process of adolescents. The primary purpose was to extend knowledge in this area by providing an in-depth understanding of urban, minority adolescents' experiences from their own perspective. Specifically, this research used qualitative methods to examine the career attitudes, career plans, career exploration, and overall career maturity of urban adolescents, while exploring the development of the six primary constructs purported to influence vocational self-understanding (Lapan & Kosciulek, 2001). It attempted to understand how urban, minority adolescents have made sense of recent career interventions they have participated in, as well as the support and guidance they have received from significant others. It also sought to explore how demographic, social, economic, and political contexts determine minority students' perception of barriers and opportunities to desired futures, as well as how these inform students' decision making, academic behaviors and vocational choices.

## Chapter 2

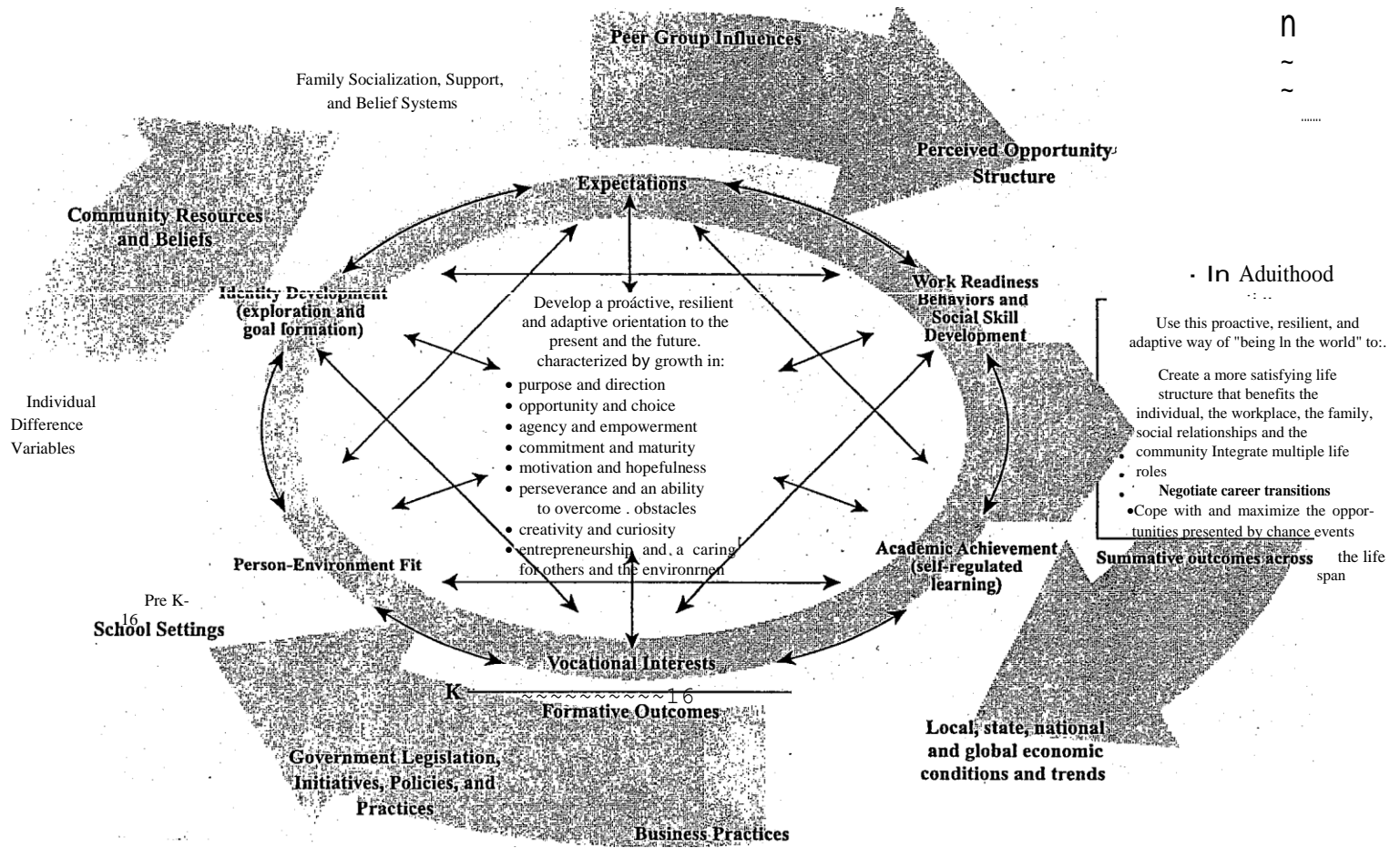
### Literature Review

The purpose of this review is three-fold. First, an integrative contextualized model of career development will be presented (Lapan, 2005). Second, the six primary career constructs that promote either growth or constriction of an individual's acquisition of vocational self-identity will be discussed. This discussion will include a review of both the explanatory theories and the current state of research in this area. Finally, the career development needs of inner city minority youth will be addressed.

#### An Integrative Contextual Model of Career Development

Super (1954) posited that in order for career counseling services to be effective, it is essential that they be founded upon an understanding of the "traits and trends of development observed in adolescence" (p. 18) that lead to career patterns that are both successful and satisfying. Thus, identifying and integrating the "traits and trends of development" that individuals employ in their everyday style of interacting within their environments is a principal responsibility for career development practitioners and researchers (Lapan, 2005). In order to answer Super's (1954) question and extend the findings and conclusions of career development practitioners and researchers, Lapan (2000) developed an integrative contextual model of career development. This framework outlines the specific career-related "traits and trends" that empower adolescents to act in more adaptive, resilient, and productive ways as they engage in and negotiate with their environments. Figure 1 provides an illustration of this model.

The integrative contextual model of career development proposed by Lapan (2005) provides a description of how an individual's style of engagement in the present and approach to possible career futures develops within an interwoven structure of demographic, social/cultural, economic, and political contexts. Lapan contends that young



people need to develop an approach to the present and the future that is proactive, resilient, and functionally adaptive. To accomplish this, the manner and style with which adolescents interact within their everyday social contexts must be characterized by certain qualities.

Adolescents who possess this approach to the world: a) interact with a sense of purpose and direction; b) orient themselves to valued opportunities and choices; c) act in agentic and empowered ways; d) display a mature commitment to a self-defined direction; e) are helpful, motivated, and optimistic about the present and future; f) persevere and overcome obstacles they encounter, as well as are able to turn unexpected life events into positive opportunities; g) are creative and curious; and h) are able to balance an ability to be entrepreneurial with the need to care for others and the environment (Lapan, in press).

These qualities have been identified by numerous other career development theorists and practitioners as essential for facilitating more positive outcomes in both adolescence and adulthood (e.g., Astin, 1984; Betz & Hackett, 1987; Blustein et al., 1997; Farmer and Associates, 1997; Fassinger, 1985; Herr, 1969; 1995, 1996, 1997; Hoyt, 1998; Lent, Brown, Hackett, 1994; Mitchell, Levins & Krumboltz, 1999; Richardson, 1998; and Savickas, 1999).

Career development practitioners and researchers have identified six primary career constructs that make it possible for individuals to internalize the adaptive qualities mentioned above. These constructs can either encourage or hamper an individual's acquisition of vocational self-identity, thus influencing the degree to which she/he is able to cope and benefit from the challenges encountered in both the present and the future. The six primary career constructs are: a) expectations, including self-efficacy beliefs and attributions; b) identity development through the interrelated processes of exploration and goal formation; c) an enhanced understanding of one's self, the world of work, and how best to fit or match this self-understanding to occupational realities; d) the pursuit of one's interests and preferences; e) the ability to achieve academically and become more of a self-

regulated and life-long learner; and f) the use in one's everyday interactions with others of a range of complex social skills and work-readiness behaviors (Lapan, 2005).

Lapan's (2005) model is conceptualized as a fully interacting system.

Psychological functioning, as argued by Bandura (1986), occurs within the reciprocally interacting framework of behavioral, environmental, and cognitive influences. This framework describes career awareness, exploration, and planning activities as integral links in a single continuous process that occurs across development; this development proceeds in shifting, non-linear sequences that are independent of an individual's age. Career development is understood to be a reciprocally deterministic system nestled (Blustein and Noumair, 1996) within layers of social context where the whole is impacted by experiences in one part. This integrative contextual model suggests that there is an interdependent reciprocal nature shared among the contributing parts (Lapan, 2005).

### Career Development Constructs

#### *Expectations*

Expectations, one of the six primary constructs purported to influence career development, can be described as the ways in which people exercise self-determination or control over the directions their lives take. An individual can act with personal freedom and a sense of intentionality when cognitive self-regulation characterizes her/his way of understanding and interacting with the environment (Lapan, 2005). Bandura (1997) has argued that certain kinds of expectations significantly influence motivation, affective states, and the actions individuals implement. Specifically, Bandura (1997) offered that two types of expectations, self-efficacy and outcome, worked together to promote successful performance of critical life tasks. Further, expectations enable individuals to project future anticipations of the benefits and rewards of achieving long term goals, and thus, undertake a definite course of action (Lapan, 2005).

Bandura posited that efficacy expectations represent an individual's belief in their

ability to execute specific behaviors and to persist when confronted by obstacles. Outcome expectations involve one's beliefs about the consequences likely to happen, if a certain course of action is followed. Bandura (1986) identified three types of outcome expectations: a) the anticipation of physical outcomes like money; b) social outcomes like approval or disapproval from significant others; and c) self-evaluative outcomes like self-satisfaction.

There are four primary informational sources out of which efficacy expectations are constructed (Bandura, 1997). These are: a) enactive mastery experiences where accomplishments suggest a sense of capability to the individual; b) vicarious learning experiences where one models and compares self to others; c) social influences like verbal persuasion that convince someone that they possess or do not possess certain qualities; and d) affective states like anxiety through which judgments about effectiveness are made. While not characterized as global feelings of self-esteem or self-worth, efficacy expectations are situated judgments individuals make about their ability to perform specific tasks.

In 1981, Betz and Hackett introduced self-efficacy theory into career development research and theory. They argued that efficacy expectations might offer a unifying framework to both understand and design more effective interventions to assist women to more fully utilize their talents and capabilities. They suggested that efficacy expectations play a key mediational role in the transmission of the effects of cultural biases and stereotypes on a wide range of vocational behaviors for women. Betz and Hackett contended that women's career-related self-efficacy expectations can be strengthened when career counselors gear their counseling efforts to this end. The efficacy expectations construct (Bandura, 1977) has become one of the most important individual difference variables in career development research. Research has demonstrated that for both men and women, at different ages, across diverse populations, self-efficacy expectations play a

pivotal role in the development and implementation of critical career-related behaviors (Betz, Harmon, & Borgen, 1996). For example, Lapan, Boggs, and Morrill (1989) found that self-efficacy expectations explained the long standing findings of women scoring significantly lower than men on the Investigative and Realistic General Occupational Themes of the Strong-Campbell Interest Inventory.

The self-efficacy construct has been identified as a predictor of a wide range of academic outcomes that are fundamentally related to career development of both women and men (Multan, Brown, & Lent, 1991). For example, the decision to pursue, persist in, and enter mathematics, science, and technology-related college majors and careers has been linked to the self-efficacy construct (e.g., Lent, Brown, & Larkin, 1986; Hackett, 1985; Hackett, Betz, Casas, & Rocha-Singh, 1992; Farmer, Wardrop, Anderson, & Risinger, 1995). Lapan, Shaughnessy, and Boggs (1996) found that sex differences in the selection of college majors that require more mathematics and science was mediated by the mathematics self-efficacy beliefs students held. First year college women were less prepared to pursue mathematics and science coursework and believed less in their ability to successfully perform these tasks than did men (Lapan et al., 1996). Similar results have also been found for high school and middle school students, as well as for rural adolescents (e.g. Lopez, Lent, Brown, & Gore, 1997; Lapan & Jingeleski, 1992).

The role that parents play in their children's career development is fundamental and significantly shapes their development (Lapan, 2000). One of the ways in which parents influence their children's educational and career development is by contributing to the formation of efficacy expectations (O'Brien, 1996). Eccles (1994) argued that parents do this by acting as "expectancy socializers", especially in relation to children's perceptions of competence in both academic and non-academic domains. The impact of a significant interaction between the sex of one's child and the mother's gender role stereotypic beliefs on the children's efficacy expectations was confirmed by Jacobs and Eccles (1992). This

interaction between mother's beliefs and the sex of their children was found across mathematics, sports, and social relations. For example, if girls were favored by the parent-held stereotype to be better at social relations than boys, then mothers overestimated their daughter's ability in that activity. The perception that parents held about their children's competency in an area was a stronger predictor of domain-specific efficacy beliefs for children than prior performance accomplishments in that domain. Jacobs (1991) contends that parental evaluative appraisals of their children is so critical and influential that children could be motivated to persist in the study of difficult subject matter if their parents provided the appropriate encouragement and support; children would prove tenacious even when confronted with ambiguous circumstances.

A necessary component in the career decision making process is the ability for the individual to be decisive. Without this skill, serious negative consequences can result. When negotiating the numerous problems that can arise as one pursues a career, several decision making skills have proven useful. Crites (1974) identified some of these skills as gathering information, choosing lifestyle goals that identify careers appropriate to these goals and planning coherent sequences of activities to achieve these goals. Several studies (e.g., Betz, Klein, & Taylor, 1996; Taylor and Popma, 1990; Taylor & Betz, 1983) have identified a strong link between career indecisiveness and efficacy beliefs individuals hold about their competency in being able to successfully conduct career exploration and planning decision making tasks. If individuals do not believe in their ability to make good decisions, they are less likely to perform career exploration activities and commit to a course of action (Bandura, 1997; Blustein, 1989).

It is clear that when an individual possesses a positive sense of career-related self-efficacy, they can enjoy benefits that effect their career planning, entry, and job seeking behaviors (Lent, Brown, & Hakett, 1994; 2000). The advantages of efficacious career-related beliefs have been found across a wide diversity of ethnic groups, social classes, and

disability statuses. Bores-Rangel, Church, Szendre, & Reeves's (1990) investigation of Hispanic high school students from migrant, seasonal farm worker families found that those who had a better sense of efficacy in relation to academic achievement had higher educational aspirations and high school equivalency test scores; this relationship persisted even after controlling for prior academic achievement differences between students. The willingness of these students to consider or reject a wide range of career options was predicted by efficacy expectations. It was also found that Hispanic women who held lower efficacy expectations expressed an inability to be successful in careers that traditionally employed men, and these women indicated that they would avoid these careers (Church, Teresa, Rosebrook, & Szendre, 1992). Turner and Lapan (2003) observed similar relationships between perceived efficacy, interests, gender, and range of career options one would seriously consider in her study with Native American adolescents. Further, Hackett, Betz, Casas, and Rocha-Singh (1992) found efficacy expectations to be the strongest predictor of academic achievement for European American, Mexican American, African American, and Asian American students enrolled in a university-level School of Engineering.

Providing all young people maximum opportunities to enter desired and productive careers is a colossal task that confronts economically disadvantaged inner city communities. Structural and institutional barriers inhibit the growth and development of financially poor children as they exist and interact within their community contexts. Within stressed and disapproving conditions, adolescents are at-risk on a variety of dimensions. Many economically disadvantaged children and adolescents may come to believe that even if they achieve academically, valued rewards for such success will still not be accessible to them. Ogbu (1991) suggested that many African American youth internalize community beliefs that there are impenetrable restrictions on educational and vocational attainment over which they have no control.

In order to assist the reader in understanding the expectation-related constructs that have been identified as critical to the varied stages of career development, two pertinent theories will be introduced: Social-cognitive career theory and attribution theory.

### *Social Cognitive Theory*

Social Cognitive Theory, developed by Lent, Brown, and Hackett (1994; 2000), is an integrative framework that links the self-efficacy construct to a comprehensive theory of career development, i.e., Social Cognitive Career Theory (SCCT). SCCT attempts to identify the particular causal pathways by which an individual can exercise personal agency in planning, choice, and entry phases of career development. The SCCT framework has four highly interrelated parts that describe the connections between important career development constructs.

In the first part, the connection between interests, choices, and actions is described. The model suggests that crystallized career interests lead to choice goals, which then motivates choice actions. Thus, there is a linear causal sequence that an individual pursues as she engages in the career development process. The second component of the model explains the direct and indirect influences of career-related efficacy and outcome expectations. SCCT establishes efficacy expectations as the central explanatory construct in the framework. Efficacy expectations directly influence outcome expectations, interests, choice goals, choice actions, and performance attainment. Outcome expectations have both direct and indirect effects on career choice and entry behaviors for individuals. They have a direct effect on the development of interests, choice goals, and choice actions. The direct effect that outcome expectations has on the development of interest patterns indirectly shapes the goals, actions and performance attainment of individuals. The third component places the model within the person and environment-related contexts and learning situations. Lent et al. (1994) stated that efficacy and outcome expectations are either strengthened or weakened by mastery performance accomplishments, vicarious learning,

social persuasion, or states of physiological arousal. This model recognizes that a broad range of individual difference variables shape the context within which efficacy expectations are learned and influence the actual career choices that are made. Finally, the fourth part of the SCCT model provides a feedback loop by means of which the results of actions taken by an individual shape future efficacy and outcome expectations. For a more complete description of the SCCT model, the reader is referred to Lent, Brown, and Hackett (1994).

#### *Attribution Theory*

Attribution theory views people as agents who actively seek to understand the causes of success and failure in all their relationships and interactions with their environments (Weiner, 1986; Kelly, 1971; Heider, 1958). Individuals most often attribute their success or failure to one of the following: a) ability; b) amount of effort expended; c) how easy or difficult the person found the task; d) whether or not luck was involved; e) the person's mood during the event; and f) whether or not others assisted or hurt their performance. Further, individuals also consider their past performance and societal norms as they seek to search for understanding of failure and success. Every inferred cause of success or failure is comprised of a locus dimension, stability dimension, and a controllability dimension. Each of these creates a different motivational sequence for the individual. In fact, locus, stability and controllability act in concert with each other to affect motivation. For a more complete description of Attribution theory, please see Heider (1958), Kelly (1971), and Weiner (1986).

#### *Identity Development*

In order to facilitate a more successful transition into young adulthood, Erikson (1968) suggested that it is critical that the identity crisis characteristic of adolescence be resolved. Flum and Blustein (2000) argued that successful passage from adolescence to young adulthood is possible only as young people actively engage in exploratory activities

that lead to the formation of and commitment to self-defined and self-chosen goals. This developmental process encourages the growth of self-constructed identities that envelop skills individuals need as they build and re-build life structures across the life-span (Flum & Blustein, 2000; Super, Savickas, & Super, 1996). The interest and enthusiasm that adolescents display in relation to engaging in this type of identity development may be the product of the varied ways in which they experience time (Lapan, 2005).

Super (1983) offered that one of the three fundamental components of career maturity is a positive time perspective that encompasses reflection on past experiences and anticipation of the future; self-esteem and autonomy are the other components. Lapan (2000) suggested that the task of assisting young people to develop more playful orientations to their futures is made less challenging by adolescents' inherent interest in career development activities. This claim has been substantiated by several researchers (e.g., Carr & Schmidt 1994; Nurmi, 1991) who found that young people are most interested in and deem it necessary to explore issues related to their educational and career futures.

Savickas, Silling and Schwartz (1984) found that in late adolescence a positive future time perspective was associated with more well developed attitudes toward career planning, exploration, decision-making, and career satisfaction. Savickas et al. speculated that vocational indecision could be a developmental consequence of difficulties in an adolescent's future time perspective. The importance of an optimistic, forward looking time perspective as a basic dimension of career maturity was also identified by Marko and Savickas (1998). These researchers suggested that as counselors, teachers, and parents encouraged adolescents to develop life goals and educational plans, they simultaneously acquired positive time perspectives (Marko & Savickas, 1998).

Cartensen, Isaacowitz, and Charles (1999) suggested that the specific kinds of goals that adolescents select are intimately connected not only to their perception of time,



but also to their level of motivation. They propose that one's perception of time will steer behavior by influencing the decision to pursue either knowledge-related goals or emotion-related goals. When an adolescent perceives time to be infinite and expansive, she will be motivated to select knowledge-related goals. These goals propel the adolescent to engage in significant exploration of, preparation for, and understanding of the world of work (Lapan, 2005). However, if an individual views time as limited, she will tend to pursue emotion-related goals-- goals that are primarily related to her desire to find significance in life or to become more fully engaged in intimate social networks that are meaningful to her' (Lapan, 2005).

As adolescence is characteristically a developmental stage for seeking out and exploring new experiences, the overwhelming preference for adolescents to select knowledge-related goals (Cartensen et al., 1999) is unsurprising. Parsons (1909) offered that those who engage in substantive exploratory activities are more likely to achieve a better understanding of themselves and the educational and career options that await them. Active engagement in career exploration better equips the adolescent to proactively create self-defined plans in preparation for the future.

Erikson (1968) identified the construction of a stable and coherent identity as the major developmental task of adolescence. Flum and Blustein (2000) suggested that a self-constructed identity provides for the successful integration of the various challenges and opportunities of adolescence. They offered that the formation of self-constructed identities are achieved when adolescents are engaged in the appropriate processes of exploration. These processes of exploration and the development of self-defined goals interact to enable adolescents to make meaningful commitments to the present and the future (Lapan, 2005). Flum and Blustein (2000) offered that such commitments result in the clarity present in self-constructed identities and demonstrate successful resolution of the identity crisis.

Flum and Blustein (2000) emphasized the fundamental role exploration plays in the

process that empowers adolescents to create self-constructed identities. In their consideration of Marcia's (1993) assessment of the advantages between identities formed through active exploratory processes, Flum and Blustein contrasted the differences between three main identity statuses: diffused, conferred, and self-constructed. An adolescent with a diffused identity is likely to present as fragmented, confused, poorly organized, and focused more on the present than the future. Berzonsky (1992; 1993) suggested that the adolescent possessing this type of identity is more likely to have adopted an avoidant-oriented style in dealing with decisions, conflicts, problems, and opportunities. A conferred identity is realized as an adolescent becomes aware of herself and her place within the adult world. This individual's career plans, however, are inclined to be governed by the expectations of significant others. The adolescent who possesses a self-constructed identity is one who has taken a more active exploratory role. She is not only more information-oriented, she is more likely to employ active exploratory strategies to gather information before making decisions. Marcia (1993) noted that the creation of an identity that is flexible, autonomous and self-defined is the result for those engaged in a self-directed process. Information-oriented individuals have a clearer sense of both commitment and direction in their lives, which may be related to the internalization and integration of goals and values within one's core sense of self (Berzonsky, 1996).

In order to better understand the engagement of an adolescent in the use of exploratory behaviors to influence the creation of a self-constructed identity, Rum and Blustein (2000) considered intrinsic and extrinsic motivation. An activity is intrinsically motivated when it is performed for the inherent interest and enjoyment that it holds for the individual. In contrast, extrinsic motivation explains that activities done to obtain an outcome different from the activity itself (Lapan, 2005). Rum and Blustein (2000) proposed that tasks initially considered extrinsically motivating to individuals could be transformed into activities regarded as intrinsically motivating and self-regulated when

career explorations appropriately stimulate the process of internalization. Adolescents can be propelled to experience personal agency and autonomy in their lives when they engage in an identity-forming process of exploration.

There is much evidence in the literature that supports the direct connection between career-related exploratory actions and positive enhancement in vocational identity development. Among the studies advocating such a relationship is that of Grotevant, Cooper, and Kramer (1986). These investigators reported that high school students (both male and female) who had been more fully engaged in explorations of career alternatives were in the process of making vocational choices that were more congruent with their personality styles. Robitschek and Cook (1999) found that college students who more actively explore their environment achieve more directed and coherent vocational identities. Shoffner and Newsome (2001) found that the best predictor of identity achievement for academically gifted adolescent girls (ages 13-17) was their engagement in career exploratory activities.

The conditions within which an individual's exploratory behaviors can be either hindered or encouraged are significantly influenced by that person's historical, cultural, and relational contexts (Flum & Blustein, 2000). Research suggests that multiple contexts, including gender, ethnicity, political structures, prestige and occupational status hierarchies, and family support have been found to significantly influence how individuals engage in information-seeking career exploratory strategies (Flum & Blustein, 2000; Silbereisen, Vondracek, and Berg, 1997; Blustein & Noumair, 1996; Grotevant & Cooper, 1985; Josselson, 1987; Marcia, 1988; Schmitt-Rodermund & Vondracek, 1999). It is these contexts that can provide emotional and instrumental support, as well as impose limitations on adolescents as they identify and participate in identity-related exploratory activities.

The often impairing cultural stereotypes that adolescents encounter in their

environments can be rendered less powerful and ineffective when adolescents engage in exploratory behaviors that allow them to achieve more self-constructed identities (Flum & Blustein, 2000). It is these exploratory activities that can introduce individuals to a more vast buffet of choices for their future lives. As a result, adolescents are free to investigate multiple career possibilities without prematurely foreclosing on the paths that societal pressures and environmental limitations might dictate (Gottfredson, 1981; Lapan, Boggs, & Morrill, 1989). Further, Flum and Blustein argued that exploration-enhanced self-constructed identities empower adolescents to adapt and grow as their life roles change over their life spans.

#### *Person/Environment Fit*

In order to equip adolescents to make decisions about their futures that will create an optimal match between self and career, researchers (e.g., Parsons, 1909; Lapan, Boggs, & Morrill, 1989; Lapan, 2000) have argued that individuals have to accomplish an in-depth exploration of self and the world of work. Frank Parsons, noted to be the father of career and vocational guidance and counseling services in the United States, developed the process of "true reasoning" (Parsons, 1909). It is a three-part procedure for providing vocational guidance and counseling services to individuals. This procedure divided the work of the counselor into three interrelated components which would allow individuals to make better occupational choices. The process of true reasoning required that the counselor needed to: first, help the client better understand herself; second, help the client better understand the world of work; and third, help the client with the decision-making process that would unite this understanding of self and occupations. It was through this approach that Parsons believed an individual could arrive at an occupational choice that reflected the best match between the individual differences of the client and the occupational requirements of different jobs.

As the result of Parsons' (1909) contributions, work in the area of vocational

guidance and counseling has evolved into what has been known as the trait and factor approaches to career counseling and guidance services. Trait and factor approaches have argued that: 1) individuals differ on various levels, including their personality orientations, work values, and aptitudes; 2) occupations differ in the pattern of traits required for success in specific jobs; 3) individuals are more effective in their decision making if they can identify the best match between their own traits and what is required for specific occupations. The challenge for career counselors then becomes one of assisting individuals such that their occupational choices are not the result of prematurely imposed limitations on their options, nor the result of a failure to actualize latent interests and talents.

Lapan (2005) argued that adolescents may not select career options that are potentially very satisfying because they do not fit an understanding of self that is rooted in culturally biased and socially constructed stereotypes. Linda Gottfredson (1981) argued that by junior high school occupational aspirations were to a great extent already shaped and constricted by prevailing social conditions. Several researchers (e.g., Gottfredson & Lapan, 1997; Lapan & Jingleleski, 1992) have found that the aspirations of young adolescents are significantly shaped by perceived employment pattern differences between men and women and the prestige/status hierarchy differences in occupations. Knowing the difference between the jobs that are typical for men versus women, as well as which jobs hold the most prestige is information shared by both girls and boys. Unfortunately, it may constrict the range and types of options seriously considered by adolescents (Lapan & Jingleleski, 1992). Again, the task for those in the vocational and guidance counseling arena becomes that of assisting young people in exploring and pursuing options that are free of unnecessary and premature restrictions. Meeting this challenge is accomplished through an in-depth exploration of self, the world of work, and a decision making process that results in an optimal match between self and career.

Person-environment fit models have been proposed as an approach to help match

individuals and jobs. Tinsley (2000) pointed out that it is the fit between what an employee desires (preferences and values) and what a job can actually supply (benefits and reinforcers), as well as employee abilities (her aptitudes or intelligence) and the demands of the work environment that either enhances or diminishes vocational outcomes for the individual. Person-environment fit models suggest that a wide range of vocational outcomes, including job performance, satisfaction, commitment, and morale are improved when the fit between the individual and the work environment is appropriate. Further, these models maintain that career decision-making is a developmental process that evolves and matures over time. It is then plausible to conclude that as adolescents are able to better understand their emerging selves in relation to the world of work, the potential to experience both freedom and satisfaction in their lives becomes more likely.

John L. Holland (1985; 1997) developed a theory that integrated personality types into a person-environment fit model. Holland's theory embraces several assumptions about how an individual arrives at an occupation. First, it proposes that occupational choice is an expression of personality. Second, people working in similar occupational groups will have similar preferred personality orientations. Third, because of their similarity in personality, people working in the same occupational area will respond to events and challenges in similar ways. And finally, the degree of congruence between one's preferred personality orientation and that required by their job will predict a wide range of vocational outcomes. The core of Holland's (1997) theory is found in the following assertions: (a) most people in our culture can be categorized into one of six personality types, i.e., Realistic, Investigative, Artistic, Social, Enterprising, and Conventional; (b) work environments can also be categorized into these same six types; (c) people actively search for work environments where they can express their preferred personality orientations, abilities, values, and engage in more agreeable work tasks; and (d) important aspects of work related behavior are determined by the interaction between one's

personality and the salient characteristics of their work environment. Holland's connection of personality and work environments through the same six categorizations makes clear his contention that occupations are not isolated and disconnected tasks and functions that people perform; they are, in fact, a means by which individuals can express themselves.

It is clear that for Holland, interests are an expression of personality. The three-letter Holland codes, or subtype summary codes represent the pattern of preferred personality types for individuals and environments. The relationship between the six personality types can be described in a form of a hexagon. The placement of each personality type in the hexagon, in relation to every other type depicts the hypothesized theoretical and empirical relationships they share. Thus, personality types that are closer together in the hexagon have more in common with each other.

Holland (1997) developed five constructs, calculus, consistency, differentiation, identity, and congruence, to be used to make empirical predictions. Calculus is the hexagonal ordering of relationships between types that is similar for both individuals and environments. Those types that are located closer together are more hypothesized to be more related, theoretically and empirically. Likewise, as types are more distant from one another on the hexagon it is assumed that the correlations will decrease.

Consistency refers to the degree of similarity between the first two types of an individual's three-letter Holland code. An individual is considered to be internally consistent as the first two types move closer to each other on the hexagon. Those who are less consistent, Holland (1997) would predict, would experience lower levels of success than individuals whose summary codes are more consistent.

The extent to which a person's or a work environment's Holland code is well-defined and crystallized is called differentiation. By comparing the highest type to the lowest or by contrasting the scores on the three-letter code to the individual's lowest three types, estimates of differentiation are achieved. Closely related to differentiation is

vocational identity. Holland (1992) described individuals' whose goals, interests, and talents are dear and stable as possessing vocational identity. Finally, congruence relates to the degree of fit between a person and their work environment. According to Holland (1997), positive work-related outcomes are possible when individuals' summary codes more closely matched the preferred types of their work environments. For more about the use of the Holland hexagon in vocational and guidance counseling as a theoretical and diagnostic tool, please see among others, Harmon, Hansen, Borgen, and Hammer (1994) and Holland (1997).

### *Vocational Interests*

The role that vocational interest plays in shaping the educational and career choices that individuals pursue has long been recognized in the field of career development. Validity studies have provided significant evidence of the ability of measured vocational interests to predict both career choice and occupational entry (e.g., Strong, 1927; 1943; Harmon, Hansen, Borgen, and Hammer, 1994; Zytowski, 1976; Bingham & Walsh, 1978; O'Brien & Walsh, 1976; Walsh & Holland, 1992). Understanding the relationship between vocational interest and eventual career choice has been suggested to better equip individuals to engage in more effective educational planning and more satisfying career placement.

The early contributions of E.K. Strong, Jr. and his desire to discern the relationship between careers led to the discovery of unique interest patterns between people employed in similar careers as compared to those employed in dissimilar occupations. That is to say that Strong (1927; 1943) demonstrated that people employed in the same occupation have more similar interests patterns to each other than they have with individuals working in different professions. Harmon et al. (1994) contended that this homogeneity of interest patterns within an occupation and heterogeneity of interest patterns between different careers could best be identified when employees sampled possessed the following five characteristics: (1)

they were between ages 20-55; (2) they were satisfied with their job; (3) they performed their job duties in a manner typical of employees in their occupation; (4) they had worked in their job for at least a couple of years; and (5) they had achieved some measure of success in their line of work.

Lapan (2005) posited that the ability of career counseling personnel to compare an individual's interests to those of women and men who are actually successfully employed in a broad variety of careers is an indispensable counseling tool. It is with this tool that career and guidance counselors can assist adolescents to match their needs, abilities, and interests with a work environment where they can grow and achieve job satisfaction. Practitioners have several vocational interest measures at their disposal, including the Self-Directed Search (Holland, Fritzsche, & Powell, 1994), the Kuder Occupational Interest Survey (Kuder & Zytowski, 1991), and the Unisex Edition of the ACT Interest Inventory (American College Testing, 1995), to help meet this end. Nevertheless, if interest assessment instruments are to maintain their vitality in the future, researchers must persist in their pursuit to better understand the structure of vocational interests (Lapan, 2005).

Understanding the structure of vocational interests has been a task undertaken by several researchers (e.g., Cole, Whitney & Holland, 1971; Lunneborg & Lunneborg, 1975) during the last half of the 20th century. While holding the proposed theoretical models to high standards of scientific accountability, the creation of several logical and ingenious models have emerged to explain the structure of vocational interests. These models have provided creative and logical strategies for organizing thousands of careers into more meaningful patterns. Resultingly, a diverse range of individuals are able to access more effective career assessment and counseling services.

As discussed earlier, Holland's (1985; 1997) hexagonal model has become the most widely utilized framework in the field for understanding the structure of vocational interests. Holland suggested that an individual's personality was expressed through her

vocational interests. He proposed that six major personality constructs (i.e., Realistic, Investigative, Artistic, Social, Enterprising, and Conventional) could be organized around a hexagon to create a highly credible and empirically tenable model to explain the structure of vocational interests. Holland's contributions have impacted many facets of career counseling, including practice, measurement development, and research in the field (Lapan, in press). The work of other researchers (e.g., Gati, 1991; Prediger, 1976; 1982; Jackson, Hoidin, Locklin, & Marks, 1984; Tracey & Rounds, 1995) have also helped to shape the path the field has followed in search of understanding the structure of vocational interests.

Prediger (1976; 1982) explained that the majority of the variance in Holland's six themes could be accounted for by two-bipolar work task dimensions (i.e., Data-Ideas and People-Things). The Ideas construct was added to the three dimensions (people, data, and things) that have been used to classify occupations in the Dictionary of Occupational Titles. As a result, the World of Work Map was formed. This map organizes more than 12,000 careers by the primary work tasks associated with each occupation. It also extended the 6 Holland types to 23 job families. The World of Work Map is designed to assist in creating a connection between the results from career assessments and a wide range of occupational possibilities (Lapan, 2005).

The stability of vocational interests across time has been consistently demonstrated by researchers (e.g., Fryer, 1931; Hansen, 1984; Strong, 1955). It has also been established that the interest patterns within occupations for both men and women remain constant. Nevertheless, researchers have been curious that an individual's sex, ethnicity, and cultural background may surface meaningful differences as it relates to interest patterns. While researchers have attempted to address the consistent and substantially different ways that men and women respond to items measuring interests (i.e., Strong, 1943; Harmon et al., 1994; Prediger & Swaney, 1995), sex differences persist in all major interest inventories. The task for career counseling practitioners not only becomes that of

understanding the particular interest measuring tool they opt to employ, but also that of engaging clients in interpretive discussions that are "free from confounds imposed by the influence of sex-role stereotypes" (Lapan, 2005, p. 145).

Whether or not the theoretical propositions and findings from leading vocational theories are applicable to the lives of ethnic and culturally different minority individuals has been a concern for several researchers (e.g., Carter & Swanson, 1990; Leong & Brown, 1995; Sue & Sue, 1990). Leading career development theories, as well as evidence for their validity have been based primarily on samples that have not included much diversity (e.g., middle-class, English speaking, White males). As a result, Osipow & Littlejohn (1995), Swanson (1992) and other career development researchers have questioned the suitability of these instruments for use with persons not from the majority culture.

The concern for the utility of career development theories and instruments that are not based on samples that have included minorities has spurred much investigation and consequently, produced much fruit. Studies testing the applicability of Holland's (1997) hexagonal structure with minorities within and outside of the United States have yielded mixed reviews. Among those who found that the hexagonal model did not accurately explain interest patterns in their sample were Khan and Alvi (1991), Rounds and Tracey (1996), and Fouad, Harmon, and Borgen (1997). However, many researchers have found support for Holland's model (e.g., Fouad, Cudek, and Hansen, 1984; Lattimore and Borgen, 1999; Fouad, Harmon, and Hansen, 1994; Fouad & Hansen, 1987). For example, Lattimore and Borgen's (1999) study revealed moderate support for using Holland's hexagonal model with U.S. minorities. Furthermore although Fouad et al. (1997) did not find clear support for an equidistant hexagonal structure, they did find some support for Holland's circular model and calculus assumption in their study of employed U.S. minorities.

It is clear that understanding the structure of vocational interests for any population

or group is more than an notion. The efforts of career development researchers extends beyond that of simply grasping a more full knowledge of the world of work and how individuals can find fulfillment and satisfaction in it via their' identified interests, needs, and aptitudes. Their efforts have had to include an exploration of the development of vocational interest patterns, as these significantly influence the occupational horizon an individual is likely to set her sights upon. Lapan (2000) suggested that multiple causes shape crystallizing vocational interest patterns in late adolescence and early adulthood. He proposed four major factors that have been shown to significantly influence the development of vocational interests. These include: 1) genetic influences; 2) environmental and social influences; 3) personality development; and 4) aptitudes and skills (Lapan, 2000).

In order to estimate the genetic contribution to the development of a wide range of behavioral and psychological constructs, research in behavioral genetics has studied monozygotic and dizygotic twins (Lapan, 2005). These studies have found that two genetic components (an additive effect and a non-additive effect) explain significant portions of the variance in the expression of several constructs, including personality, work values, job satisfaction, ego identity development, and vocational and recreational interests (e.g., Arvey, Bouchard, Segal & Abraham, 1989; Betsworth et al., 1994; Bouchard, 1995). Betsworth et al. (1994) explored how vocational interests were shaped by genetic and environmental causes across different family contexts (e.g., twins reared together and apart, adoptive families, and biological families). Using both the General Occupational Themes and Basic Interest Scales on the Strong Interest Inventory to measure vocational interests, Betsworth et al. concluded that genetic factors explained one-third of the variance (36% of the variance in the six General Occupational Themes) and environmental sources and measurement error explained two-thirds of the variance (64% of the variance in the General Occupational Themes).

People approach the world with their own unique physical abilities, temperament, personality, aptitude, and other genetic traits. However, Lykken, Bouchard, McGue, and Tellegen (1993) proposed that the environment offers a selection of experiences that significantly shapes choices selected and reactions to these experiences. An individual's interests and talents may be prematurely discouraged from expression or narrowed if the environment in which she lives does not offer access to certain experiences. Lykken et al. (1993) further offered that vocational counseling equips people to better understand the influence of environment and early experiences so as to minimize placement in careers that limit full expression of an individual's interests and talents.

The idea that social-cognitive models of career development offer a tenable framework for understanding how environmental influences shape vocational interests was outlined by Betworth and Fouad (1997). Consistently strong relationships between self-efficacy expectations and a broad range of vocational interests have been identified by research studies on the social-cognitive model of career development. As was identified in the Lent et al. (1994) framework, both efficacy expectations and outcome expectations are enhanced with successful performance accomplishments. One's interest in certain career-related domains can be increased or decreased by changing self-perceptions of ability and subjective estimations of one's chances of attaining valued future outcomes. When new goals are formed, interest patterns change, leading individuals to engage in career appropriate exploratory behaviors and avoid other possible behaviors.

#### *Academic Achievement and Self-Regulated Learning*

Academic achievement will serve as the dividing line between the economically secure and economically challenged in our ever-changing technology-driven society (Lapan, 2005). Lapan (2005) described academic achievement as a "pivotal gatekeeper" (p.155) in the selection of vocational paths that direct adolescents into adulthood. He asserted that only those adolescents who have acquired sound academic skills and become

lifelong learners will be properly equipped to handle and appropriately respond to unforeseen challenges and opportunities in their environments (Lapan, 2005). In fact, the skills and attitude that young people adopt will directly influence their ability to be successful in the global economy. Lapan further contends that it is essential that adolescents display an ability and willingness to "establish mutually beneficial and cooperative relationships" with different others (p.155). Moreover, the connection between mathematics preparation, college entry, choice of college major, and occupational success highlights the need for young people to successfully navigate through a challenging sequence of academic study.

Using statistics collected from several national databases, former Secretary of Education Richard Riley (1997) reasoned that more rigorous preparation in mathematics was critical to college entrance and future career success for children from both higher and lower income families. Riley's (1997) investigation found that within the first 2 years of high school graduation, most students (83 % ) who successfully completed Algebra I and Geometry went to college, whereas only 36% who did not take these courses entered college. Participation in more challenging mathematics courses in high school was precipitated by completion of Algebra in 8th grade. Sadly, a comparison of 8th graders who qualified for free or reduced lunch with those who did not qualify for this program revealed that only 15% of students from low income families were enrolled in an Algebra class and 29% of higher income students were enrolled. The gravity of the problem becomes more significant as it is clear that for low income students, completion of Algebra I and Geometry increases the likelihood three-fold that they will enter college. Still, students from higher income families were two-times more likely to take Algebra I in 8th grade and Geometry in high school than were lower income students. Riley further found that minority students in grades 5 through 8 tended to report more frequently plans to discontinue mathematics courses as soon as minimal requirements were met (1997).

Mathematics achievement was not only positively associated with college entrance, Riley (1997) also reported that it was directly related to success in the workplace. This relationship was clearly realized in income earnings and employment statuses: students who scored higher on high school standardized mathematics achievement tests earned 38% more money per hour and tended much less to be unemployed than those who scored lower on these measures. Moreover, this report revealed that some companies were beginning to require that those who would occupy production and maintenance positions possess greater academic skill in mathematics and reading. It is obvious that manufacturing associations and companies have set a standard at which potential workers will be assessed in order to determine their competence for successful work in manufacturing positions.

Parents can play a large role in the mathematics course taking patterns of their children. In fact, Riley's (1997) report revealed that student participation in more challenging mathematics courses in high school was notably increased with greater parental involvement. For instance, when parents indicated that they routinely discussed with their child plans for course enrollment in high school, those students ( 48%) completed Geometry by the end of 10th grade. However, the percentage of students completing Geometry by the end of 10th grade decreased to 37% when parents remained silent about what their child would study in high school (Riley, 1997).

In an attempt to help K12 schools understand how instruction and curriculum must be altered if students are to develop the performance skills required for success in high performance, high earning workplaces, the U.S. Department of Labor created the Secretary's Commission on Achieving Necessary Skills (SCANS) (Lapan, 2000). The task of SCANS (1991) was to facilitate individuals' success in high performance workplaces (e.g., manufacturing technology or laser photonics) by highlighting the skills and competencies necessary to meet that end. The SCANS committee recognized several skills and competencies that are required for success in such environments, including: an

ability to demonstrate a strong foundation of literacy and computational skills, an ability to think through different ways to put knowledge to work in solving problems, and be characterized by commitment, dedication, and trustworthiness. In addition, the SCANS report listed five workplace competencies it deemed essential. These include an ability to: manage a variety of resources, get along well with others and work as part of a team, easily acquire information and put it to productive use, understand and know how to operate within the interrelationships imposed by complex social and technological systems, and use a variety of technologies.

Finding success in life after high school is a challenge that students at all academic levels and technological skill will have to face. As career development personnel help prepare these students for college or the workplace, it becomes clear that success on either path is precipitated only by academic achievement (e.g., Scans, 1991; Riley, 1997) and an openness for ongoing learning. Zimmerman and Schunk (2001) proposed that self-regulated learning plays a central role in promoting academic achievement for all students. Encompassed within one's ability to be a self-regulated learner is also the ability to be proactive and employ self-directed strategies to enhance and consistently improve one's learning. Lapan (2005) further argued that career development personnel are especially equipped and positioned to positively influence those contexts (school, family, and community) that nurture the development of self-regulated learners.

Zimmerman and Schunk (2001) explained self-regulated learning as an organizing concept that details the processes and strategies that more effective learners intentionally employ to guide their thoughts, feelings, and actions. Those who employ self-regulated approaches to learning improve their performance by successfully adapting to challenging and dynamic learning contexts. As research in this area continues, it is evident that those who participate in the workforce at any level will be successful only as they become effective life-long learners. With rapidly increasing technological advances, workers can

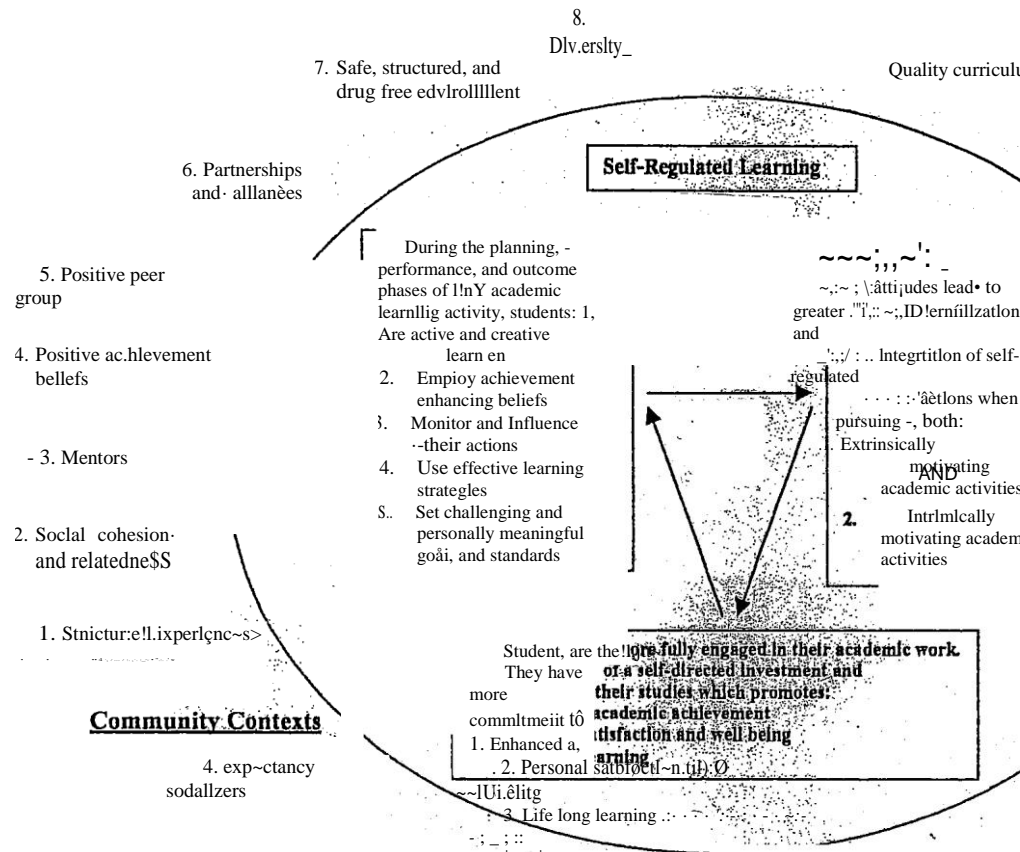
become more valued as employees and achieve greater job security if they adopt and internalize more self-regulated approaches to learning (Lapan, 2005).

Lapan (in press) illustrated a three-step sequence that summarizes and organizes much of the available research on self-regulated learning. Step 1 illustrates the strategies Zimmerman (2000) reported to characterize more effective learners during the planning, performance, and outcome phases of any learning activity. As proposed by Ryan and Deci (2000), Step 2 describes how individuals might utilize these strategies to bring under self-regulated control the learning of intrinsically interesting and uninteresting academic tasks. In Step 3 are listed the valued academic outcomes typically achieved by individuals who are actively engaged in Steps 1 and 2 (Lapan, in press). Figure 2 presents this three-step sequence and also illustrates the school, family, and community contexts that nurture and empower students to become self-regulated learners. Lapan (in press) suggested that career development professionals can impact these contexts in ways that foster greater academic achievement for individuals throughout the K16 years and into adulthood. For an in-depth discussion of the steps in Figure 2, the reader is advised to consult Lapan, Kardash, and Turner (2002).

Ryan and Deci (2000) summarized the results of studies across a wide range of treatment domains and discovered that individuals are able to pursue self-determined, self-regulated actions when the social contexts within which they live allow them to: (a) attach to others who model and value such behavior; (b) experience competence in carrying out such actions; and (c) have opportunities to be autonomous and express choice.

Adolescents can have these three basic needs met as career counseling professionals assume the role of creating and maintaining the necessary school, family, and community contexts. Henderson and Milstein (1996) suggested that these contexts would be characterized by caring and support, the establishment of high expectations, and

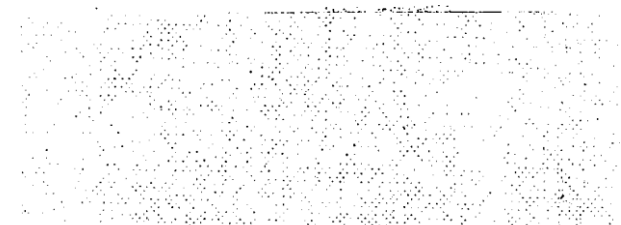
Figure 2



3, Safe, structured  
and drugfree environment

2. Dlyet~jty

1. Parent/  
child  
relationshi



opportunities for meaningful participation. They posit that these components nurture resiliency while eliminating factors that foster vulnerability and risk for adolescents (Henderson & Milstein, 1996). Young people can become self-regulated learners when school, family, and community contexts empower them to do so (Lapan et al., 2002).

The influence of the school context on the development of more effective learners is discussed in the findings of the National Association of Secondary School Principles (1996). They identified the integration of academic content with real world applications as one aspect of a quality curriculum. Specifically, these investigators noted that academic achievement could be bolstered when student learning was connected to the consideration and exploration of possible future careers. Baker and Taylor (1998) and Evans and Burck (1992) are among those who have corroborated the positive impact rich career development activities have on academic achievement when they are integrated into the curriculum across the K12 years.

Consideration of the influence of the school context on the academic achievement and development of self-regulated learning of adolescents must include the role of career counseling personnel. The emotional and instrumental support that they provide students, especially as it relates to the selection of courses and persistence in rigorous sequences of study, will effect student's ability to access high skill/high earning careers (Lapan, 2005). According to Schneider and Stevenson's (1999) findings, the most effective schools had counselors who involved students in career planning and positive human development activities across the high school years. Furthermore, career counselors can partner with school administrators to shape the learning climate of a school as well as the achievement goals set by students. For instance, Pintrich (2000) found that when students adopt a mastery goal orientation toward achievement as opposed to a performance goal orientation toward achievement, 10% to 30% of the variance in the cognitive and academic achievement measures were accounted for. Students who embraced and shouldered

mastery goals were more likely to: (a) employ more sophisticated and effective learning strategies; (b) interpret their performance in more self-efficacious ways; and (e) engage in self-regulated behaviors (Pintrich, 2000).

Lee (2001) suggested that when schools and career development professionals are culturally responsive to the needs of both the institution and people, individuals have the greatest chance of accessing valued career futures, equity, and educational justice. Lee (2001) further proposed that career development practitioners employed at culturally responsive schools should embrace the challenge to: (a) serve as advocates for the abolition of institutional biases and cultural insensitivities; (b) aid teachers and administrators in becoming aware of systemic factors that inhibit student progress; (c) initiate professional development activities for all school personnel; and (d) close the divide between school and culturally diverse homes and community life. Lapan (2000) posited that culturally responsive schools capitalize on the diversity needs of their student body in ways that inspire self-regulated learning. Students who are equipped to meet the demands of pluralistic democracy are knowledgeable, familiar, accepting of, enriched by, and able to work well with different others. These diversity practices can serve as a catalyst for students to adopt the self-defined, self-determined motivation necessary for self-regulated learning.

Finally, another role that career development practitioners play involves preparing students for the post-high school paths they will pursue. Students are able to make successful transitions into post-high school settings when they have cultivated effective partnerships with key community stakeholders (Lapan & Kosciulek, 2001). Career development professionals can help adolescents develop such relationships. They can also collaborate with school administrators to create a more positive interpersonal climate so that students experience the greatest opportunity to become self-regulated learners (Lapan, in press).

The relationship between academic achievement and parenting styles and practices has received a great deal of attention from career development researchers. Baumrind's (1978) work to study this connection revealed that the three different parenting styles (authoritative style, authoritarian style, and permissive style) were related to varying levels of cognitive and social development in pre and elementary school-aged children. Specifically, Baumrind found that most often children who displayed more social and cognitive competence, as well as more independence had parents who employed an authoritative style (1978). The authoritative style is characterized by parents who enforce rules and standards but who also encourage, via a somewhat democratic approach, open communication and independence (Baumrind, 1971). Baumrind (1971) found that parents who use the authoritarian style, on the other hand, were over-controlling and discouraged discussion and debate; the permissive style parenting approach made few demands and exerted little control over children.

Recent research in this area has found that several intervening factors mediate the relationship between an authoritative parenting style and higher levels of academic achievement. For instance, Steinberg, Dornbusch, and Brown (1992) reported that differences in parenting styles could not account for the differences found in academic achievement within ethnic groups. In addition, Steinber, Mounts, and Lamborn (1991) found that while an authoritative parenting style directly predicted student grades for middle class Caucasian American and Hispanic American students, it did not for Asian or African American students. Several intervening factors mitigated this relationship, including the level of parental involvement and support, the quality of the parent-child relationship, positive peer groups, student work habits, and beliefs about future career success and achievement in school.

Wentzel and Feldman (1993) suggested that in order for a student to become a self-regulated learner who is able to engage in the pursuit of long range goals, she must acquire

a mélange of sophisticated pro-social behaviors. Skills such as controlling one's impulses, taking responsibility, being considerate of and collaborative with others, being compliant when necessary, and non-aggressive are more likely to be learned when an authoritative parenting style is combined with effective parenting practices. Wentzel and Feldman (1993) found that when parents exert adequate levels of control, responsiveness, and autonomy promotion, their children are more likely to experience emotional well-being, exhibit appropriate and effective social behaviors and have more positive attitudes toward their school work. However, children are more likely to experience emotional distress and less likely to develop the interpersonal restraint necessary for success in school when parental control or hostility between parents and children are factors (Feldman & Wentzel, 1990; Steinberg, et al., 1991).

Children's perceptions of competence in both academic and non-academic domains have been profoundly impacted when parents act as "expectancy socializers" (Eccles et al., 1994). Bandura (1997) reported that parental beliefs systems (overt and covert) either strengthened or weakened children's efficacy expectations. For example, when parents hold sex-role stereotypic beliefs that label women as less competent than men in mathematics, their daughters are endangered of perceiving themselves as less competent in mathematics. These results have been reported even when daughters' mathematics achievement matched that of their male cohorts. This lowered competence in mathematics may contribute to decreasing interest in math that eventually results in ruling out longer range goals that would require further study in this area. In order to assist parents in shaping their students to be confident, self-regulated learners, career development personnel should provide interventions and developmental programs that strengthen parenting practices as well as promote parental awareness of those factors that positively influence academic achievement.

Another context within which students are able to become self-regulated learners is

a community that provides young people adequate opportunities to develop initiative, personal agency, and autonomy. Larson (2000) is among those researchers who propose that structured, voluntary, community-based experiences serve as pivotal developmental pathways through which adolescents can become self-directed, socially competent, caring, and successful young adults. Young people can develop these qualities as they participate in such structured activities as outward bound adventure programs, Girl Scouts, Brownies, Cub Scouts, and youth sports (Lapan, 2005).

Effective community-based programs are those that create mastery-oriented climates where adolescents can participate in intrinsically motivating activities (Larson, 2000). Pursuit of these activities should occur within contexts that have rules, constraints, complexity, challenges and support. Larson (2000) further suggested that these structured contexts should engage young people in a "temporal arc" where progress, setbacks, adjustments, and re-evaluations are both expected and accommodated. Lapan (2005) offered that "a rich tapestry of community-based choices for all students" could be furnished through the leadership of counselors. As a result, parents could connect their children to positive peer groups and nurturing mentors. Further, the key to encouraging young people's development as self-regulated learners may be found in their participation in community-based activities.

The structural and institutional barriers that beset inner city communities and schools challenge the potential for youth who grow up there to become self-regulated learners (Lapan, in press). In Wilson's (1996) study of the rise of what he called the "new urban poor", he connected the structural changes in the economy since World War II to the historical reality of racial segregation. He noted that one of the significant changes has been the loss of manufacturing jobs that required little formal education but paid well enough that an individual could support his family (Wilson, 1996). As a result, the latter part of the twentieth century has experienced the appearance of inner city communities

plagued with problems of social organization. Wilson asserted that a union was fashioned between joblessness and lowered efficacy expectations in communities where adults have lost much of their power to exercise control in their neighborhoods and realize common goals. Ogbu (1991) contends that this inability necessarily cripples the perception of hope and attainment of educational and vocational goals for young people living in such contexts. It is this hopelessness and helplessness that place young people at-risk for not generating the sort of positive outcome expectations demanded of self-regulated learners. The role that career development counselors play in helping these youth press through the barriers and establish community alliances and partnerships is invaluable to their futures as self-regulated learners. Without the support systems that the community context could afford, many youth will be ill-prepared to meet the challenges that tomorrow's economy will bring.

#### *Social Skills and the Development of Workforce Readiness Behaviors*

Proficiency and deftness in a wide range of complex interpersonal skills are characteristics that identify individuals bound for success in the workplace (Lapan, 2005). Bloch (1996) pointed out that successful preparation for entry into the workforce involves both personal and interpersonal career development. For Bloch, personal career development points to the ability of those entering the workforce to make sound career decisions and exhibit standard employability skills, like being able to take responsibility and make decisions. Interpersonal career development is encompassed in the worker who is able to effectively demonstrate the relationship skills demanded of her in the workplace. Such a worker can establish quality working relationships with those who may be demographically and multiculturally different from herself (Bloch, 1996).

Bloch's (1996) assertion that personal and interpersonal career development are interlocking requirements for successful entry into the workplace is reflected in national standards and guidelines for the provision of comprehensive career development services

(e.g., the SCANS Report). An example of this connectedness is found in the Department of Labor's identification of eleven core work-readiness competencies. Pre-employment skills are described in the first five competencies (i.e., making career decisions, using labor market information, preparing resumes, filling out applications, and job interviewing skills). A host of interpersonal skills needed for success in the workplace are highlighted in the remaining six competencies (i.e., maintaining regular attendance, being punctual, displaying positive work attitudes and behaviors, completing tasks effectively, presenting an appropriate appearance, and using good interpersonal relations). These behaviors and social skills are key in creating success and satisfaction for individuals in their occupations. Lapan (in press) categorized these workplace-readiness skills and behaviors into six very broad areas: 1) Social Competence; 2) Diversity; 3) Positive Work Habits; 4) Personal Qualities; 5) Personal and Emotional States; and 6) Entrepreneurship. A list of these skills and behaviors are provided in Table 1.

### *Social Competence*

Intimate friendships across the lifespan tend to enhance both emotional and physical well being and vocational adjustment. Gottman (1983) found that the adaptability and tenacity of those who experience the challenges of life are strengthened by intimate and reciprocal relationships where they are able to confide in and receive support from others. Ladd (1999) found that success and failure during the K12 school years is fundamentally influenced by the quality of one's relationships with teachers and peers. As individuals are able to establish and maintain positive relationships with co-workers and supervisors, they will be better able to access a wide range of work-related outcomes. For example, Wanberg and Kammeyer-Meuller (2000) reported that new employees who practiced effective relationship building experienced the following: (a) were more socially integrated into the organization; (b) had greater clarity about their role in the organization; (c) had greater job satisfaction; (d) expressed less of an intention to leave their job and seek new

Table 1

## Social Skills and Workforce Readiness Behavior

<u>Skills and Behaviors</u>	<u>Description</u>
Social Competence	Build and maintain effective relationships Communication skills Caring for others and the environment Developing and utilizing prosocial behavior
Diversity	Knowledgeable about differences Respectful of differences Accepting of differences Enriched by differences
Positive Work Habits	Developing a sense of personal industry Work ethic Showing initiative Responsibility and dependability
Personal Qualities	Self-esteem Positive attitude towards work Personal hygiene Motivation to be a leader in workplace settings

Table 1 (continued)

Skills and Behaviors

Description

Personality & Emotional States

Anxiety Disorders Depression

Shyness

Entrepreneurship

employment; and (e) had fewer actual job turnovers. Similarly, Ashford and Black (1996) found that enhanced job performance and higher job satisfaction were the result of building a more effective relationship with one's boss. Further, higher overall job satisfaction and a stronger commitment to the organization in which one is employed result when one is able to attract social support from co-workers (Fisher, 1985).

There are four interrelated components of social competence that are associated with success in the workforce. First, individuals who build and maintain effective relationships with supervisors and co-workers will be those most likely to receive rewards in the workplace. Second, workers need to solve complex problems and complete high quality projects while competently functioning in team/ group settings. Next, individuals who have a more positive self-presentational style in a business context and who can relate effectively with customers and the public at large will be advantageously positioned. Finally, the ability to solve conflicts, negotiate, and compromise with others are critical qualities for those seeking success in the workplace (Lapan, 2005).

Lapan (2005) suggested that possession of complex oral and written communication skills are a pre-requisite for demonstrating these components of social competence. He contended that more effective workers are able to listen to others, know how to assertively speak up in any setting, and are able to express their point of view without being passive or aggressive. Successful workers know how to initiate conversations, take turns, elaborate, and are able to end conversations in appropriate ways. Lapan (2005) asserted that the need to establish effective communication practices with others who are ethnically and culturally different from oneself is paramount for the successful worker in a diverse society. Further, when help or guidance is needed, the successful worker is willing to solicit it from appropriate others.

### *Diversity*

Cultural pluralism is a growing reality of the today's workforce. With the need for

culturally responsive schools also increasing, counselors and school personnel face the task of building contexts that foster the highest in human development without the negative influences of oppression characteristic of the history of the United States (e.g., racism, sexism, homophobia, and classism) (Lee, 1997). Lapan (2005) posited that among the workforce readiness skills is the need for employees to possess a genuine acceptance and respect for differences between themselves and others. He further suggested that in the new workforce, adaptive advantages will be afforded to those employees who not only tolerate diversity, but who also embrace it.

Lapan (2005) speculated that just as students' academic achievement can be strengthened by schools that appropriately highlight diversity issues (Lee, 2001), business productivity and long term success can also be enhanced by practices that maximize and release the positive human potential rooted in these new directions. If ethnic and racial identity development are celebrated, allowing both the affirmation of individual uniqueness and unity based on our common humanity, then work and learning environments will adopt an atmosphere where individuals' full potential can be realized.

### *Positive Work Habits*

Success, both in academic centers of learning and in the workplace, will be more likely for those who have incorporated positive work habits into their daily routines. Students and workers who demonstrate initiative, possess a strong work ethic, and take advantage of opportunities will be more motivated and productive, and thus, more valuable to their employers. Workers who wish to enhance their marketability will be dependable, responsible, and able to use good judgment. Additionally, they will adhere to the legal and ethical standards.

Individuals are better able to internalize a set of positive work habits when they are first able to incorporate a sense of personal industry (Lapan, 2005). According to Erickson (1959), personal industry is connected to the experience of usefulness and competence;

children who fail to develop a sense of personal industry will become dissatisfied. This assertion is confirmed in Vondracek's (1993) synopsis of Glueck and Glueck's (1950) 35 year longitudinal study of the vocational adjustment of underprivileged junior high school boys living in the inner city. Eighty percent of the sample was re-interviewed at ages 25, 31, and 47, and those individuals who had more fully developed a sense of personal industry in junior high school experienced the following in adulthood: 1) had better relations with a wider variety of people; 2) earned more and were much less likely to be unemployed; and 3) were much less likely to exhibit emotional problems and antisocial behaviors.

#### *Personal Qualities*

Lapan posited that successful workers should possess a range of personal qualities that may positively impact their performance in the workforce. These qualities are echoed in national reports that describe individuals who achieve success in the workforce (e.g., SCANS, 1991). For instance, a positive correlation may exist between one's productivity and satisfaction at work and one's self-esteem and attitude about oneself. Also, those who are able to establish better work relations with others probably practice good personal hygiene and exercise good self-presentation skills (e.g., making eye contact while speaking and smiling at appropriate times) (Lapan, 2005).

The ability to exercise leadership is a quality that organizations highly prize. Lapan (2005) suggested that individuals who can provide leadership in the form of direction and guidance to others increase their own value and the productivity of the businesses with whom they are employed. In Chan's (1999) studies with young adults from Singapore and the United States, three dimensions were identified as the basis of an individual's motivation to display leadership in the workplace. The affective/ identity factor is the first dimension and describes individuals who are extraverted, like competition, and value achievement. The second dimension, the social-normative factor, claims that motivation

may be greater for the person who feels a sense of obligation and duty. The last dimension, the non calculative factor, explains that while an individual may express group-oriented values and a willingness to lead, he may fail to consider the personal benefits or costs to acting in a leadership role. The first two dimensions, and not the third, were positively related to a higher sense of self-efficacy about one's leadership ability and to one's previous experience in leadership roles (Chan, 1999; Chan, Rounds, & Drasgow, 2000).

#### *Personal and Emotional States*

While noting that a range of personality and affective states influence the development of workforce readiness behaviors and social skills, Lapan (2000) described how one's willingness and ability to speak in public settings might paralyze potentially successful workers or catapult them into highly rewarding positions in the workplace. The DSM-IV (1994) recognizes public speaking as one of the most common social phobias. It is identified by a profound and chronic fear of social situations and performance situations where embarrassment in the presence of others is possible (DSM-IV, 1994). The DSM-IV notes that the estimated prevalence rate for social phobias to range between 3% to 13%. Social phobias are often related to a history of childhood shyness and social inhibition; the typical period for onset of social phobias is the middle teenage years (DSM-IV, 1994)~

The level of shyness an individual experiences could inhibit one's ability to create and maintain effective relationships with co-workers and supervisors and cripple success in the workplace. In considering the consequences of shyness on vocational development as reported in previous research (e.g., Cheek & Buss, 1981; Zimbardo, 1977), Phillips and Bruch (1988) detailed the following characteristics of shy individuals: 1) they tend to be more lonely and have less of a social support network; 2) they view their friends in more negative terms and are viewed by others as less affectionate and likeable; and 3) they are plagued by more significant problems in the area of communication than are non-shy

persons. As a result of these earlier findings, Phillips and Bruch concluded that shyness has its roots in early childhood and is operative in adolescence, the period of development when vocational identity begins to take shape. Phillips and Bruch's (1988) further study of the impact of shyness on vocational identity development revealed four additional characteristics of shy individuals. They: 1) tend to avoid exposure and interest in interpersonally oriented fields; 2) are less likely to participate in career exploratory information seeking behavior; 3) are more undecided about their careers; and 4) are less likely to believe that assertive behaviors in job interviews would result in more positive evaluations from potential employers and report that they would less likely to exercise assertive job interviewing techniques (Phillips & Bruch, 1988).

### *Entrepreneurship*

The communities and personal fortunes of minority groups and women have been extraordinarily impacted as they have taken advantage of opportunities to begin their own businesses. After summarizing the results from several national surveys, Walstad and Kourilsky (1999) reported that today, 6 out of every 10 young people desire to start their own business. Some of the major reasons young people have interest in and aspire to be entrepreneurs include: (a) a strong desire to be one's own boss; (b) the significant earning potential available; (c) the chance to more fully use their abilities and skills; (d) the desire to test oneself and conquer challenges; (e) the resolution to build something for one's family; and (f) awareness of the potential to be in a position to help others and strengthen their community (Kourilsky & Walstad, 2000).

The opportunity to realize entrepreneurial dreams is more than a notion for young people as current education and training programs do not consistently place them in positions to do so. Henderson and Robertson (1999) identified three reasons why young people experienced stifling challenges in their development of entrepreneurial skills, including: 1) the absence of successful entrepreneur role models; 2) poor presentation of

small firms and individual entrepreneurs by the media; and 3) teachers' and career guidance specialists' failure to adequately encourage and support young people to explore entrepreneurial interests.

The potential for adolescents to explore, pursue, and become successful in entrepreneurial ventures could be markedly enhanced if schools and training programs would integrate entrepreneurial competencies into their curriculum. Kourilsky and Walstad (2000) provided a summary of the knowledge and skills future entrepreneurs need to achieve success, and these are represented in a three-layer pyramid. The base of the pyramid is called Foundation, the middle is Bridging, and the top of the pyramid is Focus. Kourilsky and Walstad proposed that as an individual progresses to the top of the pyramid, she will be building toward entrepreneurship, entrepreneurial thinking, and economic understanding. The three levels of the pyramid are interconnected and are suggested to provide young people strategies that are applicable to varied creative entrepreneurial enterprises (Kourilsky & Walstad, 2000).

In Kourilsky and Walstad's (2000) pyramid, the Foundation portion represents the base of knowledge and skills needed for high-order learning and complex entrepreneurial tasks. If an adult is to be successful in making their own job, she must master the educational basics, such as reading literacy, mathematics, and writing. Understanding and ability to handle problems effectively, as well as possessing knowledge of the decision-making process are necessities for successful entrepreneurs. These individuals must be capable of appropriately and assertively responding to opportunities in a fast paced economy. Lastly, those who choose to pursue entrepreneurial interests must learn to generate creative ideas that will result in positive experiences for others and the health of varied facets of the environment (e.g., physical, social, educational and economic).

Building on the foundational base, the Bridging layer of the pyramid represents the need for future entrepreneurs to acquire a clear grasp of business management and

communication practices (Kourilsky & Walstad, 2000). Critical business management skills in this area include: 1) ability to utilize efficient time management practices; 2) employment of sound budgeting and money management practices; 3) formation an action and plan and the power and influence to catalyze others to reach these goals; 4) leadership skills that ignite others to work together to realize common objectives; 5) understanding how to energize others to collaborate and cooperate; negotiation skills that gain cooperation, as opposed to opting to use authoritarian tactics. Kourilsky and Walstad also identified the communication skills required for successful entrepreneurs. These include: 1) effective listening skills; 2) ability and ease to perform oral presentations and to speak publicly; 3) use clear and concise writing skills; 4) capable of efficiently maneuvering through a multilingual workforce and global economy; and 5) maintaining a proficiency in advancing technology.

At the top of their pyramid, Kourilsky and Walstad (2000) have placed specific knowledge domains and skills related to successful efforts at self-employment. These practical skills include: 1) identifying an a idea that could realistically support the venture; 2) developing a sound business plan appropriate for the niche's market; 3) garnering the human and financial capital needed to initiate and sustain the business; 4) using solid accounting practices; 5) establishing a sales team capable of employing creative advertising and promotion strategies to reach targeted customers; and 6) proper pricing of products and services to the niche market. Further, future entrepreneurs must grasp essential economic concepts, including the laws of supply and demand, the role of the government in the market economy, and the impact of inflation, just to name a few.

#### Perspective On The Problem

This section first reviews the educational, economic, and occupational conditions of minorities, specifically African Americans living in inner cities. It then focuses on research that has investigated the state of vocational development for minority youth. Finally, a

rationale for focusing on the vocational self-understanding and career development of urban minority youth is presented.

*Minorities in the Public Educational System*

Public schools in the United States are witnessing a growth in numbers of culturally diverse students. Kellogg (1988) reported that minority students account for 70%- 90% of the student population in 15 of the nation's largest school districts. It has been suggested that African Americans have traditionally appreciated the value of acquiring an education (e.g. Schaefer, 1998; Blackwell, 1991; Kiselica et. al., 1995). They recognize that achieving social mobility often requires formal schooling or training and African Americans, along with other groups in the United States, have sought to maximize their opportunity for advancement via education.

However, a historical glance at their attempts to engage in the educational process reveals that African Americans have not been embraced by the educational system. In fact from the beginning, they have had to fight for the right to receive an education. As slaves, they were not permitted to attend school nor allowed to learn to read or write. When granted the privilege to attend schools, African Americans had to contend with separate, inferior places of learning. Students had to go to schools where the buildings were poorly ventilated and dilapidated, classrooms were overcrowded, and teachers were often unqualified. Despite the Supreme Court's decision in *Brown v. Board of Education of Topeka, Kansas*, as well as other efforts to ameliorate disparities in the educational system in favor of providing African Americans and other racial/ethnic minorities with equal educational opportunities, differences in educational attainment continue to persist. It is obvious that simply increasing financial support to predominantly minority school districts, a frequently employed strategy, is not an adequate solution (Schaefer, 1998).

A review of the statistics on school dropout rates reveals that African American youth drop out of school sooner and are less likely to receive a high school diploma than

are their Caucasian American counterparts. For example, in 1995, only 73.4% of African American males and 74.1 % of African American females completed high school, where as 83% of Caucasian American males and females completed high school. Further, 13.6% of African American males and 12.9% of African American females completed college compared to 27.2% of Caucasian American males and 21.0% of Caucasian American females completed college (Bureau of the Census, 1996).

Schaefer (1998), Worthington and Juntunen (1997), and others suggest that the high dropout rates and low college attendance (Riley, 1997) and completion for African American students may be attributable to number of factors. Often, these students receive inadequate educational and vocational guidance, and thus fail to understand the relationship between college entrance and more challenging high school math courses. Teachers and guidance counselors are sometimes insensitive to different learning styles and needs of minority youth. As a result, African American students and Hispanic students are more likely to be enrolled in vocational or general courses, while their Caucasian and Asian American counterparts are more frequently placed in college preparatory classes. Further, African American students are more often labeled emotionally disturbed or learning disabled than are White students, especially when African American students have problems adjusting. It seems that racism and discrimination continue to serve a role in preventing African American students from accessing the tools that might best prepare them for social mobility (Blackwell, 1991; Schaefer, 1998; Worthington & Juntunen, 1997).

The problems that minority students face in the classroom are further compounded by school administrators who are frequently unresponsive to the cultural, sociopolitical, family, and environmental needs of minority students (Lee, 2001). Vontress (1979) suggested that African American youth feel like outsiders in the public education system. As a group, African Americans tend to be more group centered, sensitive to interpersonal matters, and value cooperation. This worldview and style of relating to others is not

congruent with the typical structure of public education, which values individuality, uniqueness and competition (Bowman, 1993). Unfortunately, rare is the effort of administrators to modify their approach to working with African American or other minority students. They lack the appropriate knowledge and skills necessary for working with this population and for enhancing the school environment and the personal development of culturally diverse students (Lee, 2001). Thus, it is not that students fail in the public school system, but that the system fails to meet their needs (Blackwell, 1991; Kiselica et. al., 1995; Schaefer, 1998; Worthington & Juntunen, 1997).

### *Minorities in the World of Work*

The differences in educational attainment between African Americans and Caucasian Americans are similarly found when considering the employment opportunities, occupational distribution, and income levels of these groups. According to the Bureau of the Census (1996), in 1994, African American families had a median income that was nearly \$16,000 below that of Caucasian American families. Moreover, African Americans were three times more likely to live below the poverty level than their Caucasian counterparts. While the general economic picture for African Americans has been gradually improving over the last forty years, this improvement, when compared to Caucasian Americans, has been modest at best. Social and economic inequality in the United States have not ceased to suppress the level of prosperity African Americans strive to achieve (Schaefer, 1998).

Employment statistics suggest that, although African Americans constitute 10%-11 % of the workforce, they are significantly underrepresented in the more prestigious, higher salaried positions (e.g., Blackwell, 1991; Schaefer, 1998). According to the Bureau of the Census (1996), African American workers account for over 15% of the cooks, health aides, hospital orderlies, maids, janitors and stock handles; less than 5% of lawyers, judges, physicians, financial managers, public relations specialists, architects,

pharmacists and dentists are African American. **It** is clear that few African Americans have been able to obtain high status positions in the world of work (Schaefer, 1998).

Worthington and Juntunen (1997) argued that the unemployment rate for African American high school graduates in 1995 was 29.1 %, compared to only 14.2% for Caucasian graduates. Their further analysis, as well as the observations of others (e.g., Lingg, 1995), offers that an issue confounding the efforts of African American youth to obtain employment is the tendency of employers to perceive or attribute negative workrelated qualities to youth residing in the inner city. While employers complain that many high school graduates lack adequate training and skills and are ill-prepared to enter the labor force, they tend to view African Americans as even less prepared. Employers often assume, for example, that African American workers from the inner city will have a poor work ethic, poor relations with company managers, and more negative interactions with customers. Further, they are often less willing to hire African American youth in their companies and places of business (e.g., Worthington & Juntunen, 1997; Lingg, 1995).

Wilson (1996) also addressed the issue of joblessness for poor, inner city minority groups. He offered that the interaction between racial segregation and critical economic changes since World War II has resulted in damaged social organizations and the loss of low level, high earning manufacturing jobs. Consequently the relationship between joblessness experienced by inner city dwellers and lowered-self-efficacy strengthened over time, especially as the community members experienced a loss of power to exercise control in their environment. Ogbu (1991) surmised that the inability to exercise control in one's environment clouds the prospect for hope and cripples the attainment of educational and vocational goals for adolescents living in these contexts.

In order to positively influence the career development and career choice of minorities, it is important to first understand how the educational system and the world of work have interacted to create barriers and stumbling blocks for minorities in their efforts to

achieve social mobility. Their experiences in the educational system, along with their observation of their parents experiences in the world of work, and in some cases their own personal experiences in attempting to enter the labor force confound and thwart the potential for these youth to arrive at appropriate and satisfying career choices (e.g., Wilson, 1996; Ogbu, 1991). In effect, these variables act to prevent African American youth from mastering developmentally appropriate vocational tasks, which often results in premature narrowing of career exploration and pursuit of educational and career paths (e.g., McNair & Brown; Rojewski, 1995). For the observer, it becomes clear that minority youth may struggle with hopelessness, an inability to change their life situations, and a resolve that they will not be able to exit the cycle of poverty. Thus, the odds against securing a satisfying and socially suitable career may so frustrate some African American youth that they resolve to seeking less constructive, alternative jobs ( e.g., D' Andrea, 1995; Schaefer, 1998).

The influence of poverty in this complex system must also be considered.

Researchers (e.g., Schaefer, 1998) have indicated the challenges that poor African American parents have in monitoring and participating in their children's educational progress. These investigators propose that African American parents are indeed concerned about their children's academic performance, but are hampered in their involvement by a variety of other family problems and adversities. Competing for their attention are concerns about care for younger children, financial insecurity due to unemployment or underemployment, and problems related to housing, medical care, and crime. Their only option, then, is to leave the academic issues of their school age children in the hands of teachers and school administrators. This lack of parental involvement necessarily places African American children at a disadvantage. McNair and Brown ( 1983) and others have suggested that parental influence is critical in the academic and career development of children. In fact, McNair and Brown (1983) found that the only significant predictor of

career maturity for both White and African American students was parental involvement.

McNair and Brown (1983) proposed the importance of investigating the factors that predict the occupational aspirations, occupational expectations, and career maturity of African American and White 10th grade students. Rojewski (1994, 1995) provided a very clear definition of these career terms. Career maturity is explained as the repertoire of coping behaviors that persons possess and their readiness to employ them toward vocationally-related events encountered at various life stages. It represents both affective and cognitive skill components that are critical in realistic career decision making. Career aspirations reflect the orientation one has toward a particular career goal. Career expectations are an individual's estimation of a probable career attainment (Rojewski, 1994, 1995).

The sample used in McNair and Brown's (1983) study consisted of 259 students from a central North Carolina community, and included 54 African American females, 80 White females, 38 African American males and 87 White males. The students completed the Attitude Scale of the Career Maturity Inventory, as well as a student data form. The latter was used to collect information about career aspirations and expectations, parental influence, socioeconomic status, and certainty of parental influence. Researchers were able to ascertain the level of parental influence by asking students about their perception of the degree of educational encouragement or discouragement they receive from their parents. Participants also completed the Tennessee Self-Concept scale; the Total Positive score on the scale was used to measure self-perceptions (McNair & Brown, 1983).

McNair & Brown (1983) found that White students scored higher on career maturity measures than did African American students, and females demonstrated higher career maturity than males. Accordingly, White students and female students in this study were more capable of mastering developmentally appropriate vocational tasks. Further, the only significant predictor of career maturity for all groups was parental influence. These

findings contradict other research that argues the primary predictor of career maturity to be self-concept, as this construct predicted the career maturity for white males only. The researchers also found that occupational aspirations were predicted by both perceived parental influence and SES, both operating in different directions for males and females: Parental influence impacted girls less than boys and SES resulted in a positive influence on girls, but not boys. The researchers found that perceived parental influence was the primary significant predictor of career expectations across groups (McNair & Brown, 1983).

McNair and Brown (1983) make several recommendations from their research. Those that address the concerns of the present research project include making parents aware of their influence in determining the occupational aspirations and expectations of their adolescents, as well as working to develop the career maturity of African American youth. It seems that in order to facilitate the career development of African American adolescents, counselors must confront not only the aspirations and expectations of African American youth, but their level of career maturity. These researchers suggest that unless African American youth acquire the appropriate attitudes and skills to pursue their career goals, a lowering of both their career aspirations and expectations can be expected.

Rojewski (1994) echoed McNair and Brown's (1983) recommendation that understanding career maturity is essential to the career development of African American youth. Rojewski (1994) focused on exploring whether select variables could predict the career maturity of rural economically disadvantaged youth. The questions asked in this study seem to address the concerns and issues faced by African American youth residing in the inner city. Rojewski (1994) proposed that youth in rural areas face barriers that urban youth do not contend with, namely, geographic isolation, few employment opportunities, an absence of economic vitality, and lower educational and vocational achievement. However, a comparison of the limited opportunities afforded to these youth and those

available to African American youth in urban areas reveals many similarities. As previously discussed, many African American youth in the inner city have significant employment challenges, must navigate through economically depressed economies, and often experience educational and vocational achievement that is significantly lower than that of their White counterparts. Thus, it seems that the findings of Rojewski's (1994) study might also provide information about the influence of the barriers encountered by African American youth in urban centers.

Rojewski (1994) proposed that there are certain variables that often work in concert to prevent the continuity of the career development process for rural adolescents. Traditional vocational development theories (e.g., Super, 1974, as cited in Rojewski, 1994), describe occupational choice as a continuous developmental process that allows passage through predictable life stages; a specific set of vocational tasks accompanies each developmental stage (Rojewski, 1994). Because the vocational development of rural youth is often interrupted and delayed, occupational choice can best be described as a one-time event. This tendency makes obvious the need to investigate factors influencing the career maturity of African American adolescents.

Rojewski's (1994) research involved the participation of 90 economically disadvantaged 9th grade students enrolled at a public high school in a rural southeastern community; 72 of the students were African American and 18 were White. There was a relatively equal number of males and females, 47 and 43, respectively. The composite score on a 7-item scale was used to classify students into one of three educational disadvantaged categories. According to these divisions, one-third of the students did not exhibit any type of at-risk behavior, almost one-half of the participants reported experience with no more than two of the behavioral indicators, and only 15.7% reported experience with three or more of the educational at-risk behaviors. A small portion of the students (25%) reported involvement in vocational education courses. The career activities the

participants planned to engage in after high school graduation included 4-year college attendance (n= 54), 2-year community college or technical school (n= 17), military enlistment, and immediate entrance to the workforce (n= 19).

Participants completed a self-report demographic questionnaire in order to gather personal data. Using information readily available to school personnel, researchers were able to determine each participant's socioeconomic status. Further, a seven-point scale that combined both attitudinal and behavioral correlates of being "at-risk" was completed by participants. Participants were asked to indicate the frequency with which they were involved in behaviors described on the "at-risk" scale. Finally, participants completed the Career Maturity Inventory (CMI) and the Career Decision Scale (CDS). As their titles suggest, the CMI measures the maturity of attitudes and competence needed for realistic career decision making; the CDS was used to assess participants' level of indecision (Rojewski, 1994).

Rojewski (1994) found that using six variables as predictors-- gender, race, post-secondary plans, educational disadvantage, vocational education, and career indecision-- to categorize students into career maturity and immaturity groups resulted in a 75% accuracy rate. Relying on chance alone to categorize students only yields 50% accuracy. Thus, these predictors offer a significant improvement over chance classification. Of further import, the results indicated that the most influential variable for predicting career immaturity in participants was degree of career indecision; the second most important predictor was race. Interestingly, the accurate identification of career mature students was most predicted by race, then by educational disadvantage. Further, contrary to other research (e.g., Lingg, 1995) that report the positive effects of involvement in vocational education on career maturity, this variable did not significantly contribute to accurate categorization of students in this study. However, it was hypothesized that involvement in vocational education was not a good predictor in this research because students' length of

participation in vocational education programs (only several months) did not allow sufficient time to recognize the benefits of such participation (Rojewski, 1994).

Overall, this research study demonstrated that career mature students were more likely to be White, female, non-educationally disadvantaged, and decisive about their careers. Career immature students, conversely, were more likely to be African American, male, educationally disadvantaged, and more indecisive about career choice. It is suggested that in the absence of early career interventions and financial resources, the predictors identified in this study may be employed in order to quickly and easily recognize students at-risk of delayed or interrupted career development (Rojewski, 1994). Further, it may be appropriate to assume that these predictors may also be applicable to inner city African American youth. Other studies seem to support this assumption (e.g., Brown, 1997).

As potential solutions are approached to address the career development needs of African American youth, it becomes necessary to understand differences in career maturity between males and females. Much of the research exploring gender differences has focused on trends among the majority group youth (Brown, 1997). However, Brown (1997) sought to understand potential gender differences in career maturity among African American adolescents; her research also explored educational plans and career expectations of African American youth. The participants solicited in Brown's (1997) study included 301 African American youth from three urban high schools in the midwest. Students from grades 9 through 12 were sampled; the mean age of participants was 16 years (Brown, 1997).

Participants were administered the Abbreviated Career Maturity Inventory to assess career maturity attitudes. They also completed a self-report demographic data form to collect personal information. Each participant's vocational expectations was assessed using his/her answer to an open-ended question that focused on post-high school plans (Brown,

1997).

The results indicated that the career maturity attitudes and career maturity competencies of females exceeded that of their male peers. In examining the vocational expectations of this sample, Brown (1997) found that although the category of professional careers was the highest endorsed career preference for both males and females, the percentage of males who expressed a preference for social careers was much lower than females. Further, females tended to indicate greater interest in careers that require a college education in comparison to their male peers. Generally, the participants expressed career expectations that were divided based on sex-stereotypes. However, there was no significant difference in educational expectations for this sample; the educational plans of the participants were consistent with the careers they intended to pursue (Brown, 1997).

Given the differences found in the levels of career maturity for African American males and females, further research is recommended (Brown, 1997). Brown (1997) proposed that in order to better understand the development of career maturity in African American youth, it may be helpful to explore the applicability of those variables identified as significant in the development of majority youth. Such exploration might serve as a starting place and thus facilitate understanding of this career concept in minority youth. Similar to McNair and Brown's findings (1983), the aspirations of African American youth is high, as more than 85% of females and males expressed plans to attend college. Again, it would seem that African American youth dream big and have high goals; however, the likelihood that they will realize their high expectations is low. Solutions addressing this discrepancy might include improving educational standards for these students, as well as achieving a clearer understanding of the role discrimination and other environmental factors may play in their career development (Brown, 1997; Worthington & Juntunen, 1997). It might also include working to empower African American students by helping them identify personal strengths, broader post-high school options, and the tools necessary to

successfully navigate both the world of work and the world of the undergraduate (Worthington & Juntunen, 1997; Lingg, 1995).

In an attempt to reach and engage African American adolescents and to "reconnect them to life", the Kmart Employment for Youth (KEY): Workforce 2000 was initiated (Lingg, 1995). The program was established to provide occupational and academic opportunities for African American students, especially those at-risk for high school drop-out and high unemployment. The partnership created between Kmart, the University of Missouri- St. Louis, and several public schools provided for a unique invention program geared toward job-skills training, decreased high-school drop-out rates, and increased access to higher education (Lingg, 1995).

Students were solicited from five area high schools where African American students comprised at least 50% of the student body; 4 of the 5 schools participating were 95% African American .. Students selected to participate were 16 years old, had a minimum 2.00 GPA, attended school regularly, were recommended by school personnel, and expressed commitment, interest, and cooperation with the program's agenda. Over the course of 10 weeks, students attended training workshops after school for three days a week, two hours a day. Recognizing the importance of role models for the participants, African American professionals from the community were solicited to facilitate the workshops. The workshops emphasized personal development, goal setting, value clarification, life planning, and communication and were intended to help students prepare for their first work experience and to develop and practice desirable worker attributes (Lingg, 1995).

Other unique features of the KEY program included transportation provisions for students to and from training and work, centering workshops on the University campus, graduation exercises at the conclusion of the training, and a \$1,000 yearly renewable scholarship to attend UMSL. Students were eligible for the scholarship if they completed

both high school and the job-training, and continued to work for Kmart while in college (Lingg, 1995).

In order to assess the effects of participation in the KEY program on the behaviors and attitudes of students, three of the five groups of students who took part in the program during the three-year pilot period were tracked (n=145). These students completed the Adolescent Discouragement Indicator (ADI) and also participated in an exit interview. A control group of students was selected from the same schools the KEY students attended (Lingg, 1995).

The results revealed that 45 of the 145 students who began the KEY program persisted until graduation from high school or were currently active in the program. Those students who remained in the KEY program graduated from high school; those who discontinued still achieved a 99% graduation rate. The level of high school completion far exceeds the percentage typical for the high schools participating. Further, all the students who remained in the program went to college, the military, or entered the workforce. The students who completed the program reported less discouragement than students in the control group, initially; these levels seemed to equal out later, however, when retested. Less discouragement was initially reported for those who dropped out when compared to the control group. Yet, a significant increase in discouragement was expressed when retested; it was offered that this increase may have been a reflection of the frustration experienced from either quitting or being fired from the job. Another significant finding revealed that females had lower levels of discouragement than males (Lingg, 1995).

The interviews showed that those who completed or who persisted in the Key program experienced several positive outcomes, including the acquisition of job skills, confidence to handle responsibility, willingness to try something new, and ability to accomplish personally set goals. In addition, those who discontinued participation in KEY reported that they benefitted from the program and were able to utilize the skills they

acquired in other situations and to obtain different employment (Lingg, 1995).

One of the most valuable insights gained as a consequence of this study pointed to the need of diversity and sensitivity training not only for participants but also for those serving in the role of supervisors and managers. Those who discontinued participation in KEY most frequently perceived their supervisors and managers as prejudiced against African Americans. These negative perceptions, whether real or imagined, contributed to feelings of non-acceptance, discouragement, poor performance and termination for African American students. This gives credence to the fact that African American youth cannot be expected to successfully navigate the world of work without appropriate "defenses" or tools intact. These might include learning to communicate frustrations, learning to handle those challenges present in a predominately White workforce, and acquiring some level of understanding of self-- interpersonal factors that influence interactions with non-similar others. However, an analogous process must occur for employers. There must be a commitment of those who employ African American youth to keep the doors of communication open, to be aware of personal biases as it relates to racial differences and to act against these biases, and to be willing to be patient, yet consistent, with minority youth (Lingg, 1995).

Further, the fact the female students expressed lower levels of discouragement than did their male peers suggests that significant efforts must be made to engage African American males, both vocationally and educationally (Lingg, 1995). This effort does not solely involve implementing interventions that would affect the career development of African American males (e.g., role models or mentoring programs). Equally essential are interventions that would change institutional and environmental influences. This is a colossal task, one that requires solutions and interventions on several levels. One way to broach this multifaceted endeavor is to consider the contributions career development psychology can make.

*Statement of the Problem*

Lapan (2005) argued that adolescents need to develop an approach to the future that is proactive, tenacious, and functionally adaptive. Young people need the freedom to exercise control over the direction their lives take, primarily through exploration of their vocational interests. This process should occur along side an individual's consideration of her skills, values, aptitudes, and experiences.

Adolescents need to understand that the choices they make to pursue certain academic paths in high school will significantly impact the educational and vocational options available to them later *in* life (e.g., Sells, 1973; Riley, 1997). In order to be appropriately equipped to meet and conquer the challenges that the ever-changing workplace will present, young people must cultivate self-regulated learning approaches, as well as pro-social behaviors (e.g. Wentzel & Feldman, 1993; Bloch, 1996; Lapan, 2005). Those who will be successful in their educational and vocational pursuits will have developed significant relationships with community stakeholders and potential employers (Lapan & Kosciulek, 2001). Adolescents can market themselves as valuable employees and facilitate the transition from high school to paths beyond if they acquire and exercise work-readiness behaviors. These behaviors may include adopting an appreciation and respect for ethnically and culturally different others; presenting oneself as cooperative and able to get along well with others; practicing sophisticated written and oral communication skills; and demonstrating an ability to negotiate with others to solve problems.

As adolescents attempt to navigate through their environments to understand themselves and, ultimately, to reach their educational, vocational, and personal goals, support afforded by the community, school, and parents must be in place (Lapan & Kosciulek, 2001). Without these, young people may flounder in their career development, fail to achieve their goals, limit their aspirations and expectations, and never attain successful, satisfying employment in the workforce. To optimize their potential for

success in these areas, parents, school personnel, and community stakeholders must understand the magnitude of the influence they have in adolescents' lives (e.g., Steinberg, et al., 1992; Steinberg, et al., 1991; Baumrind, 1971; 1978; Lee, 2001; Schneider & Stevenson, 1999).

Research has revealed that there are multiple barriers that impede the career development of inner city minority adolescents, placing them in a decidedly less advantageous position to make adequate educational and vocational choices (Wilson, 1996; Ogbu, 1991; Lingg, 1995; Worthington & Juntunen, 1997; Brown, 1997). Career development specialists (e.g., Bandura, 1977; 1986; 1997; Super, 1954; Betz & Hackett, 1981; Lent et al., 1994) have amassed a great deal of knowledge about how career development proceeds, as well as those factors that influence the course it will take. Much is known about how to prepare adolescents to transition into educational and vocational paths after completing high school and how to follow a rewarding path. However, limited information exists about an individual's perspective of her own career development. It seems that in order to affect change in the futures of inner city minority youth, more must be understood about how they process their experiences (e.g., support, setbacks, successes, the education, work), as this will better inform theory and practice.. To this end, having insight into their perspective may allow career practitioners a rich plethora of information that will aid in the pursuit of change in the lives and futures of inner city minority youth.

Therefore, this investigation will qualitatively assess urban minority youths' perspective of their career development experiences, particularly as they are related to the six primary career constructs delineated above. Specifically, urban minority youth will give voice to their experience, expressing their view of the effectiveness of environmental supports, exploratory activities, the role of academic achievement and interests, and the acquisition of work-readiness behaviors and social skills on their career development.

## Chapter 3

### Method

#### *Participants*

The participants were randomly selected 8th and 12th grade students from an urban public middle school and high school in Kansas City, Missouri. There were a total of 12 participants, 2 boys and 10 girls. As suggested by Hill, Thompson and Williams (1997), this small number of participants allowed the researcher to study more intensively the career development experiences of these students, and thus gather a richer, more colorful qualitative perspective from them. Among the students, there were 4 Hispanics, 7 African Americans, and 1 Somalian/ African. The mean age for the boys ( $n= 2$ ) was 18.5 years and the mean age for the girls ( $n= 10$ ) was 15.5 years.

The schools from which the students were solicited had been identified by a federally funded research initiative, the School-to-Work-Opportunities Act of 1994 (STWOA), as schools to receive interventions directed at facilitating and evaluating school-to-work transitions for students. This funding created locally controlled community partnerships that focused on this goal, and that would provide more effective and sustainable interfaces between business and education for students. As such, the students attending these schools were a prime group to assess the effectiveness of the current career development programs being implemented in Missouri. This evaluation provided the investigator the opportunity to acquire more in-depth information about the students' perspective not only on the career development initiatives employed at their schools, but also on how they are being shaped and prepared to transition into post-high school educational and vocational settings.

Students represented different levels of exposure to and experience with the school-to-work efforts promoted by the STWOA). Thus, most students had the opportunity to engage in activities designed to prepare them for the world of work (i.e., job shadowing); some had only

participated in large group discussions on occupational education and future career choice; and others had not participated in any activities. Nevertheless, all the participants had access to career information. After parental consent forms had been obtained, the researcher collaborated with the guidance counselors at each school to randomly select students with varying degrees of participation in school-to-work activities. Those students not selected to take part in the study were encouraged to participate in the school-to-work initiatives already in place at the schools.

### *The Schools*

The participants were students at Westport Community Secondary Charter School in Kansas City, Missouri. Westport Middle School and Westport High School became a charter school in 1999. With approximately 1,200 sixth through 12th grader students enrolled, Westport Charter was the largest of 18 charter schools in the city and was the only one sponsored by the Kansas City School District (Smith, 2004). While public funding allows charter schools to operate within the school district, they are run by their boards independent of the school district. In becoming a charter school, Westport contracted with Edison School Inc., a for-profit management company, to supervise its operations (Smith, 2004). By using traditional instructional materials, augmented by longer school days and a longer academic year, the structure of the Edison education model was developed to help students in urban centers reach greater academic success (Franey, 2003). In addition, principals and teachers participate in intensive training and development programs (Franey, 2003).

Prior to becoming a charter school, the history of poor academic performance prompted the district to consider closing Westport High School. Hiring Edison School, Inc. initially seemed quite promising but had not resulted in improved test scores for students at Westport. In 2002, more than 9 in 10 Westport students scored in the lowest two MAP (Missouri Assessment Program) levels in mathematics and science (Franey, 2003). In 2004, Westport's students' academic test scores were lower than the district average; however, several of the other district

high schools had worse state reading and math scores (Smith, 2004). Table 2 illustrates Westport's students' performance on MAP (Missouri Department of Elementary and Secondary Education, 2004).

In addition to poor academic performance among its students, the environment at Westport may not be the most conducive for academic learning to take place. Among the offenses reported as perpetrated by students were a stabbing and a rape (Franey, 2003). Table 3 provides more information about the type of offenses that occurred in the school in 2004 (Missouri Department of Elementary and Secondary Education, 2004). Because of the poor academic performance of the students at the charter, as well as alleged financial mismanagement, the Kansas City School District has resumed control and management of Westport Middle School and Westport High School (Franey, 2003; Smith, 2004).

#### *Procedures*

Interviews were conducted by the primary investigator using the Structured Career Development Interview (SCDI; Lapan, 2000). Consistent with previous trials employing this interview instrument, respondents took approximately 45 minutes to an hour to complete the interview. Interviews took place in a room where privacy could be maintained (i.e., an office in the guidance department) and a cassette recorder was used to document participants' responses. Interviews were conducted over the course of two consecutive months, during that school day, and outside of class. At the conclusion of the interview, the investigator collected GPA and school attendance rates from the participants' school files. Before initiating the protocol for this research, the participants completed an assent form, indicating that they understood the nature of the investigation. They also were informed about the voluntary status of their participation and of their freedom to discontinue their participation at any time. At the conclusion of the assessment period, students were orally debriefed about the nature of the research. Students were offered no incentives for participation in this study.

Table 2

Academic Test Scores of the Missouri Assessment Program for Westport Community Secondary Charter School

		2000	2001	2002	2003	2004
<b>Grade</b>						
7 or 8	Level					
<b>Math</b>						
	2	0.8	0	0.4	6.5	20.6
	1	95	92.6	90.6	74.1	52.8
<b>Communication Arts</b>						
	2	7.6	10.4	9.2	5.5	3.6
	1	68.8	59.2	55.4	77.9	75
<b>Science</b>						
	2	1.3	1.2	0	0	0
	1	93	92.6	95.8	97.7	94.1
<b>Social Studies</b>						
	2	9.6	8.1	7.3	13	.
	1	68.8	59.8	68.1	61.5	.

Table 2 (continued)

		2000	2001	2002	2003	2004
Grade						
10 or 11	Level					
Math						
	2	0	0.4	0.4	0.5	0
	1	94.4	90.5	93	96.2	95.7
Communication Arts						
	2	3.8	2.1	3.6	1.7	0.6
	1	82	62.4	72.1	74.3	80.2
Science						
	2	0	0.8	0	0	0
	1	97	92.5	96.3	97.1	98.6
Social Studies						
	2	1.4	2.1	1.5	0	.
	1	93.5	80.8	83.5	84.6	.

Note. Level 1 indicates that student's performance demonstrated ability at step 1 and progressing level, the lowest level. Level 2 indicates that student's performance demonstrated ability at advanced and proficient level, the highest level. The values represent percentages.

Table 3

## Offenses Committed at Westport Community Secondary Charter School

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Type of Offense	Frequency
Alcohol	0
Drugs	5
Tobacco	0
Violent Act	52
Weapon	3
Other	50

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### *Measures*

The goals of this investigation were pursued through a qualitative research paradigm that employed the Structured Career Development Interview (SCDI; Lapan, 2000). The Structured Career Development Interview (SCDI) is a 48-item protocol intended for persons in grades 6 to 12 who are in the early stages of career planning. The protocol consists of 9 subscales or subsections that are based on 9 career constructs and are designed to assess the specific career behaviors in which an individual might engage - those purported as critical in the formation of vocational self-understanding (Lapan & Kosciulek, 2001). The constructs on which the subscales are based are as follows: proactive opportunity seeking; career expectations; academic achievement; identity development; social skills; person-environment fit; interests; emotional supports; and instrumental supports.

The SCDI questions, written in an open-ended format, were fashioned to engage the respondents in discussions about career issues and encourage elaborate and detailed responses. Thus, the aim of such an approach is to provide specific, even idiographic information about the career development issues relevant to those responding. The anticipated result is that adolescents' perspectives about their career development process, as well as those experiences that have been most meaningful to them will be clearly described and elaborated upon. The responses that the participants provide will help to inform and shape the career development interventions professional career development personnel employ with urban, minority adolescents.

### *Data Analysis*

This research project was intended to provide a unique way to understand the complicated, complex phenomenon of career development of urban, minority adolescents. Consensual Qualitative Research method (Hill et al., 1997) was employed to achieve this goal. The advantage of employing the CQR method lends itself nicely to the efforts of any qualitative research endeavor. This method allows investigators interested in achieving highly descriptive data about

complex phenomena to access that information in a very systematic way. Besides the significant investment of time required to employ the CQR method, the criticisms are few. In fact, because it is highly organized and rigorous, the CQR method can be employed as a standardized approach to performing qualitative research. Further, the CQR method is the only qualitative research approach that highlights the use of multiple researchers, utilizes the process of consensus, and provides for a systematic way of examining the representativeness of results across cases. These features control for researcher biases often inherent in qualitative research; require that data are analyzed accurately and carefully; and provide for the emergence of relationships among concepts and ideas. Most importantly, the CQR method embraces a discovery-oriented, hypothesis-building approach to data collection and analysis. The CQR method nearly ensures that the researcher and his colleagues will discover something new (Hill et al., 1997).

#### *Consensual Qualitative Research*

CQR has many attractive features and addresses many of the problems characteristic of traditional qualitative research methods. Unlike other qualitative research methods, CQR method is replicable: each step is clearly articulated so that the reliability and validity of the findings can be tested. The data collection is critically categorized and organized so that the researcher was able to specifically describe variations within the sample investigated and make claims about representativeness of subgroups to the sample. Although the judgments are quite subjective, the process toward analysis is very organized and stringent. With the CQR method, other researchers can critically evaluate the study: the stages of analysis, procedures, and results are rigorously checked, and re-checked (Hill et al., 1997).

Embedded within the framework of the CQR method is the premise that data is collected using open-ended questions. This approach allowed the researcher to discover relationships between factors, concepts, and ideas without imposing her own expectations and preconceived hypotheses - the data was allowed to speak for itself. Thus the process is inductive; conclusions

are built from the data. Further, in the CQR method, all the judgments are made by consensus of a primary team of 3 to 5 persons, providing for a variety of opinions. Hill and her colleagues (1997) contend that understanding complex issues, like the career development of adolescents, requires multiple perspectives and levels of awareness. Not only is the truth more closely approximated when more than one perspective is considered, but the judgments are also more likely to be free from researcher biases.

*The Research Team.* Hill et al. (1997) proposed that in research that employed the CQR method data be analyzed by a primary team of 3 to 5 people, and one to two auditors to review and provide feedback on the analyses. However, many different variations of team composition are acceptable. By having more than one person to analyze the data, a variety of opinions and perspectives are made available about each participants' career development experience. Moreover, the biases of any one person are circumvented and the complexity and "truth" of the data are more closely approximated.

The composition of the team is very important to the CQR method. The team members are required to spend a great deal of time together and must be able to discuss their opinions and perspectives openly, even when disagreements are present. Hill et al. (1997) explained that the CQR method requires that team members be able to listen to one another, be flexible, and be respectful. When power differentials arise within the team (because they do exist), members must be willing to talk about these issues openly and honestly. Ideally, team members would feel equal and would have an equal investment in the process with no one deferring or dominating too much. In addition, team members must feel committed and involved in the analysis, and each must contribute her opinion and perspective.'

The **team** members are charged to describe the phenomenon they are investigating using words, rather than numbers. **It** is important that members consider the whole context of each case in order to understand the specific parts of each participants' experience. The auditors, who are

not members of the primary team, are used to check the judgments of the team to ensure that their results and conclusions are accurate and based on the data and that important information is not overlooked (Hill et al., 1997).

In this investigation, the primary team was comprised of 5 people: the principle investigator, her doctoral advisor, a doctoral level graduate student, and two master's level graduate students. The auditor, who was not a member of the research team, was also a master's level student. Of the primary team, 4 members were female and 1 was male. The auditor was a female. Two of the researchers were African American and 4, including the auditor, were Caucasians. Two team members reported religion as significant sources of support and influence in their lives; three others offered that sports were very important to them as they negotiated adolescence and high school.

Hill et al. (1997) suggested that researchers investigating a phenomenon via a qualitative approach must address possible biases at the beginning of the study. In so doing, team members could attempt to understand their biases and set them aside to prevent them from interfering with data analysis. In the current project, the team members shared their personal career development histories, as well as their theoretical orientations over the course of two months, for 3 two hour sessions. During that time, it was revealed that all the team members believed that hard work, positive role models, and positive experiences all contributed to positive academic and vocational outcomes. All team members voiced a belief that academic and vocational success was driven by parental support and encouragement. All team members reported family of origin profiles that highly valued education and academic success. As the team explored and discussed each member's biases, as well as those held in common, they committed to not allow these to interfere with the data analysis. They agreed to hold each other accountable as they analyzed each student's responses.

*The Consensus Process.* The consensus process, which is central to the CQR method, relies on

mutual respect, equal involvement, and shared power among the members. CQR, unlike other qualitative research approaches, does not involve interrater agreement through statistical analysis. Determining agreement levels would be impossible in CQR because the data continues to evolve over time. In order to minimize groupthink and to ensure that team members are able to thoughtfully consider the experiences of the research participants, team members independently examine the data prior to discussions with the team.

Hill et al. (1997) explained the advantages of the consensus approach over interrater agreement methods when analyzing an aspect of the human communication. They offered that the consensus method allowed researchers the freedom to think and talk about the ambiguities in meanings of the data being analyzed, and to reach more accurate conceptualizations. They also offered that having more than one person analyzing the data would help prevent researchers from missing important information and discourage individual biases from influencing the analysis. Hill et al. (1997) went on to explain that it is important for CQR team members to have some differences of opinions on what the data mean. The consensual agreement process is valuable because it relies on the fact that there will be initial differences. In fact, team members should have different, but not totally disparate, theoretical orientations. Their orientations should be similar enough that members share a common language and understanding about basic constructs, but different enough that they might sufficiently challenge one another. CQR allows team members to question one another and helps them to remain open to expanding their own perspectives about ways to understand the data (Hill et al., 1997) ..

The auditor, who is attentive to details, checks the work of the primary team. He is responsible for reading through all the raw material and determining whether: all the important material has been abstracted; the wording at each phase of analysis is clear and reflective of the data; suggestions or recommendations could be made to improve the analysis; there are any discrepancies in the data. Overall, the role of the auditor is to provide feedback to the research

team in order to arrive at the best end product. Her job is to force the team to think critically and to come up with the best abstractions, The team, in return, seriously considers and weighs the comments and recommendations of the auditor; they either defend the decisions they have made or revise them based on the suggestions of the auditor. Nevertheless, whatever decisions are made, each stage in the analysis must remain as close to the original data as possible (Hill et al., 1997).

The CQR method does share some qualities with other qualitative approaches. For example, the CQR method relies on words, not numbers, to describe the phenomenon being studied. Like other qualitative approaches, the CQR method uses a small number of cases to study intensively, and thus gain an in-depth understanding of each research case. Hill and her colleagues (1997) proposed that researchers employing this method should use at least 8 to 15 participants. The current project had a sample size of 12, which was small enough to allow the researchers to gain rich, in-depth information about the career development experiences of the participants and, thus, describe these experiences as accurately as possible. However, the sample size is large enough to determine whether the findings apply to several people or are just representative of 1 or 2 cases.

#### *The Stages of CQR*

*Step 1.* There are five primary stages of analysis in the CQR method. These stages or phases of analysis are outlined in Table 2. The first stage required that each member of the research team develop domains from the responses to the open-ended questions asked in the interviews for each individual case. A domain is a conceptual framework used to group or cluster data about similar topics. Hill et al. (1997) suggested that the team begin with a list of domains that they decided were relevant to the research area being investigated; this list would be informed by the related research in the area of study, as well as by the questions of the interview protocol. This initial list would serve as an organizer for team members as they began to interpret the data. As this process begins, the domains would then take more definite shape and would be refined to

better describe the experiences of the research participants.

Each member of the research team engaged in this process independently. Once every response for each question for every case had been divided into domains, the team reconvened to arrive at consensus about the domains. Our task was to find the domain title that best fit, the one that best described each block of data, while equally recognizing the contributions of each member. The research team involved in this project identified and achieved consensus on 15 different domains to describe the data and prepared to begin the second stage of data analysis. Developing domains and arriving at consensus for this phase of the research project took two sessions, approximately 5, over the course of two months.

*Step 2.* In the second stage, each team member constructed core ideas (abstracts or brief summaries) for all the material within each domain for individual cases. Another helpful way to look at this process might be to consider the abstract found at the beginning of a journal article. The journal author uses the abstract in order to convey to the reader a pithy summary of the findings of her research. **It** briefly and clearly states the facts. This is what the core idea should do. According to Hill and her colleagues (1997), the core idea summarizes the content of each domain for a given case or student. **It** captures the essence of the response using only a few words. Rather than interpreting the implicit meaning of the students' responses, core ideas stick close to the explicit meaning. Thus, it is important that as team members develop the core ideas, they consider the context of the entire case and point to the transcripts for evidence of inclusion in the core ideas.

Again, the team members first worked independently and then collaboratively to reach consensus on the core ideas for this project. Using no more than three or four sentences, team members worked to abstract the explicit meaning and essence of each participants' responses for each domain. While working to reach consensus about the core ideas of the data, team members referred to evidence in the transcripts to support and challenge one another's decisions. Team

Table 4

## Steps of Tasks within the CQR Method

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Step	Description of Task
1	Develop and code domains within cases and argue to consensus
2	Construct core ideas within cases and argue to consensus
3	Auditor reviews domains and core ideas
4	Cross analysis—develop categories within domains across cases
5	Examine the patterns in the data and chart the results

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members considered the entire case to inform their consensus about the core ideas. This phase of the analysis took approximately 20 hours of independent work to develop the core ideas for each case and 10 hours of team work to arrive at a consensus version. This process took nearly three months to complete.

*Step 3.* The primary investigator of this study recorded the consensus versions of both the domains and the core ideas and submitted them to the auditor for review. The auditor served as a check for the group, adding a different perspective and keeping the team on track. This outside team member forced the team to think critically about their judgments by challenging the domains and core ideas that the group developed (Hill et al., 1997). During this process, the auditor read through all the raw data in the consensus versions to evaluate the wording of the domains and core ideas, as well as to determine whether or not the team members remained close to the actual transcripts and interpreted the data based on the explicit meaning.

As a result, the auditor in this research made several recommendations for the team to consider in our analysis of the data. Among them, the auditor suggested that a couple of domains be collapsed into one, and that raw data in several domains be reorganized into other domains for a better fit or more accurate description of participants' experiences. The auditor also identified some discrepancies in how the raw data were coded or core ideas were defined. The auditor took two and a half months to complete this stage in the analysis.

After the auditor completed her check of the team's analysis, she returned her suggestions and comments back to the team. Due to two of the original team members graduating from their graduate programs, three of the five team members continued on with the analysis. These team members carefully considered the auditor's recommendations, and worked toward consensus on which points to amend and which judgments to defend and retain. When the team disagreed with the auditor's recommendations, we were able to point back to the raw data to defend our decisions. This phase of the analysis took quite some time to complete. The initial review of the

auditor's comments took one session and approximately 3 hours to complete. As the primary investigator, along with one other team member more closely considered the auditor's recommendations, the necessary changes were implemented; this process took approximately 16 hours to complete.

*Step 4.* After all the domains and core ideas in every case had been analyzed and audited, the research team began the final analysis. At this point, categories were constructed that describe the consistencies in the core ideas within domains across cases-- the similarities among the core ideas within the domains are clustered into categories. This more in-depth abstraction of the data is called a cross analysis.

During this stage of the analysis, the team members looked across the core ideas for each case to determine if there were similarities among the cases: the goal was to identify how the core ideas clustered into categories. All the core ideas for each domain across every case were copied and listed on a piece of paper. Then two of the remaining three team members brainstormed together to generate potential categories using the data as evidence to support the judgments. This process was very discovery oriented and the categories were derived from the data.

After the categories were developed, the team determined how frequently the categories applied to the entire sample. In so doing, the team could make claims about the representativeness of the sample, as well as describe variations that occurred within the sample. Hill et al. (1997) reported that a sample's representativeness could be defined in one of three ways: General, Typical, and Variant. A category that applies to every case is considered General. If the category applies to half or more of the cases it is considered Typical. Categories that are applicable to only a few, less than half of the cases are considered Variant. Hill et al. (1997) suggested that categories that described only one or two cases should not be dropped, but possibly included into other categories so that valuable data would be preserved. This phase of the analysis took 8 hours and over one month to complete.

*Step 5.* In this final phase of the analysis, the primary investigator charted the results of the analysis, attempting to identify whether specific categories in one domain aligned with the specific categories in other domains. This process represented the relationships that existed among domains and provided a way of focusing and organizing the information. Only those connections between General and Typical categories were charted so that the results were those that applied to more than half of the cases.

In order for the research team to complete the CQR steps outlined by Hill et al. (1997) to analyze the data generated in this project, approximately 50 hours were expended. The results of the cross analysis, as well as the list of domains and core ideas are presented in chapter 4.

Attempting to understand the perspective of adolescents is a very difficult task. But **it** is a task that must be embraced. **If** career development researchers, theorists, and practitioners want to better assist adolescents in making smooth, successful transitions from school to work or college, they must know what interventions, supports, and experiences are most significant. They must know how adolescents perceive their future and their opportunities to achieve their educational and vocational goals. Crucial to understanding the career development of adolescents is ascertaining their perspectives about the host of contextual factors that influence their vocational

.. self-development. The CQR method will enable the researcher to obtain rich, descriptive data about this complex phenomenon from the view of the students. The researcher will be compelled to hear what the participants have to say. The data will speak for itself; the "truth" about the adolescent career development and those variables that influence it will be obtained. As a result, current career interventions may be altered; other gaps in the research may be identified; and new career theories may be born. **It** is hoped that the findings of this investigation will better inform both theory and practice in career development, and will lead to adolescents who are well-equipped to embark upon the next stage in life.

## Chapter 4

### Results

The initial list of domains that the research team developed included 15 topic areas. These domains were reflective of each member's understanding of the career development process as indicated in career development literature and informed by the interview questions. After each member had a chance to independently code the interview responses for each interviewee to a domain, the team reconvened to reach consensus on which domains best described the data. This process resulted in not only the redefining of the domains such that only 13 domains remained, but also each interviewee's response was assigned to a specific domain. The final list of domains consisted of the following: Proactive Opportunity Seeking, Expectations, Academic Achievement, Goals/Actions, Social Skills, Person-Environment Fit, Interests, Emotional Supports, Instrumental Supports, Contexts/Environment, Ethnicity/Culture, Religion/Prayer/God, and Socioeconomic Status. A list of the domains along with their descriptions are provided in Table 5.

After the team members arrived at consensus on the domains for the responses for each interviewee, we independently summarized into core ideas, or abstracts, the content of each domain for every case. Once the core ideas had been developed, the team reconvened in order to reach consensus. Then, the consensus versions of the domains and core ideas were given to the auditor for consideration. After the auditor's comments and feedback had been addressed by the team, we then proceeded to perform the cross analysis of the data. In working to identify similarities across cases in the cross analysis phase, the team discovered how the core ideas could be clustered into categories. As a result, subcategories were produced. As is indicated by the CQR guidelines (Hill et al., 1997), both the domains and subcategories were classified as general, typical, or variant. Table 6 provides

Table 5

## Listing of Domains and Definitions

Domain	Definition
Proactive Opportunity Seeking	Investigates options, takes steps to prepare for the future, takes initiative, displays assertive attitudes and behaviors, and actions imply individual is hopeful about the future; agency and empowerment, purpose and direction.
Expectations	Locus (self or other), Stability, Control, Self-efficacy, Outcome expectations; desires to have a good job; attain a respected position
Academic Achievement	Skills, Standardized test scores, English, Math, Science/Tech.
Social Skills	Ability to solve problems, pro-social behaviors, communication, interactions with others, diversity issues; work ethic
Person-Environment Fit	Abilities, values, work conditions, personality/personal characteristics, training required; recognition of specific skills needed for careers.

Table 5 (continued)

Domain	Definition
Interests	Data, Ideas, People, Things related work tasks
Emotional Supports	Teachers, Counselors, Parents, Extended family members, Peers, School Program; encouragement, mentors, role models
Instrumental Supports	Teachers, Counselors, Parents, Extended family members, Peers, School Program, mentors, role models; school-to-work activities
Contexts/Environments	Parents, family issues, situations, neighborhood
Ethnicity/Culture	The influence of ethnicity/culture on the career development of the individual; influence on educational and career goals; gender roles; cultural stereotypes
Religion/Prayer/God	As a source of support, as a model/guide for right living
Socioeconomic Status	Attitudes about financial resources, motivation from lack of resources, anticipation of financial freedom

Table 6

## Results of Analysis by Domains and Subcategories

Domain & Subcategory	No. of Occurrences	Classification
Proactive Opportunity Seeking	12	General
Focus & Direction	8	Typical
Gathering Information	9	Typical
Working hard in school	6	Typical
Expectations	12	General
Connection b/t current efforts And future goals	9	Typical
Confidence	9	Typical
Anticipates challenges, but is Not paralyzed	10	Typical
Academic Achievement	12	General
Study Skills	4	Variant
GPA	10	Typical
Goals/Actions	12	General
Plans for college or career	10	Typical
Investigated Career Choice	8	Typical
Social Skills	12	General
Gets along well with others	12	General
Job readiness skills	8	Typical
Leadership	6	Typical
Responsibility	11	Typical

Table 6 (continued)

Domains & Subcategories	No. of Occurrences	Classification
Person-Environment Fit	12	General
Informed about career requirements	5	Variant
Recognizes match b/t self & career	9	Typical
Interests	12	General
Sure of interest choice	9	Typical
Considered other choices	7	Typical
Emotional Supports	12	General
Needs met	9	Typical
Parental encouragement	9	Typical
Vicarious learning	7	Typical
Instrumental Supports	12	General
Finances	7	Typical
Job information	5	Variant
Activities	4	Variant
Contexts/Environments	8	Typical
Family expectations	8	Typical
Personal illness	1	Variant
Transfer during school year	2	Variant
Ethnicity/Culture	7	Typical
Cultural stereotypes	3	Variant
Appreciate racial differences	4	Variant
Gender issues	1	Variant

Table 6 (continued)

Doman & Subcategories	No. of Occurrences	Classification
Religion/Prayer/God	2	Variant
Significant source of strength	2	Variant
Socioeconomic Status	9	Typical
Concerned	6	Typical
Anticipates financial freedom	3	Variant
No concerns, family saved money	2	Variant

a summary of the domains and subcategories, as well as the frequency of occurrences and classifications.

Nine domains were identified as general, which means these domains occurred in coded data for all twelve interviewees. The general domains consisted of the following: Proactive Opportunity Seeking, Expectations, Academic Achievement, Goals/Actions, Social Skills, Person-Environment Fit, Interests, Emotional Supports, and Instrumental Supports. The domains that occurred in at least six, but less than twelve of the cases were classified as typical. The three typical domains were Contexts/Environment, Ethnicity/Culture, and Socioeconomic Status. There was only one domain identified as variant, Religion/Prayer/God. It occurred in the coded data once. The next section further discusses each of the nine general domains.

#### *General Domains*

##### *Proactive Opportunity Seeking*

Proactive opportunity seeking, a general domain (n= 12), was defined as the degree to which an individual investigates options, takes steps to prepare for the future, takes initiative, displays assertive attitudes and behaviors, and displays agency, empowerment, purpose and direction. The subcategories that emerged were focus and direction, gathering information, and working hard in school. Each of these were classified as typical subcategories in the proactive opportunity seeking domain (n= 8, n= 9, and n= 6, respectively). Students reported that working hard in high school is essential for being able to enter college. One interviewee said, "I'm trying to keep up my grades so I can get some scholarships and I'm talking to--- we (her family) have a guy, a guy we know is a counselor over by where I live. So he's kinda helping me look into some colleges and stuff."

Students also recognized the importance of gathering information about potential majors and colleges they might want to pursue, as well as possible careers in which they

were interested. It seems that being more informed helped the students to be better prepared for their post-high school choices. As one 12th grade interviewee offered:

I've gone to a lot of seminars, I've gone on college tours around the United States. I've been to a lot of seminars that deal with directions as well as college, where they do things like bring you on campus. And these colleges, such as (name of a historically Black university) they have different elements like job interviewing, how to get credits, as well as financial aid stuff... And they help you out a lot, as far as the workforce because they take you to the department that you're majoring in, and if you don't have one, they give you the opportunity to experience the campus .... I'm glad I had the opportunity to go.

Another interviewee said, "I'm going to cosmetology classes, doing hair on the side. I'm reading about starting your own business."

In regards to being focused and having direction about a career they wanted pursue, students discussed their own perspectives about their future plans. One student responded,

"(the drive) comes from inside because if I didn't want to do it, I'd just sit back and be lazy. But this is something I want to do for myself. I always told everybody I wanted to be a pediatrician, so in order to do that it's gonna be something that I have to do to get there." Another student said that she was a take-charge kind of person and she's "not letting anyone influence me in the wrong ways. You know, I'm not easily persuaded into doing (bad) things."

### *Expectations*

The Expectations domain, which was defined as outcome

expectations students have and their desires for a good job and a respected position, was another general domain (n= 12). It reflected students' self-efficacy, stability, and locus of control (self or other). This domain included three subcategories: connection between current efforts and future goals (n= 9), confidence (n= 9), and anticipation of challenges, but not paralyzed to act (n= 10). All of the subcategories were classified as typical. The first subcategory in this domain, connection between current efforts and future goals, revealed students' awareness of the relevance of their engagement in certain tasks and activities to increase the likelihood of future success. One student who planned to enter the military after graduation shared,

Yeah, I think I'm going to do well because I'm in Boy scouts and I learned CPR. I learned how to swim. I almost swam a mile, but I passed out in the water. And I learned aiot. I learned how to start a fire in the woods, how to survive, how at night time, if I don't have a compass or a-- I could look at the Moon. The Moon goes up in the east and I know what direction I'm going to.

Another subcategory in this domain is confidence. It encompasses the extent to which the interviewee believes she has the ability to surmount obstacles, meet challenges, and attain a positive outcome. When asked about her confidence to master the necessary educational requirements and job duties of the career in which she expressed interest, she offered, "Yep-- like I said, its something I want to do, and even if I don't, I'm just going to try and make sure that its done. Because I ain't gonna be one of those people who just 'oh, I can't do it, I can't do it.' I'm going to try; not give up." Another student responded,

I don't look at it as hard or easy. I look at it that you make it as you want it to be (unclear). It's that whole, in terms like if you believe you can do it, like you listen to people who say you can do anything you put your mind to. If you want to do a push-up, if you think you can't do one, you won't be able to do one. And if you think you can, and you try, you can do it. So, there will be obstacles. I know. But there are obstacles now. As long as I feel that I can get over them, I will get over the obstacles. I will, you know, do what I have to do to get around them, (unclear).

The last subcategory in the Expectations domain, anticipation of challenges, but not paralyzed to act, focuses on how students intend to deal with the potential barriers they might face as they pursue their goals. When asked about possible challenges impeding her access to her future goals, one student offered, "Well, right now, I'm not really sure because it's like edgy and stuff like that for me. But I'll fight, you know. I mean, you know, I'm working-- I'll try work and get a scholarship. I'm going to get a scholarship, and everything, so I'm o.k. So it (*finances*) wouldn't be a problem."

#### *Academic Achievement*

This domain was defined by self-perceived academic skills, performance on standardized tests, and grades earned in English, Mathematics, and Science/Technology courses. All twelve interviewees reported that they had realized academic success in one or more of these areas; thus, this domain was cataloged as general. Two subcategories were identified within this domain, study skills (n= 4) and grade point average (n= 10). The typical subcategory of this domain, grade point average, referred to the interviewee's belief that she had attained a gpa high enough to go to college or to pursue a desired career path. Most respondents offered that they had achieved a gpa of 3.0 or higher. However, when

the primary investigator collected the academic records of the participants, she found that only 8 students had actually earned grade point averages of 3.0 or above. Thus, 4 of the students overestimated their grade point averages. Table 7 lists all the grade point averages of the participants.

The other subcategory of this domain was study skills; it was coded variant. Only four interviewees answered that they practice good study habits. For example, when asked if she was developing academic skills that would lead to future success, one student said, "Yeah, I'm trying. I talk to a lot of teachers, you know, a lot of different people about stuff. And I try to just go ahead-- like we have textbook assignments, I just kind of like to just go ahead, read ahead of the class. And when it comes that there is something I don't know about, then I'll ask." This student's assertion that her study skills will allow her to be successful in the future is corroborated by her grade point average of 3.149.

#### *Goals/Actions*

The Goals and actions domain refers to the plan an individual has mapped out for himself in regards to post-high school pursuits. It includes exploratory behaviors she has engaged in, as well as her level of commitment to her stated area of interest. Both subcategories that emerged from this domain were catalogued as typical. These included plans to go to college or to pursue a career (n= 10) and investigated career or major choice (n= 8). In the subcategory plans to attend college or to pursue a career, interviewees were able to articulate specific college majors they planned to study or definite careers they wanted to have. One student stated,

(My goals) are pretty clear and specific. My goal is to become a pediatrician and I want to graduate from a-- I really want to go to Penn State University in Pennsylvania. And I'm trying-- that's one of my goals: to go to Penn. And to become a pediatrician. Then after that, I want to work in a-- I'm thinking about coming back

home to work at (*name of an area hospital for children*).

An 8th grade student said, "(I want to) go to college or a vocation school and get a degree in music production, or be a music teacher or singer." Another 8th grader explained, "After high school, I want to go to college and do like four years. And I want to major in like writing, or something like that. Or something to do with that." A senior reported, "I will attend (*an area university*) in the Fall-- maybe summer school at (*an area university*). I will study pre-law. In the past years, my career have wavered between journalist and law. I always have returned to law, something I really want to do." Finally, another senior offered, "I'm taking cosmetology classes and I've been doing that since last year. We have to have 16 hours to graduate so I'm going back next year and probably graduating in May. I want to maybe teach cosmetology or enter into the profession. I'm really interested in teaching."

Another subcategory of the Goals/Actions domain was investigated career choice, which included the activities and tasks students engaged in to learn more about their area of interest. A senior said, "I did some research on how to be a doctor, the minimum requirements and what kind of classes I need to take and what kind of colleges have medical schools."

### *Social Skills*

This domain was defined by the interviewee's reported ability to solve problems, demonstrate pro-social behaviors, communicate well with others, interact well with ethnically/racially different others, and to describe a strong work ethic. The social skills domain was categorized as general. Four subcategories emerged from this domain: gets along well with others, job readiness skills, leadership ability, and responsibility. The first subcategory, gets along well with others, was coded general, as all of the students said they display this quality. One student discussed her ability to get along well with others and attributed it to her personality. She said,

Table 7  
Participant Cumulative Grade Point  
Averages

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Participant .	Grade	GPA
Case 1	10	3.149
Case2	8	3.22
Case3	10	2.871
Case4	12	3.263
Case5	10	3.131
Case6	12	3.326
Case7	8	3.36
Case8	12	2.334
Case9	12	1.952
Case 10	12	2.074
Case 11	8	3.63
Case 12	8	3.71

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Absolutely, I've always made friends easily-- wherever I go. I'm easy to get along with. Like at my first day at this school, or any where, I made lots of friends. People are drawn to me. I'm not sure what it is that they are drawn to, but-- no one should feel uncomfortable around me or fear me. I'm a nice person. I guess that's how I get my friends.

When describing her ability to get along with people of diverse backgrounds, one student said,

Yes, I've been around alot of different schools and alot of different parts of town, and I've always learned to adjust to the community, the people around me. And there's never really a problem. I always just get to know the people and be friends with everybody.

Another student replied,

This is a very diverse school. I've always had friends from every race, black and white. Even now, I get along with Ethiopians, Vietnamese, Chinese. I have one Japanese friend. I get along with them even when they don't like each other. But I'm their friend and that's all that matters. And so I have biracial-- I have very diverse group of friends. Haitian friends-- I 've never not gotten along with people who are different from me. Maybe people with different religious affiliations-- not purposefully, maybe I 've off ended them. But not purposefully. Otherwise, there's no way I could have.

The job-readiness subcategory (n = 8) embodies the skills students will need to be successful in the rapidly growing pluraliste workforce. **It** captures the abilities and

flexibilities a successful worker will need to meet the demands of tomorrow's workplace. Commenting on her ability to communicate well with others, a senior stated,

I mentally prepare myself to talk with others. I'm a good public speaker because I try to be well prepared. I'm a great listener and I maintain eye contact with people when I talk to them. I can explain things to people if they have any questions. I'm not aggressive at all. But I'm assertive and passive, equally. I can flip-flop either way, so I look at myself equally. I used to be aggressive. But I learned that being aggressive is not always the best choice.

The ability to demonstrate leadership was another subcategory of the social skills domain (n= 6). Interviewees spoke about their ability to handle conflicts, solve problems, and organize and motivate others. One student explained that working in group settings allowed her the opportunity to be a good leader. She shared,

We recently built houses as a group project in science class. The whole thing is to build a house together and for (unclear) a home for everyone. Everyone puts in ideas and someone gets mad. Then I come in and say we can do both. There always has to be like the leader of the group, and usually in my group that's where I'm at. There's four people to a group, and they just try to say whatever, and they want it their way, and they want it this way. And you got to explain, you know, this is a group project. And you get them talking and they're ready to go and come together. Because if not, we'd never get our project done. Everybody would be arguing.

The final subcategory in this domain was responsibility (n = 11). Interviewees explained

that being responsible is a trait that is necessary for future success. They discussed how being responsible helped them to achieve in school. One senior reported, " On an everyday basis, I'm always on time. Papers and homework are completed. I obey the school rules, and I complete tasks on my own when supervised." Another senior reported, "If I know something that's wrong, then I will take initiative. I do follow the rules because I'm too old not to. There are no rules really. Just come to class and do what you're told, then leave. Yes, I'm dependable."

#### *Person-Environment Fit*

The person-environment fit domain was described as the abilities, values, skills, work conditions, and training required for specific careers. It also encompassed how well an individual believed their personality/personal characteristics would fit the career in which they expressed interest. This was a general domain and two subcategories were identified; informed about career requirements (n =5) and recognized match between self and career (n = 9). The subcategory informed about career requirements was classified as variant. Not many students possessed a clear understanding of how much education and training they would need to pursue their job of interest. However, those who were farther along in their career development were able to articulate what the process might entail. For example, one student who indicated that she wanted to become a doctor responded, "I have to go to college for 4 years. Then I have to do a minimum really of 6 years in med school. Pretty much, I'll be in school for the rest of my life. Well, not for the rest of my life. But this is what I want to do so."

The other subcategory in this domain is recognize match between self and career. It was coded typical. Students indicated awareness that certain personal qualities were necessary in order to succeed in certain careers. One student interested in studying Psychology offered,

A psychology teacher who had said, you know, you should go into

psychology. You know, I did so well in her class she said she would recommend me for another class. But, everybody says I should be a lawyer because I got good debating skills and other people say I should be a counselor. I mean, I have like multi-talents, I can get myself in any field. But it's about, I want it to be about helping people, so I want to find something where I can do that. Psychology, seems like I can help people more than I would be able to if I was a doctor or a lawyer, because I could help people inside and hopefully outside as well. So, I think that's the better choice.

Another interviewee desiring a career as a lawyer explained,

My writing skills. I have a good memory. I can recall things. I considered doing some type of computer work. But I'm still debating. I don't think I will. I like computers and all, but I don't . think I can have a career dealing with computers every day. As far as being fun and interesting, I think that your job should be something you enjoy doing. So you don't get bored doing it. Because I find that a lot of adults don't like doing what they're doing, like my mom for instance. She doesn't like her line of work.

### *Interests*

Another general domain identified in the data was interests. The interest domain was defined as an awareness of one's affinity towards tasks associated with certain careers. **It** allowed students to explain whether they were most interested in Data, Ideas, People or Things related work tasks. Two subcategories emerged from the data, and both were coded as typical. Sure of interest choice was the first subcategory (n= 9) and considered other interests was the other (n = 7). Students indicated whether they were sure of their

interests in their ability to describe their reasons for selecting a certain career. A senior reported,

They make good money. **If** you can do good hair, you'll have a lot of customers. **If** you can't, you know it's not your career. It's very flexible hours because you can come in basically when you want and leave when you want. **Y**ou make your own time. I don't think it's because of other people. Because when I'm doing hair now, at my house, there is no one else around. I think it's because I like to do hair, and I can do it.

Another student explained, "I know I want to be in the nursing field. And psychiatry, nurse, doctor, pediatrician-- something that has to do with people. I like to work with people. I'd like to know what people are thinking and how they **feel** about stuff." Finally, one other student interested in becoming a medical doctor said, "I like helping others. I also want a job that is challenging. An educational job-- I want to learn from the job. And I want a job that has many responsibilities. I also like biology."

The other subcategory in this domain was considered other interests or other career options. While several interviewees responded that they had at least thought about others areas or careers, few were able to elaborate on why they ruled out certain careers. For example, one student explained why she was not considering Data work tasks. "(I'd consider) maybe filing and looking up files and records-- maybe something like that. But not accounting. I hate math in accounting, and all that."

### *Emotional Supports*

This domain includes the discussion, advice and encouragement offered to students by parents, teachers, counselors, role models, and peers. It also includes the emotional support received vis school programs. This general domain (n= 12) produced three

subcategories in the data. These were needs met, parental encouragement, and vicarious learning. All of the subcategories were classified as typical. The first subcategory, needs met (n= 9), referred to the helpfulness or appropriateness of the support given to the student. When asked about people who have influenced her career development, one student answered,

Like a job shadow or something? Yeah, I've been to a couple of job shadows. I know alot of people who work in different places. My uncle is an EMT driver and he tells me alot of stuff. I've always wanted to do it. When my brother was alive, he always told me, you're gonna do it. You're gonna be the only one in our family to do something good with their life. 'cause he knows that I'm serious about school and I study, I get good grades. He always told me, don't you ever drop out of school, 'cause Ill beat you up and you know, I want you to go all the way. He was my brother. He's not here anymore, but I'm still going to follow my dreams. An my uncle, I figure he knows from some of the stuff he's been through.

Another student explained, "Yes, he's very supportive (the school counselor). He new here also. But he has given me different information about different schools that I have asked about." Another student interested in becoming a cosmetologist shared,

My friend (identified name), she does hair. She's in a higher class than me. She always tries to keep me posted on, 'Oh, you need to do this. And here is an application for this.' And she'll give me one of whatever she's got. That's the only person that's been a good help to me. Besides, I've done like half of everyone's hair up here at the school. They think I do good hair.

Parental encouragement (n = 9) is another subcategory of the emotional support domain. Students offered that parental support was the most significant support they received. One student shared,

When I was younger, I mean, I had just my dad and he encouraged me alot. He never, because he went to high school, you know. And he almost graduated but he dropped out his last year because he had a son coming. And that was my older other brother, Rob. And uh, he encouraged me alot. He doesn't work anymore because he's kind of sick. And uh, my step-mom, she encourages me alot, you know. They encourage me alot, you know.

Another student reported,

Yeah, my mom and dad. My dad-- he's the type of parent who's really into the child's schooling and stuff. School comes before everything. He's always saying, you know, "You're the one who says you want to be the pediatrician, well I bought you some encyclopedias." And so he bought us like two sets of encyclopedias and we got like four computers in our house. So he's like, 'why · don't you guys go do something-- something educational.'

One other student shared,

They have been very supportive. My dad wants me **to** go (*an area university*) because that's his alma mater. But my mom would rather me go away. But I'm going to try out (*an area university*) for a year because I do want to go away and then see if I like it. I will probably end up liking it and I will probably end up staying here. My dad doesn't want me to go away. But my mom wants me to go away. Dad is the one who told me to go into law. He helped me make the

choice to go into law. My mom has always been very supportive in what I've wanted to achieve. It's a good opportunity to go somewhere I've never been and basically be out there by myself. She thinks it'll be a good experience for me.

Vicarious learning (n = 7), the final subcategory of this domain, embodies the emotional support students have received via the experiences of others. A sophomore explained,

Yeah, that guy-- the guy I told you about. He's more like a counselor and he has programs (unclear). He's always talking to me and he doesn't want our lives to end up-- 'cause he likes to help little kids, and teenagers. He's always talking about he don't want these kids to end up like he did. He's a friend of the family. He works at a charter school over on the west side. Now he's a police officer.

### *Instrumental Support*

The final general domain that emerged from the data was Instrumental supports. This domain was defined as the information students received from parents, teachers, counselors, peers, mentors, as well as activities and information they received via school programs that centered around financial aid, scholarships, or job placement. Three subcategories were identified in this domain: finances (n= 7), job information (n= 5), and activities (n= 4). Only the first subcategory, finances, was coded typical. The other two subcategories, job information and activities, were coded variant. Finances referred to the support students received as they sought to identify ways to pay for college or vocational school. One student said,

When I first told them I wanted to be a pediatrician, they were like--

you know my dad likes to joke around; he was like, "you probably won't even make it through high school." And I was like, "we're going to do this." And he's like, "well I know--" He knows a lot of people, so different people who work in different places, and who give different scholarships. He said if you really want to do it, just talk to my good friend. And his friends will come over and they talk to me about this and what kind of different scholarships they have for Mexicans.

Another student added, "My English teacher especially helped me find scholarships. She nominated me for an achievement award and stuff like that. She's very supportive ....."

Job information is another subcategory of the instrumental support domain. Only a few students were able to report that they had received information from any source about potential jobs. One student said that her school had a program that "let people from (an area amusement park) come up here for information on summer jobs." Another student commented, "The African American History class teacher helped me look at different colleges. (The career counselor), she helped me in finding jobs and looking for jobs."

The final subcategory of the instrumental support domain was activities. Activities include behaviors that students had been directed to engage in that would provide information about successfully negotiating post-high school plans. One student interested in cosmetology offered, "My aunt (a hair dresser) makes me go up there (to her beauty salon) and see how she cuts hair and colors hair. I have mannequins and so I practice. and I know I will be very good." She further added, "We go on field trips and we go to other hair salons. We go to the mall and We do surveys on hair salons - how clean they are, what they're doing, how they talk to their customers. And just me personally, yeah. I ask a lot of questions to my auntie and stuff because I want to know."

## Chapter 5

### Discussion

This chapter provides an in-depth description of the results found using the Consensual Qualitative Research (CQR) method proposed by Hill et al. (1997). It highlights some of the major findings of this investigation and explores the implications for practice in the area of career development. It also discusses the limitations of the results, as well as proposes directions that could be taken in future research in this area. Finally, a conclusion section will offer a summary perspective on the critical career development issues facing urban youth.

#### *Major Findings*

##### *Progressive Career Maturity*

The purpose of this study was to better elucidate the career development process of urban minority adolescents. Specifically, this research sought to achieve qualitative insight about the career attitudes, career plans, career exploration, and overall career maturity of adolescents. As was indicated by the data, the career maturity of urban adolescents tends to be progressive with increased age. Overall, the 8th grade and 10th grade participants had less focus and direction, less specific post-high school plans, and tended to be less proactive in seeking opportunities than did the 12th grade students. It is possible that those in the early stages of career development simply do not tend to think as seriously about life after high school until they are on the brink of high school graduation. Of her early high school experiences, one 12th grader said,

You don't know until you become a senior how bad it looks if you do bad. Because when they go through your transcript, they say like, "you have 10 Fs and 10 Ds." That's how I was and I was like, "Dang!" It is not going to get me into the college that I want to get in

and then-- but my gpa has improved. I really wanted my mom to put me into a private school because I think I could have learned so much more and stayed focused because when you come up here in your freshman year, you're looking at what everyone is wearing, how they look, who's this boy. You're not concerned about-- and that's what I'm trying to tell my brother now-- you're not concerned about your grades because I sure wasn't until I became a senior and they were like really all about the grades. I think my GPA is decent, but I know I could do better. But it seems like I want to learn-- like I don't have enough right now. I still want more. And that's why I don't think I'm exactly ready for college yet. But it's not like I not going to try. But I've been playing for two years. I wish I would have paid more attention in class.

Evidence of the progression of career maturity over time was also found in the interviewing process. While all of the participants reported an ability to communicate well with others, only the 12th grade participants and a few of the other students were able to demonstrate strong social skills via their ability to communicate well with the interviewer. These students interacted more with the interviewer and were better able to articulate their goals and experiences. Overall, they seemed more comfortable in their interactions with the interviewer.

#### *Academic Success*

Nine of the twelve participants in this research provided responses that indicated they understood well the connection between the amount of effort they were currently expending and the attainment of their future goals. **It** seemed that the participants understood that in order to go to good colleges and pursue challenging and rewarding

careers, they would have to first prove themselves academically successful students. Ten of the twelve participants further offered that they had achieved above average grades, and shared that they believed their grades would allow them to pursue their areas of interest. However, according to the academic records obtained for each student, only 8 students had achieved cumulative grade point averages that exceeded 3.0. Only two students of those eight had cumulative grade point averages that exceeded 3.5. Further, most of the students did not offer that they practiced appropriate study skills.

The inconsistency between the students' self-reports about academic achievement and the schools record of their achievement was quite interesting. The reasons that the students tended to over-estimate their achievement are not known. What is important is that students not only need to be aware of the relationship between academic achievement in high school and future success, but that knowledge must prompt them to do better academically. **It** may not be a matter of effort that stifles these students' success; it is possible that these students are hard workers. The problem may rest in a failure to access the appropriate help (i.e., tutors) or the availability of such support may not exist. Nevertheless, it was encouraging to discover that all of the participants seemed to recognize the need to succeed academically and to possess strong academic habits. Again; this knowledge needs to transfer into actions that result in better academic performances. **It** is possible that one of the reasons students have failed to demonstrate greater academic success is because they lack strong study habits and have not acquired the appropriate self-regulated learner characteristics. Thus, navigating through the challenges of academic study have proven to be somewhat disappointing for some of these students.

#### *Expectations*

The students in this study attended an urban middle school or high school, and lived in an urban setting. Ten of the twelve participants reported anticipating challenges to achieving their future goals. Most of the students identified challenges related to securing

financial resources to go to college. Only two participants discussed peer pressure to engage in the drug culture as a potential barrier to future success. Even so, nine of the twelve respondents expressed confidence in their abilities to accomplish their goals. It was this confidence to overcome challenges, financial or otherwise, that revealed the inner strength and determination of these students. Perhaps because these students may have witnessed the success of others (i.e., vicarious learning under the Emotional Support domain,  $n = 7$ ), they were empowered to visualize their own success. It is also possible that the reported emotional support participants receive from parents and extended family members has also played a significant role in strengthening their confidence.

Another interesting finding was that although all of the participants expected to be satisfied in their future careers, all but one student professed high aspirations to secure a job that held high prestige. Most students reported interests in going to college and being doctors, lawyers, or entering other financially rewarding professional occupations. This student, however, explained, "Yeah, (I'm) firm about getting a job. That's what I'm focused on. A decent job. Not a McDonald's or a waitress. I mean a decent job that'll pay good money, pay the bills. I really want a secretary type job. I don't really want to do any work I really just want to be at ease." This student also shared that her mother is a Civil Engineer and encourages her a great deal to work hard and to do well in order to be successful later in life. It would seem that having a parent who had achieved an advanced degree would position this student quite advantageously in a mind-set to achieve similar goals, like going to college. This was not the case with this student. It is possible that this student, a 10th grader, had set her sights on less challenging goals because she held dissimilar interests to her mother. She shared, "I really don't want to do what she does. She's a civil engineer and she loves math. Totally opposite of me. I never did get anything out of math." It is possible that the student lacked confidence in her abilities because she struggled in math, and therefore, prematurely foreclosed on any other challenging career

options; she wanted to pursue an area where she believed success was more certain.

### *Career Interests*

Premature foreclosure was not an issue for the aforementioned student alone. All of the respondents could identify the career or vocational areas they were interested in pursuing after high school. And while more than half had entertained other options, their investigations were quite limited. Further, most students were only able to report a desire to pursue one specific career and reported no knowledge of related areas they might be able to pursue. It seems that once a student identified an occupation she wanted to pursue, she was committed to that one occupation. Related jobs in the same general area of interest were not considered. Further, students tended not to consider other possible areas of interests in unrelated fields. It is possible that this might be an appropriate stance for seniors who may have already engaged in significant exploratory exercises and have determined the area of interest they want to pursue. However, it may not be a good place for students who are not yet in high school to find themselves. Perhaps with such a narrow perspective about possible careers, many students significantly limit the options available to them in the future. Without adequate exploration of options, the potential to be satisfied in one's job is drastically weakened.

### *Socioeconomic Status*

While many might suppose that a primary motivator for those who reside in urban areas would be financial rewards, only three participants indicated that they looked forward to the financial freedom that their chosen occupations would afford them in the future. One student offered that "making more money, and getting a good job and stuff like that" would benefit her in the future. When asked about work values that are important to her and what she was looking for in a future career, this same student explained,

Just to make alot of money. Help other people that are less fortunate. It's mostly-  
about the money. And also, I'm going to try

to stay single for as long as I can when I grow up, that way I can work year round. I want to be a workaholic like my daddy. And then, I figure if I work year round all the time, I'll make enough money where I can retire early and then start doing some of the things I didn't do when I was twenty. That way I won't have to work when I'm 82 years old. I want to retire around 40.

Nevertheless, almost all of the participants acknowledged interest in pursuing professions that would be financially rewarding (i.e., doctors, lawyers, music producers). It is clear that these students set high goals for themselves. Moreover, most participants maintained aspirations that matched their expectations.

Another unexpected finding related to finances was some students' explanation that to "make good money" in one's job is equally as important as it is to enjoy the job one is doing. One student expressed interest in becoming a writer. She reported that while being a writer probably would not afford her financial luxuries, writing was what she most enjoyed doing. .That students recognize job satisfaction is connected to life satisfaction places them on the path that could lead to a rewarding future. It seems that these students appreciate the idea that money, while offering many freedoms, does not offer the greatest compensation. For them, having a meaningful life is much more valuable.

#### *Emotional and Instrumental Support*

All of the students reported receiving substantial levels of both emotional and instrumental support. Students explained that most of the emotional support they received came from parents and extended family members or friends. However, the data indicates that parents were limited in the instrumental support they provided students. One student, a 12th grader, even reported that her parents offered her no support after she turned 16 years old. Further, very few students reported receiving emotional or instrumental support from teachers, counselors, or school programs. Lapan (2005) provided lengthy discourse on the

importance of emotional and instrumental support students receive from parents, teachers, and counselors. In the present study, most of the participants reported receiving support that was beneficial to them-- mainly encouragement, and to a lesser degree, information about financial aid, scholarships, and potential employment. However, the gaps in the support systems warrant comment.

It is possible that parents were limited in their ability to provide instrumental support because of their own limited knowledge and experiences in the areas of career development that their children now needed help. Table 8 shows that four students reported that they had at least one parent who had earned a college degree or a graduate degree and four students reported that at least one of their parents had graduated from high school. Both parents for two participants had only received an 8th grade education, and two students did not know the education attainment of either parent.

Despite the achievements of the students' parents, their parents typically did not provide direction to their children about accessing financial aid, completing the college application process, or impress upon students the importance of college entrance exams. Many students did report, however, that their parents encouraged them to pursue obtaining scholarships to help finance their college education. Being able to provide specific instrumental support to students not only requires that parents possess the know-how of relating such information, but it also requires that parents and school personnel (i.e., teachers, counselors, and administrators) maintain open and clear communication so that the information could be shared. However, most students reported that school personnel limit their attention to students who are "trouble-makers" or high achievers. Those students who do not meet either description tend to be ignored.

Moreover, it seems that offering emotional support and encouragement to students is a role that parents find themselves most comfortable. The parents in this study seemed to recognize the connection between academic success and future success and encouraged and supported their students in their efforts to do well in school. Many parents, however, may

Table 8

## Participants' GPA, Desired Occupation, and Parents' Highest Level of Education

Participant	GPA	Desired Occupation	Parents' H.L.E.
Case 1 high	3.149	Pediatrician	Some education after School
Case 2	3.22	Music Industry	Does not know
Case 3	2.871	Rest for year; no college	Master's Degree, Civil Engineering
Case 4	3.263	Psychologist	Some education after high school
Case 5	3.131	Does not know; college	College graduate
Case 6	3.326	Surgeon or Radiologist	Post Graduate degree
Case 7	3.36	Author/writer	Finished 8 <sup>th</sup> grade
Case 8	2.334	Lawyer	Post Graduate degree
Case 9	1.952	Cosmetologist	Some education after high school
Case 10	2.074	Military	Some education after high school
Case 11	3.63	Plastic Surgeon or Dentist	Does not know
Case 12	3.71	Medical Doctor	Finished 8 <sup>th</sup> grade

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Note: H.L.E. indicates the highest level of education.

view the provision of financial aid information, potential employment, and college preparatory activities the job of school personnel. Further, it is possible that with the large numbers of students that school personnel sometimes have to manage, it is easier to serve as overseers who ensure the peace and solve problems than to act as mentors or guides for students who don't seem to require immediate attention.

#### *Implications for Practice*

Understanding the perspectives of urban minority adolescents about their own career development provides invaluable information about the roles that school counselors and career counselors, parents, and other school personnel must play in the lives of these young people. Appropriate interventions initiated by these supports will have a powerful influence on the futures of urban youth. As career and school counselors fully assume their rightful place in this ring of support, urban minority youth will be better prepared to negotiate the plethora of experiences and possible career choices available to them. School counselors possess knowledge of the world of work, skill in establishing key relationships, expertise in identifying the needs of their clientele, and training in ineffective problem-solving. These characteristics strategically position them to provide a comprehensive counseling program in their schools, and provide essential developmental and preventative career experiences across the K12 years (Gysbers & Henderson, 2000).

Lapan (2005) asserted that adolescents need to develop an approach to the present and the future that is proactive, resilient, and functionally adaptive. The findings in the current study indicate that while urban youth may possess such an approach, the development may be slow and sporadic at best. The overwhelming sentiment of the students in this study was that the counselors at their schools played no significant role in their career development. In fact, some could only minimally identify interactions they may have had with their counselors. If counselors are to be effective in their schools and in the lives of students, they must establish relationships with their students that are more than

casual and more than discipline-focused. Students need the direction and assistance that counselors provide; they need the emotional and instrumental support that counselors offer as well. In a comprehensive school counseling program, this support should take the form of an intimate working relationship with students where students are free to ask for and receive vocational interest assessments, college admissions information, vocational planning, and scholarship and financial aid information (Gysbers & Henderson, 2000). With the support and information that counselors give, students can make more appropriate decisions about their occupational futures. They will be better able to select paths that are not only personally satisfying, but that also contribute to the community at large.

Counselors can be on the forefront to ensure students get what they need by partnering with school personnel-- teachers and principals. These can collaborate to develop creative ways to integrate career development activities into the curriculum, for example, to allow students to seriously think about their futures (Baker & Taylor, 1998; Evans & Burck, 1992). If these collaborations occur at the middle school years, students can begin earlier to make the connection between academic achievement and future success. Students can begin to do more than simply dream about the professions they wish to enter. If vocational interest inventories like the UNIA CT- Revised are employed at the middle school level to help students begin to identify occupational tasks they might enjoy, students will have a head start in effectively mapping out their post-high school plans. They can develop a clearer sense of what characteristics and skills are required to successfully enter the career path of their choosing.

One of the most critical characteristics that students must possess in order to attain their desired futures is academic achievement (Sells, 1973). If indeed the opportunities for career development without academic achievement are evaporating (Lapan, 2005), students must begin at an earlier age to comprehend the relationship between their academic performance and attaining their desired occupation in tomorrow's marketplace. Counselors

can help students in appropriate course selections and encourage them to persist in a rigorous sequence of study. It is these two factors that will have a significant impact on a student's ability to pursue high skill and high wage careers (Lapan, 2005). Counselors must provide direct intervention in the type of courses students select. Without suitable guidance from counselors, students are more apt to prematurely close themselves off from potentially satisfying careers. They must assist students in identifying and selecting help (like tutors, additional teacher assistance, and supplemental coursework) for successfully completing challenging coursework. Students who are able to embrace and successfully negotiate the challenges they encounter in high school are better able to conquer the challenges inherent in the process of attaining a desired future.

Lapan (2005) offered that working with parents should be a primary target for intervention and developmental programs offered by career counseling professionals. The findings in the current research corroborate this sentiment. All the students shared that they received emotional support from their parents; few reported that their parents had provided instrumental support. As counselors share with parents the goal of preparing and equipping students for a rewarding future, parents will be endowed with the tools they need to help their children develop the range of interpersonal skills necessary for selfregulated learning and success in school (Lapan, 2005). Next to the students themselves, parents offer the best insight into their children's strengths and weakness. With this, insight, parents can be the primary motivators of their children to become confident achievers. Counselors must help parents to become more informed about the paths available to their children, as well as share with them what requirements those paths dictate for success. Counselors must paint a vivid picture for parents of the importance they play in the lives of their children, and convey their need to be actively involved in the educational process. Counselors cannot be everything to students; they must have the support and participation of parents to adequately shape positive futures for students.

Finally, professional career counselors can use their position to effect change on the legislative level. They can communicate to policy makers the critical need of preparing students to enter the global economy and contribute to an ever-diversifying community. Professional career counselors can help policy makers understand that not leaving one child behind necessarily means that measures must be taken to ensure that all students are ready to achieve in college or technical school or to brave the frontier of tomorrow's competitive marketplace. Counselors could suggest, for example, that high school students be required to complete a project at the end of their high school tenure that focuses on the career exploration engaged in throughout high school and identifies the intended career path that will be followed. Counselors would have predetermined the necessary experiences for each student based on her skills, interests, and academic achievement. Parents, students and counselors would work together through the high school years to chart the best path for the student and to identify areas where the student might need additional support. Encompassed within the project would be information about financial aid, college admittance, and scholarship sources, as well as a profile of stability of the student's interests and academic achievement across the years. Teachers and counselors would work together to connect student learning with the exploration of possible futures. In so doing, students would see how their current achievement impacted their ability to pursue certain desired outcomes. Ultimately, students will have a real opportunity to explore themselves and possible future occupations, and arrive at a possible career choice that reflects sincere consideration, investigation, interest, and preparedness.

#### *Limitations*

The advantages of employing the CQR (Hill et al., 1997) method are evident to the researcher who desires to investigate complex issues. This approach is useful for examining research questions for which rich and descriptive results will be yielded. Its rigorous and structured approach to data collection and analysis allow the findings to be

trustworthy and reliable. However, as with all types of qualitative methodology, this approach carries with it some limitations.

The very nature of the CQR method requires that team members make judgments about the data. Although the team deliberately discussed their personal biases and expectations and attempted to set these aside, the results of the study may reflect the ideologies of the research team. As graduate students and a graduate professor in an educational and counseling psychology program, it is possible that the team members' professional training, as well as their family of origin experiences may have influenced their interpretations of the data. For example, all of the team members came from families where education and academic success are highly valued. It is possible that the team looked for opportunities in the data that supported a similar position-- that these students came from families that also placed significant weight on education and academic achievement. In addition, as is suggested by Hill et al. (1997), the sample size of this study was relatively small; interviewing 12 participants enabled the researcher to intensively study their experiences and perspectives. Although valuable, the results of this study are not necessarily generalizable to all urban minority youth. The findings do, however, contribute to the larger body of knowledge regarding adolescent career development. Further, most of the participants in this study were females; it is quite likely that the experiences and perspectives of urban minority males could be different.

Future qualitative research on the career development of urban minority youth should include a more balanced number of male and female participants. Research in this area should also investigate the experiences and perspectives of students from various racial/ethnic backgrounds, in urban, suburban, and rural settings. In so doing, practitioners can have a more broad picture of the career development needs of urban youth

### *Conclusions*

Understanding the career development of urban minority youth is essential for

preparing these students for a competitive global economy. While it is clear that students desire secure, positive futures, it is also evident that they need to better understand the environmental and personal requirements indicated by the professions they wish to enter. It is also apparent that these students could benefit from more intensive interventions and support from career specialists, school counselors and parents. As parents and counselors become more involved with students and establish more intimate relationships with them, they will be better able to hear and meet students' needs. As school counselors work to incorporate comprehensive counseling programs in their schools, the gap between students and access to positive outcomes will become smaller. Preparing for paths beyond high school can be both exciting and intimidating for students. With the appropriate guidance and support, students will be much better able to successfully negotiate any challenge that threatens to interfere with achieving their desired goals.

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**Appendix A – Sample Informed Consent**

## Appendix A

## Informed Consent

Missouri's Community Career System Local Partnership Evaluation  
Consent Form (rev. 12/18/98)

Code \_\_\_\_\_

### CONSENT TO ALLOW MY CHILD TO SERVE AS A SUBJECT IN RESEARCH

I consent to allow my child to participate in the evaluation of Missouri's Community Career System sponsored by the Missouri Department of Elementary and Secondary Education and the Department of Educational and Counseling Psychology at the University of Missouri-Columbia. This project is being conducted under the direction of Richard T. Lapan, Ph.D., Associate Professor of Educational and Counseling Psychology, and will assess the effectiveness of local community career systems in promoting academic and career development for all students.

I understand that the study will involve the following procedures: (1) My child will be asked to complete three questionnaires: one giving demographic information, one on his/her own interests, and one on career paths; (2) My child may be asked to complete these same surveys at two-year intervals for a maximum of three times. I understand that each administration of these questionnaires will be completed in one 50-minute school period. Additionally, a small percentage of those who complete the questionnaires (we estimate 5%) will be asked to do an interview with a project investigator. This interview will take place at your child's school and will consist of questions about your child's perception of your local community career system, and will take no more than 45 minutes.

I also give the project director permission to gain access to my child's academic records for the purpose of correlating involvement in his/her local community career system with various measures of school achievement and for being able to follow up with my child in two- and four- years time in order to see the effects (if any) that participation in these programs has had on my child.

I also understand that all possible steps have been taken to assure my child's privacy. I understand that the project staff will code the results of this research in a manner that his/her identity will not be attached physically to the information he/she provides. The data code key listing his/her identity and subject code number will be kept separate from the information in a locked file accessible only to the project staff. This key will be destroyed at the end of the research project. I also understand that these identifiers will be preserved for the duration of the project unless I request otherwise.

I understand that I may contact the project director at any time and request that all identifiers that link my child's identity to the information he/she has contributed be destroyed. If requested, all data he/she has contributed and all identifying information will be destroyed by the project director.

Also, I realize that the purpose of this project is to examine the relations between certain variables in groups of individual and to evaluate the responses of a single individual. In other words, his/her individual responses will not be evaluated outside of their being put

together in a group report.

I understand that participation is voluntary, that there is no penalty for refusal to participate, and that I am free to withdraw my consent and discontinue my child's participation before at any time. I also understand that he/she may refuse to answer any individual questions without penalty, and the he/she may refuse to participate even if my consent is given.

If at any time I have questions about any procedure in this project, I understand that I may contact the project director, Bradley Tucker, at 573-882-0987.

Child's Name (Print): \_\_\_\_\_

Parent or Guardian Name (Print): \_\_\_\_\_

Parent or Guardian Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Audio taping of interviews: In this project, the audio taping of interviews (if my child is randomly selected to participate in this particular phase) is necessary in order to record my child's thoughts and opinions accurately, as well as to assess the significance of the findings. These tapes will be reviewed only by project staff. All tapes will be kept in locked drawers or cabinets and will be accessible only to the project staff. All tapes will be destroyed at the conclusion of the study. I understand that if I withdraw my child from the study or if he/she withdraws his/her assent, my child's interview tape will be destroyed. Finally, I understand that my child may participate in the study regardless of whether he/she agrees to be audiotaped. By my signing below, I indicate my consent for my child's interview to be audio taped.

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

**Appendix B: Sample Informed Assent Form**

## Appendix B

## Informed Assent

Missouri's Community Career System Local Partnership Evaluation  
Assent Form (rev. 2/16/99)

Code: \_\_\_\_\_

YOUTH ASSENT FORM: MISSOURI'S COMMUNITY CAREER SYSTEM  
EVALUATION PROJECT

I understand that I have been asked to participate in a study of Missouri's Community Career System's effect on students across the state. The people conducting this study will ask me to complete several surveys, all of which I can finish in about 50 minutes. I understand that I may also be asked to participate in an interview where I will be encouraged to talk about my experiences with Missouri's Community Career System. This interview should no more than 30 minutes.

I understand that my name will not be on any of the materials that are collected by the people doing this project, except for the demographic sheet, which will be kept in a locked file cabinet separately from the other materials. Rather, a code number will be used to match up the different answers I provide. Everything that I do in the study will be kept between me and the people doing it. This means that no one, including my parents or teachers, will be told about my answers.

I give the people conducting this study permission to view my academic records for the purpose of seeing just how Missouri's Community Career System may be helping me in my entire school experience. I also give them permission to follow-up with me in two- and four- years' time in order to see if the Community Career System experience has been helpful to me over time.

I understand that all possible steps are being taken to assure my privacy, and that all materials will be destroyed at the end of the study. I also realize that the people conducting this study are interested in relationship between various characteristics that differ across groups, and my own responses will not be evaluated outside of being combined into group reports.

I understand that in order for the people conducting this study to correctly interpret my interview, they will audio tape record it for additional study later. I also understand that my tape will not be matched with my name and will be kept in a locked place. The tape will be destroyed at the end of this study.

I understand that it is up to me to be in the project. If I don't want to be in it, that's O.K. Also, if I don't want to answer any of the questions, that's O.K., too. I can stop being in the study at any time and ask that all the information relating to me be destroyed.

I have had a chance to ask questions I have about the study, and I received a copy of this form to keep. I understand what I am asked to do and I want to be in the project.

Student's Name (Print): \_\_\_\_\_

Student's Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Research Person's Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

**Appendix C: Sample—The Structured Career Development Interview**



## Appendix C

## The Structured Career Development Interview

Name:  
Ethnicity:  
District:  
Interviewer:  
Sex:  
Grade  
Age:  
School:  
Date:

## Instructions Read to the Students:

There are no "right" or "wrong" answers to the questions I will be asking you. The questions deal with your plans to obtain additional education and training after high school and eventually enter a satisfying and rewarding career. **It** is important that you give your honest opinion and that your answers reflect how you really feel and think about your future plans and choices.

## Question#1

I: What do you want to do after leaving high school ? Please be as specific as you can, describe all the educational and career options that you may seriously consider and that you are, at least, somewhat committed to try out.

## Question#2

I: How are you preparing yourself for life after high school? Give examples of how you are preparing yourself.

## Question#3

I: Have you sought out, created your own, or taken advantage of opportunities that will help you prepare yourself for life after high school? **If** yes: Give examples of how you have done this.

## Question#4

I: When it comes to getting yourself ready to enter a career that you would be happy in or getting more education or training after high school, are you the kind of person who takes charge of things and makes sure that you do what you need to do to be successful? **If** yes: Please give some examples of how you are doing this.

## Question#5

I: Are you hopeful that one day you will work in a career or job where you will be happy and satisfied? **If** yes: How will you make this happen? What plans and strategies will you use to bring this about?

## Question#6

I: Are you successfully developing academic skills that you will need to successfully enter a career that you want? **If** yes: Please give examples of the academic skills you are developing. **If** No: Please explain why you are not developing the academic skills you will need.

## Question#7

I: Will your GPA and academic test scores be good enough to let you do what you want to do after high school? **If Yes:** Please explain why you think this is so.

## Question#8

I: How are you doing in your English/Language Arts classes? What are your grades and plans to take additional or advanced classes in English/Language Arts?

## Question#9

I: How are you doing in mathematics classes? What are your grades and plans to take additional or advanced classes in mathematics?

## Question #10

I: How are you doing in your Science/Technology classes? What are your grades and plans to take additional or advanced classes in Science and Technology?

## Question #11 .

I: Do the things that will really help you to be successful in the future come mostly from inside of you (like your talents and the effort you will use to reach your goals) or do they come mostly from outside of you (like luck and employers needing more employees)? Please explain.

## Question #12

I: Will the challenges (like getting financial aid or earning high enough grades) that could get in your way as you try to reach your educational and career goals be hard to solve or fairly easy to solve? Please give examples of challenges you may face.

## Question #13

I: How are you doing to deal with the challenges that you talked about in the last question? Please discuss.

## Question #14

I: Are you confident that you could successfully master both the educational requirements and job duties necessary to successfully work in careers that you are interested in? Please give examples of why you are or are not confident in your ability to do this.

## Question #15

I: **If** you were to successfully prepare yourself to enter a career that you were interested in, are there things that would get in your way from actually getting a satisfying job in that career? **If Yes:** What things might get in your way?

## Question #16

I: Right now, are your educational and career goals pretty clear and specific or unclear and very general? Please describe your goals.

## Question #17

I: How difficult and challenging will it be for you to reach the goals that you are setting for yourself? Please explain.

## Question #18

I: Do your goals help you to see what things you need to do to be successful? **If yes,** do your goals suggest a timetable for when certain things need to get done so you can be successful? Please describe what things you will need to do to successfully reach your goals.

**Question #19**

I: Have you participated in any career exploratory activities that really made you stop and think about what you might do after leaving high school? **If** yes, what were these activities and how did these activities influence your future goals?

**Question #20**

I: Have you made any firm decisions about what you will do after leaving high school? **If** yes, how committed are you to these decisions? How likely is it that these decisions will change in the next couple of years?

**Question #21**

I: Can you work with others to solve problems and complete projects? Please give examples of when you have done this and how you have been helpful.

**Question #22**

I: Do you consistently use the following positive behaviors to be successful in school? Do you show initiative and leadership, follow rules and regulations, use good grooming and hygiene practices, be dependable, complete tasks both on your own and under supervision? Please give examples.

**Question #23**

I: Can you effectively communicate with others in work settings, like classes or a part time job, by using the following skills (showing good listening skills, speaking up and assertively stating your opinion, neither being too passive or too aggressive in relations with co-workers or fellow students, using effective writing skills to get your point across)?

**Question #24**

I: In work settings, like in classes or in a part time job, do you have good relations with others? For example, can you cooperate well with others, get along with people in authority (like teachers or supervisors), be courteous and respectful of others (like other students or customers)? Please explain.

**Question #25**

I: Can you get along with people who have backgrounds very different from your own, like people who are ethnically and racially different from you? Please explain. In what ways have you gotten along with people who are different from you? In what ways have you not gotten along with people who are different from you?

**Question #26**

I: Have you explored which of your abilities, talents, and skills you will use in your future work? **If** yes, which ones have you considered? And have you tried to find out what careers would both allow and reward you for using these abilities, talents, and skills? **If** yes, what have you done and which careers match these abilities, talents, and skills?

**Question #27**

I: Work values are your feelings about certain things that would be very important for you to have in a career. Some examples of work values are: having an opportunity to be creative, earning a high income, helping others, earning recognition or prestige in your career, being able to work independently, being able to make decisions, assume responsibility, or be a leader, have flexibility in your work house and variety in your work tasks, or being intellectually curious and trying to solve abstract or concrete problems.

Have you explored what work values you really want to have in your future career? **If** yes, which work values have you considered? What kinds of careers would be a good match with your work values?

#### Question #28

I: Have you explored what kinds of working conditions you really want to have in your future career (like working outdoors or indoors or the kinds of pressures and stresses you may face)? **If** yes, which ones have you considered? Have you tried to find out what careers have these kinds of work conditions? **If** yes, what have you done and which careers match these work conditions?

#### Question #29

I: Have you explored what parts of your personality you want to be able to express in your future career? (Like working with others versus working more on your own to complete a task) **If** yes, what have you considered? Have you tried to find out what careers would reward these kinds of personality traits? **If** yes, what have you done and which careers have you found that would match your personality?

#### Question #30

I: Have you explored what kind and length of training you are going to need after high school to reach your career goals? **If** yes, what training will you need and how long will it take? Have you tried to find out what careers require this kind of training? **If** yes, what have you done and which careers match this kind of training?

Work tasks can be organized into 4 categories: working with Data, working with Ideas, working with People, and working with Things.

Data work tasks include working with facts, records, files, and numbers. Data activities have you record, verify, transmit, and organize facts and data to get goods and services to customers. Some Data careers are purchasing agents, accountants, and air traffic controllers.

#### Question #31

I: Have you explored doing DAT A work tasks in your future career? **If** yes, have you tried to find out careers that require DAT A work tasks? **If** yes, what have you done which DAT A work task careers are you considering?

#### Question #32

I: How interested are you in doing DA TA work tasks in your future career?

Ideas work tasks include: abstractions, theories, knowledge, insights, and finding new ways of expressing something (for example through the use of words, pictures, music, mathematical equations). Ideas activities have you create, discover, interpret, synthesize, and implement these abstractions. Some Ideas careers are scientists, musicians, and writers.

#### Question #33

I: Have you explored doing IDEAS work tasks in your future career? **If** yes, have you tried to find out about careers that require IDEAS work tasks? **If** yes, what have you done and which IDEAS work task careers are you considering?

## Question #34

I: How interested are you in doing IDEAS work tasks for your future work?

People work tasks and activities include working with others to help them, inform them, serve them, persuade them, entertain them, direct them, and motivate them. Some People careers are teachers, salespersons, and nurses.

## Question #35

I: Have you explored doing PEOPLE work tasks for your future career? If yes, have you tried to find out about careers that require PEOPLE work tasks? If yes, what have you done and which PEOPLE work task careers are you considering?

## Question #36

I: How interested are you in doing PEOPLE work tasks for your future work?

Things work tasks include working with machines, mechanisms, materials, tools, as well as physical and biological processes. Things activities have you produce, transport, service, and repair things. Some things career are electricians, technicians, and engineers.

## Question #37

I: Have you explored doing THINGS work tasks for your future career? If yes, have you tried to find out about careers that require THINGS work tasks? If yes, what have you done and which THINGS work task careers are you considering?

## Question #38

I: How interested are you in doing THINGS work tasks for your future work?

## Question #39

I: We want to explore with you whether or not your teachers are really supporting you to be successful in school and preparing you for what you want to do after high school. Have your teachers done things with you like providing you individual attention or a caring person to talk to that have helped you be more successful in school and have better prepared you for what you might do after high school?

## Question #40

I: Have teachers done things with you like giving you advice, talking to you about strategies to deal with the financial costs of post- high school education, helping you to locate part-time or full time jobs, or informing you about specific post- high school educational and training options, that have helped you be more successful in school and better prepared you for what you might do after high school? Please explain with examples.

## Question #41

I: We want to explore with you whether or not your school counselors have really supported you to be successful in school and prepared you for what you want to do after high school. Have your school counselors done things with you like providing you individual attention or a caring person to talk to that have helped you be more successful in school and better prepared you for what you might do after high school? Please explain with examples,

## Question #42

I: Have school counselors done things with you like giving you advice, talking to you about strategies to deal with the financial costs of post- high school education, helping you to locate part-time or full time jobs, or informing you about specific post- high school educational and training options, that have helped you be more successful in school and better prepared you for what you might do after high school? Please explain with examples.

## Question # 43

I: We want to explore with you whether or not your parents have really supported you to be successful in school and prepared you for what you want to do after high school. Have your parents done things with you like providing you individual attention or a caring person to talk to that have helped you be more successful in school and better prepared you for what you might do after high school? Please explain with examples.

## Question #44

I: Have your parents done things with you like giving you advice, talking to you about strategies to deal with the financial costs of post- high school education, helping you to locate part-time or full time jobs, or informing you about specific post- high school educational and training options, that have helped you be more successful in school and better prepared you for what you might do after high school? Please explain with examples.

## Question #45

I: We want to explore with you whether or not your peers have really supported you to be successful in school and prepared you for what you want to do after high school. Have your peers done things with you like providing you individual attention or a caring person to talk to that have helped you be more successful in school and better prepared you for what you might do after high school? Please explain with examples.

## Question #46

I: Have your peers done things with you like giving you advice, talking to you about strategies to deal with the financial costs of post- high school education, helping you to locate part-time or full time jobs, or informing you about specific post- high school educational and training options, that have helped you be more successful in school and better prepared you for what you might do after high school? Please explain with examples.

## Question #47

I: We want to explore with you whether or not your school program has really supported you to be successful in school and prepared you for what you want to do after high school. Has your school program provided you with individual attention or caring people to talk to you that have helped you be more successful in school and better prepared for what you might do after high school? Please explain with examples.

## Question #48

I: Has your school program provided you advice, talked to you about strategies to deal with the financial costs of post- high school education, helped you to locate part-time or full time jobs, or informed you about specific post- high school educational and training options, that have helped you be more successful in school and better prepared you for what you might do after high school? Please explain with examples.

## VITA

Chantele A. Mercier Ferguson was born in New Orleans, Louisiana. After attending Catholic schools, she received a Bachelor of Science in Psychology from Xavier University of Louisiana in 1994. In May 1999, she received her Master of Arts in Educational and Counseling Psychology from the University of Missouri-Columbia. During her graduate work, Chantele's areas of interest concentrated in counselor training and development, career development, multicultural issues, cross-cultural education and counseling, and the treatment of autism in young children. Upon approval of this dissertation (2004), Chantele will have completed all of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in Counseling Psychology at the University of Missouri-Columbia. The final requirement of doctoral internship was fulfilled when Chantele completed her training at Summit Christian Academy Psychology Internship in Lee's Summit, Missouri (2016).