

Segregation to Desegregation: The Journey of African American Students to Academic
Excellence or Academic Despair

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Abstract

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This study was designed to investigate the perceptions of a group of former African American students of their former teachers prior to and after the desegregation of schools in Columbus, Georgia. The theoretical framework for this study incorporated ideas from interpersonal communication and sociocultural theory. The major research question was, In what ways did African American students who attended segregated schools in Columbus, Georgia and later transferred to desegregated schools, perceive how these experiences affected their subsequent academic and life accomplishments?

Data were collected from interview responses from ten participants, and a number of primary and secondary sources, such as school annual history reports, school yearbooks, superintendents' reports, and articles from a Black newspaper (*Columbus Times*) and a White newspaper (*Columbus Enquirer*). The participants for this study consisted of four female and three male African American former students of varying ages, educational levels, and socio-economic status who attended segregated schools in Columbus, Georgia between 1954-1970, and in 1971 and beyond attended a desegregated school. In addition, a former administrator, counselor, and teacher were interviewed. The data collected were subjected to descriptive and interpretative analysis.

This study produced eight major findings; four were associated with segregated schooling and four related to desegregated schooling. The segregated schooling findings included: (1) the former students overwhelmingly perceived their Black teachers in segregated schools positively due to their caring, disciplinary, and family oriented traits; (2) the majority of the former students thought their Black teachers in segregated schools perceived them as intellectually capable; (3) the former students believed their Black teachers in segregated schools motivated them to succeed academically; and (4) the impact on the former students' life experiences in segregated schools was related to them feeling motivated. The four findings related to desegregated schooling included: (5) the former students perceived their White teachers in desegregated schools as uncaring and unwelcoming; (6) the former students thought their White teachers in desegregated schools considered them as having low intelligence; (7) the former students felt lost in the desegregated schools; and (8) the experiences with White teachers in desegregated schools negatively affected aspects of the former students' personal and professional life experiences.

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Dedication

With eternal love and honor, I dedicate this dissertation to my parents, Mary and Robert Lyles, and to my brother, Carey Lyles, who all continue to live in my heart, mind, and spirit. My beloved parents were lifelong educators in the public school system for a total of seventy-five (75) years. My mother, an elementary school teacher, constantly encouraged me to continue with my studies, and was always so very proud of me. My father, a high school and junior high school principal, was given the name “Professor” Lyles in the community because he not only taught and inspired excellence in scholarship and citizenship to students in the classroom but he also taught and inspired others in the community to strive for excellence in scholarship and citizenship. While I did not realize the significant impact his teachings had upon me and others until much later in my life, I am so appreciative for those teachings.

My beloved brother, Carey whose death was the result of senseless racially motivated violence and unrest during the onset of total racial desegregation in the public school system in my Southern hometown is the major reason I chose multicultural education as a life-long learning, personal, and teaching experience. Accordingly, my life’s mission is to be a vehicle for learning and teaching others about the importance of multicultural education so that my brother’s death will not have been in vain.

Chapter I

INTRODUCTION

The learning experiences of students from their own perspectives are still under-represented in research on classroom processes. When there is research on students, it is too often limited to results of narrowly constructed standardized tests, and the perceptions of others, not the students' classroom experiences from their own perspectives. Siddle-Walker (as cited in Wells, 2009) stated that capturing the students rendering of their own lives will open a new window of knowledge. Since schools and classrooms are settings that are treated as special places for student learning and growth, it is problematic not to hear the voices of students lived experiences in research literature (Carew & Lightfoot, 1979). "Voice" can be defined as the expression and sharing of people's experiences, visions or worldviews (Delpit, 1995; hooks, 1994). Kozol (1991, p. 5) wrote that "the voices of students...have been missing from the whole discussion" of education and educational reform, and Weis and Fine (1993, p. 2) invited "the students who have been expelled from the centers of their schools and the centers of our culture [to] speak."

Much research on classrooms neglect individual voices and differences among students, including learning styles, and often fails to thoroughly examine students' perceptions of their learning experiences, their views of teachers, and their accommodations to the social context (Olson, 2009). In probing the complexities of these various components of a learning environment, it is crucial to recognize that all students in a classroom do not share a common experience. The societal context may play a significant role in how students of diverse backgrounds are perceived by their teachers within the school system and how the system adapts to the diversity of its students. Since schools are microcosms of the societies in which they

exist, it is important to understand how interactions among its members affect each other. Thus, there is danger in perceiving the classroom experience as one that is shared identically by all students of a particular socioeconomic, racial, or ethnic group, such as African Americans.

Legal School Segregation and Desegregation

To understand the historical complexities of African American students' experiences in depth, the social and educational contexts that they participated in, in both segregated and desegregated schools need to be understood. Segregation was the practice of requiring separate public and private facilities for Whites and Blacks. It is part of a social and political system designed to uphold the economic exploitation and disenfranchisement of African Americans (Shircliffe, 2006). Whites created a coercive line of separation between Blacks and Whites that was codified by law and sustained by social custom (Van Delinder, 2008). Dubois (1903) used the term, "color line" to symbolize the belief held by most Whites in the 19th century that Blacks were culturally, genetically, intellectually, morally, and socially inferior. The "color line" also can be conceptualized more generally as a social phenomenon about institutional practices related to race across different time periods and in different geographical regions (Van Delinder, 2008). For example, the "color line" transgressed into school segregation, codified by the 1896 *Plessy v. Ferguson* ruling that declared "separate but equal" was not considered a violation of the equal protection clause of the Fourteenth Amendment. Therefore, after 1896, public schools were subject to segregation (Ogletree, 2004; Van Delinder, 2008).

Many school districts throughout the Southern states used the "separate but equal" principle to maintain de jure segregated schools. However, Blacks in the South witnessed and experienced changes within their segregated communities that inspired a struggle to dissolve the

color line on all fronts, especially education (Ladino, 1996). In 1954, after a group of Blacks brought suit to demand better quality primary and secondary education, the Supreme Court declared separate schools for Black and White children to be “inherently unequal” in *Brown v. Board of Education of Topeka, Kansas*. The plaintiffs in the Brown case asserted that the system of racial separation, while masquerading as providing separate but equal treatment of both White and Black Americans, perpetuated inferior accommodations, services and treatment of Blacks instead (*Brown v. Board of Education*, 1954).

One motivation for desegregating public schools was a concern that Black children would never receive adequate resources in their schools as long as they were separate from Whites. Another was the hope that educational opportunities for minority children would improve in part by tying their fate to that of the White students in the same school districts (Reber, 2007). The goal was to gain the economic benefits and resources for Black children that were commonly provided for White children (Foster, 1997). However, few Southern school districts made meaningful progress toward desegregation in the first decade following *Brown* (Reber, 2007; U.S. Commission on Civil Rights 1967, 1977). In some instances, *Brown* was not even implemented until almost two decades later. In 1955, the Supreme Court considered arguments by schools requesting relief concerning the task of desegregation. In its decision, which became known as *Brown II*, the Court delegated the task of carrying out school desegregation to district courts with orders that desegregation occur “with all deliberate speed.” Following a series of Supreme Court decisions between 1968 and 1971, large scale court-ordered desegregation plans were implemented throughout the South.

Since state and local school districts were free to implement their own desegregation plans, there was no single, unified method of desegregation throughout the United States. In the southern states, decisions were made according to the dictates of individual school boards. Thus, desegregation processes are best examined on a case-by-case basis. Rist (1979) noted, “We are hard pressed to find accounts of what is really going on, of what the day-to-day realities of school desegregation are for teachers, students, parents and administrators” (p.3).

Research Focus

This study explored the perceptions of a group of African Americans who were students in one Southern city, of their teachers prior to and after the desegregation of their schools, and the impact the experience had on their own subsequent academic and life accomplishments. The former African American students interviewed for this research demonstrated how the participants’ experiences were shaped by social conditions. The time frame of this study was the period between 1954 and 1978, since Georgia school districts were slow to actually implement desegregation rulings. The study sought to capture insider perspectives, the origins of students’ reasoning, and reflective analyses of the effects of classroom experiences on students’ academic and life experiences. Thus, the purpose of the study was to discover what factors can contribute to the present and future success of African American students in academia.

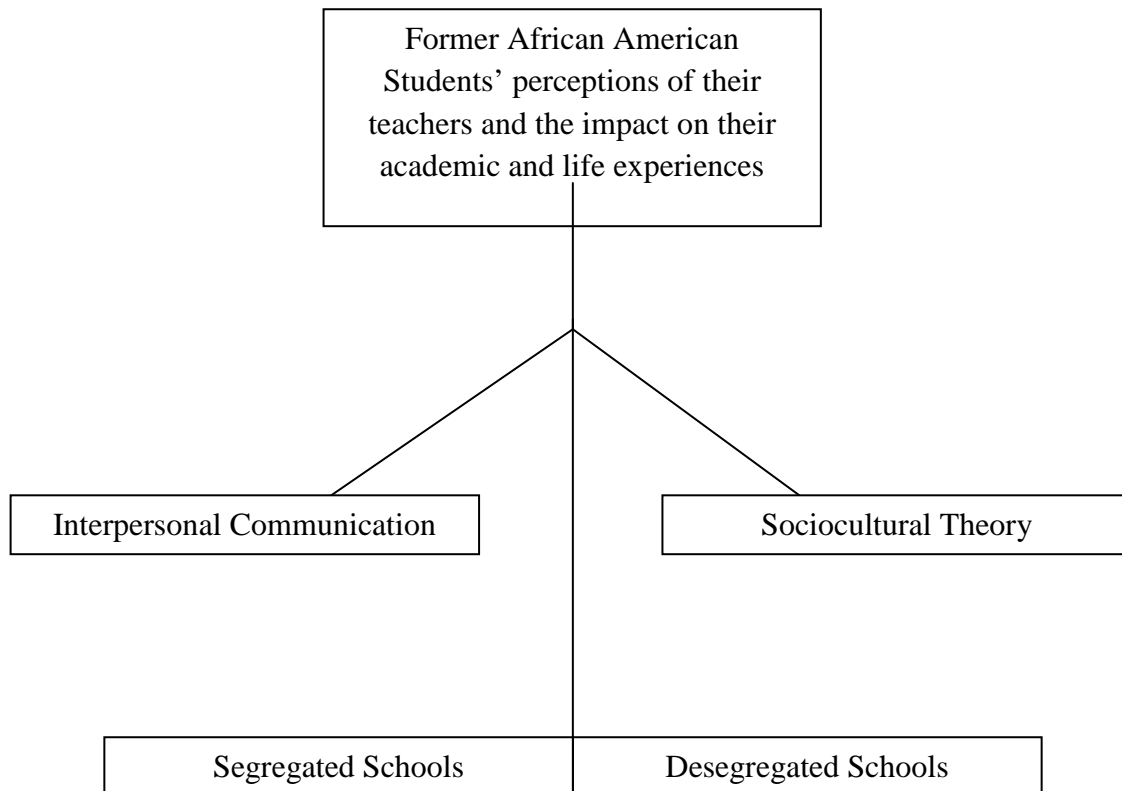
The study addressed the question: In what ways did African American students who attended segregated schools in Columbus, Georgia and later transferred to desegregated schools, perceive how these experiences affected their subsequent academic and life accomplishments? The project added to educational scholarship (Irvine, 1990; Shircliffe, 2006; Siddle-Walker, 2001; Tyson, 2011; Wells; 2009) about students’ experiences in segregated and desegregated

schools by presenting the voices of some former African American students who attended both segregated and desegregated public schools in Columbus, Georgia.

Conceptual Framework

The two contexts in which this study was framed are segregated and desegregated schools. They set the stage for analyzing the interpersonal communication, relationships, and socialization patterns and practices that were used by the active participants who were a part of each of the school systems. As depicted in Figure 1, the conceptual framework of this study is centered in the two theoretical ideologies of interpersonal communication, and socio-cultural perspectives. The integration of the ideologies aided in the exploration of the perceptions of former African American students and their teachers in segregated and desegregated schools.

Figure 1. Conceptual Framework



Sociocultural Perspectives on Learning

The first assumption of this study is situated in sociocultural perspectives. Sociocultural perspectives of education focus on the influences that social interactions and culturally organized activities play in influencing their psychological and intellectual development of individuals (Vygotsky, 1941). Sociocultural perspectives imply that people's social actions are related to the behaviors of others as individuals interconnect within environments (Weber, 1922). These interactions create cultural, social, and cognitive structures, as humans influence their sociocultural contexts. From this perspective, the cognitive functioning of individuals is not simply derived from social interaction or intelligence; rather, the specific structures and processes revealed by individuals are shaped by their interactions with others (Vygotsky, 1941).

Within these interactions, individuals may possess different or similar cultural identities. Identity construction is dynamic, occurs in context (Norton, 2000), and is contingent upon the nature of the context (Cornell & Hartmann, 1998). With regard to the home culture of African Americans, collective identity is a common term used when referring to the cultural sense of self (Fordham, 1988). This refers to their sense of who they are, and their feelings, or sense of belonging. Fordham (1988, 1996) provided an anthropological concept useful for understanding Blacks' social identity and cultural frames of reference—fictive kinship. She described fictive kinship as a family connection between a group of people within a given society who are, not related by blood or marriage but who maintain a sense of peoplehood or collective social identity resulting from their similar social, political, and/or economic status. The term conveys “the idea of ‘brotherhood’ and ‘sisterhood’ of all Black Americans” (Fordham, 1988, p. 76). The persistence of a group's collective identity depends on the continuity of the historical and social

forces that contributed to its formation. Shircliffe (2006) described the collective identity as cultural capital of the Black community. In respect to the collective experiences of African Americans, Thornton (1997), and Valk and Brown (2010) noted that their family socialization is consistently deliberate in attempts to prepare children for life across social, economic, and educational contexts, and is the means through which culture is created and transmitted. Cooper (2010) and Ladson-Billings (1994) stated that education is an honored right among Blacks because it is associated with social and economic gain. This honor is exhibited, according to Noblit and Van Dempsey (1996) in the mutual disciplinary actions of teachers and parents (if you got spanked by a teacher, you could also expect a spanking when you got home) reflect a community where beliefs are shared and enforced universally.

Another perspective that informed this study was the sociopolitical context of schooling for African American students. Schools are major social structures in which individuals negotiate their lives and construct academic identities. In addition, Parsons (1959) related the classroom structure to its primary function as an agency of socialization. No other public institution is as critical to the development of the academic identities youth will carry into their adulthoods as schools (Perry, 2002; Sadowski, 2003). Scholars have suggested that adopting a strong racial identity promotes academic success and educational attainment for Blacks (Edwards & Polite, 1992; Weinberg, 1977). However, they must be able to make personal connections with the curriculum. There is a need to observe how differences in cultural backgrounds and values may lead to differences in what is taught, how it is taught, and how it is absorbed by students (Brookover & Gottlieb, 1961). The implicit assumption here is that cultural knowledge about African Americans may translate into successful teaching and learning for Black students in public schools (Kelly, 2010). Lee (2007) explained that instruction must

make explicit connections between content and literacy goals, and the knowledge and experiences students share with family, community, and peers.

The underachievement of African American students is a serious sociopolitical issue due in large part to its significance in determining their future success (Children's Defense Fund, 2005; Gould, 1999). Two dominant cultural explanations persist for their underachievement. First, the cultural deficit explanation maintains that some Black students suffer from negative environmental factors such as impoverished family lives and negative community forces (Ogbu, 1974; Valentine, 1968). Wertsch (1991) stated that research based on these orientations examines cognition as if it only exists in a cultural, historical, and social vacuum. Brookover, Paterson, and Thomas (1962) demonstrated that, while socio-economic status is related to academic achievement, approximately 40 percent of students in their study who came from low income families were high academic achievers. Second, the cultural mismatch explanation claims that Black students are academically disengaged and underperform because they are primarily taught by White teachers who do not share their home cultures and languages. This mismatch may occur if the teachers do not recognize or use the cultural assets that the students bring to school, which creates the potential for misunderstanding and misinterpreting communication between teachers and students (Boykin, Miller, & Tyler, 2005; Lee, 1998). These misunderstandings and miscommunications, or lack of cultural synchronization (Irvine, 1989), increase the possibility of failure for students who lack the cultural capital (Delpit, 1995) to navigate norms of schooling. A lack of cultural synchronization means that teachers and African American students do not share a common understanding of verbal and nonverbal language manner of personal presentation, or ways of processing information and knowledge (Edwards, McMillon, Turner, & Lee, 2010). However, researchers such as Ladson-Billings

(2009), and Howard (2010) found that teachers who do not share their students' cultural, linguistic, and racial backgrounds can possess positive attitudes and beliefs toward them and achieve academic success with African American students.

Dubois (1953) believed that teachers' who know what they are teaching and whom they are teaching, and the life that surround both the knowledge and the knower, will be successful in teaching Black students. McLaughlin (1993) also noted that the most essential contributions that a teacher can make toward students achievement is being a "caring adult who recognizes young people as individuals and serves as a mentor, coach, gentle but firm critic, and advocate" (p. 59).

Ford (1996) proposed that closer attention be paid to the many factors influencing the achievement levels of African American students. She maintained that encouraging the potential and talents of all youth requires broader vision of understanding that these vary markedly with cultural, racial, economic, and linguistic backgrounds. Kohl (1994) reiterated Ford's point by claiming many disenfranchised students consciously make a decision to "not learn" in schools when they feel their cultural knowledge and identity are invalidated, disrespected, and not viewed as conduits for their learning. Several other scholars ascertain that African American students view academic performance in a Eurocentric educational system as futile and adopt an oppositional identity to the dominant culture, which includes not valuing academic success (Fordham & Ogbu, 1986; Mickelson, 1989; Ogbu, 1978, 2004). Carter (1999) argued that although African American students may in fact characterize certain social-situational practices of academic achievement as "acting White," this is by no means based on their academic aspirations, but rather on their social connections and in-group identity. Therefore, within

school, the social context of achievement affects the academic performance of all students, including African Americans.

Perry (2002), building on the work of Boykin and Toms (1985), stated that African American learners have a distinctive social group identity that is at least partly defined by powerful cultural values regarding literacy, learning, and education in African history and culture. Murrell (2009) believed that it is important to understand social identification of African American learners (or any learners), and it is necessary to understand individuals in relationship to the local cultures they participate in (as cited in Tillman, 2009, p 91.) The most consistent body of empirical work that examines how cultural and contextual factors influence African American students' academic performance focuses on communalism. Ellison, et al. (2000) stated that the average Black home is highly stimulated and Black children espouse an African ethos of communalism. Communalism is defined by Bokyin (1986) as "a commitment to social interconnectedness which includes an awareness in which social bonds and responsibilities transcend individual privileges" (p. 22). Research demonstrates that on a range of academic tasks including vocabulary, text recall, inferencing, math estimation, and creative problem solving, African American students perform better in communal learning conditions than they do in individualistic conditions (Allen & Boykin, 1992; & Bailey, 2000; Boykin, et al., 2005; Jagers, 1987). In addition, movement expressiveness, verve, orality and performance proclivities (Boykin, 1986; Serpell, 1998, Hale, 2001) have been documented as part of African American students' learning styles (Durden, 2007, Hale-Benson, 1986; Lee, 1998; Willis, 1989). These group oriented preferences allow most African American students to use their strong oral/aural elaborated tradition of storytelling, which causes them to have a more expressive way of communicating in the learning environment (Pai & Adler, 2001). Boykin (1986) suggested that

African American students employ an Afro-cultural meaning system as a means of coding, signifying, and making sense of their participation in the multiple contexts they must negotiate in and out of school. Closely related to their sense of collective identity is the way Blacks and some other ethnic minorities interpret the cultural and language, or dialect differences between them and the dominant group (Ogbu, 2004). The consequences of teachers' abilities to recognize the literate features of children's oral language has important consequences for the ways they are or are not able to extend the funds of knowledge that students bring to classrooms in order to help them learn school-based ways of reading and writing (Lee, 2007). Therefore, African American students may suffer when more reserved patterns of communication are encouraged (Foster, 1989). Thus, the theory of cultural context of teaching and learning views the inclusion of the students' culture as essential in improving academic success. Although people connected by culture do exhibit a characteristic pattern of style preferences, it is a serious error to conclude that all members of the group have the same style traits as the group taken as a whole. There is very little disagreement that a relationship does exist between the culture in which children live (or from which they are descended) and their preferred ways of learning. This relationship, further, is directly related to academic, social, and emotional success in school.

Communal work is given little currency in typical educational contexts as they tend to be permeated with a Euro-cultural ethos that promotes individualism and competition (Spence, 1985; Stanton-Salazar, 1997). The culture of the schools often mirrors the White middle-class norms and values evident in the greater United States society (Ware, 2006). It is important for teachers to understand that course content should be relevant to the students' life experiences, and due to the collective nature of African American students, group oriented assignments should be employed. The learning contexts imbued with cultural themes that correspond to

students' socialization experiences can significantly improve cognitive performance (Jordan, 2010).

Historically and socially, the attainment of an education for subordinate groups in an oppressive society has often been considered for them to gain access to opportunities in the larger society (Kelly, 2010). Guiterrez and Rogoff (2003) described the value of social and historical approaches to understanding students of diverse cultural backgrounds, and argued that, learning is not segmented into different times and spaces, but is a process of ongoing activity both within-school and out-of-school contexts.

Interpersonal Communication

The second theoretical ideology that guided this study is interpersonal communication, defined as the processes involved in fitting together the behaviors of separate individuals into joint action through the transfer of symbolic information (Blumer, 1969). The communicative relationship between teacher and student is an important element contributing to the learning process. Bateson (1958) stated that all message exchanges have both content and relational characteristics, and the rules that bind people together distinguish the type of relationship. If the same rule structure is applicable to the interactive system, the situation is considered to be more "role" bound, more "social," and less individualized (Barnlund, 1968). According to Mead (1934), role-taking is the central mechanism for the self-conception and for understanding the self-conception of others. The term "role" is defined as a socially prescribed way of behaving in particular situations for any person occupying a given cultural or social organizational position (Cushman & Craig, 1976). A role represents what a person is supposed to do in a given situation by virtue of the position she or he holds and, thus, the individual constructs attitudes and expectations that others have for her or him as the occupier of that role.

Leary (1957) created a model for describing roles in interpersonal communication relationships. In the Leary model, two dimensions are important. He called the dimensions Dominance-Submission axis and the Opposition-Cooperation axis. Dominance-Submission is based on who is controlling the conversation, and Opposition-Cooperation relates to how much care is present between the persons who are communicating. While the two dimensions have occasionally been given other names—Brown (1965) used Status and Solidarity, and Dunkin and Biddle (1974), Warmth and Directivity—they generally have been accepted as universal descriptors of human interaction. The two dimensions also have been easily transferred to education. Slater (1962) used them to describe pedagogical relationships, and Dunkin and Biddle (1974) demonstrated their importance in teachers' efforts to influence classroom events. Dunkin and Biddle labeled the interpersonal behaviors as warmth and power, and authority and affiliation.

According to Jones (1981), “teachers are encouraged to blend their warmth and firmness towards the students in their classroom, but with realistic limits” (p. 111). A firm belief in students' academic potential can be viewed as a personal and vested interest that teachers take in their students' performance (Howard, 2010). Gay (2010) stated that caring teachers practice respect, provide choices for students, make information comprehensible, validate students' efforts, and empower them in their quest to be academically successful. Kleinfeld (1975) and Vasquez (1989) used the term “warm demanders” to identify teachers who were successful with students of color because the students believed that these teachers did not lower their standards and were willing to help them. Irvine and Fraser (1998) expanded the term by using it to describe teachers who “provide a tough-minded, no-nonsense, structured and disciplined classroom environment for kids whom society had psychologically and physically abandoned”

(p. 56). However, Cooper (2002) identified this behavior as “community-commanded demonstration of caring” (p. 60).

Dixson (2003) suggested that “it is the fact that students trust their teachers and believe they care which makes high expectations effective” (p.228). Trust involves the notion of motivational relevance as well as predictability. If one has an expectation that something will occur and this event is of motivational relevance, then the concept of trust is often applicable (Barnlund, 1968).

Past research indicates a strong link between students’ perception of their teachers’ interpersonal behaviors and their own academic achievement and subject-related attitudes and beliefs (Brekelmans & Wubbels, 2004; Wubbels & Brekelmans, 2006). In addition, several educators believe that a positive relationship must exist between students and teachers if significant academic achievement is to be gained (Graybill, 1997; Holland, et al., 1998, Irvine, 1990; Irvine & Irvine, 1995; Polite, 1999). It is important for the teacher to understand the value of a sense of belonging that can build the self-worth of students of diverse backgrounds (Delpit, 1988).

Some African American students have indicated that they try to please their teachers by doing well in school, and teacher expectations often have more influence than parents in their home culture (Casteel, 1998). Heath (1983) stated that connecting with the home culture and awareness of the language used in students’ cultural communities can foster the kind of language, performance, and growth sought by schools and teachers. Thus, communication between the student and the teacher serves as a connection between the two, which provides a better atmosphere for academic performance (Irvine, 2003). The language connection can influence the development of educational and career goals for students, broaden their world

views, and connect their present life decisions to their future goals and successes. If teachers demonstrate an understanding of students' culture, it creates better relationships, understanding between them, and may lead to higher academic achievement.

Summary

In this chapter, the rationale and conceptual framework of the study were presented. The study begins by exploring the lack of research on students' voices, an historical background of both segregated and desegregated school systems, and why it is important to examine insider perspectives of former students who experienced both types of schooling. The conceptual framework included an overview of interpersonal communication and socio-cultural systems and how they can be used to interpret the academic and life experiences of former African American students.

Chapter II includes a selected review of research and scholarship relevant to this study. It includes the teacher-student relationships in segregated schools, cultural awareness, and the sociocultural context of school and community in the South during segregation and desegregation. The methodology used in the study is described in Chapter III. The findings of the study are summarized in Chapter IV. In Chapter V, a discussion of the implications of this study is presented, along with recommendations for future research and educational practices.

Chapter II

REVIEW OF RELATED RESEARCH AND SCHOLARSHIP

The review of related research and scholarship relevant to this study is organized into four sections. The first two sections focus on the interpersonal relationships between teachers and students in Southern segregated and desegregated schools. The third section deals with cultural perspectives of teaching and learning on a broad scale. In the fourth section, the socio-cultural contexts of schools and communities in the South are discussed, and, the local context of Columbus, Georgia to describe the specific setting in which this study took place.

Student-Teacher Relationships in Southern Segregated Schools

Kelly (2010) proclaimed that Black teachers who attended teachers' colleges and taught in segregated schools knew all about methods in teaching to match the learning styles of Black children. Black teachers were a major resource for Black achievement and social mobility, and they fashioned pedagogies for the acquisition of skills, knowledge, and credentials needed for jobs, civil rights, and social power. An elementary school teacher cited by Siddle-Walker (1996) stated that teachers were not only interested in teaching arithmetic and spelling, but the whole child. Interviews with several of the teachers in Foster's (1990) study provided evidence of a tacit curriculum that encouraged students to understand the personal value, the collective power, and political consequences of high academic achievement. For example, in New Orleans, Louisiana, Birmingham, Alabama, and other Southern cities, Black teachers did not have to incorporate Black History into the curriculum because it was already an integral part of their teaching (Pierson, 2010). Science teachers used biology lessons to discuss genetics to refute supremacist theories about Whites being genetically more intelligent than Blacks. Many Black

teachers used poetry and literature to combat racist stereotypes and challenged school boards if they found textbooks that contained derogatory depictions of Blacks (Fairclough, 2007). Thus, most African American teachers valued the cultural forms of teaching and learning that developed in segregated schools.

However, former students interviewed by Shircliffe (2001) stated that there was inferiority in the curriculum offerings and resources at Black schools, despite the dedication and energy of the Black teachers. There was not enough funding for the materials to teach the curriculum in the segregated Black public schools (Sherer, 1977). In addition, some of the Black public schools used out-of-date texts that were handed down by the White schools. Consequently, most of the schools had substandard teaching materials and physical facilities.

Many school systems failed to provide sufficient funding for African American schools, which resulted in inadequate classroom space for African American students. The Black segregated schools also needed adequate physical education buildings and auditoriums, and larger high school facilities. A study conducted in Alabama by Pierson (2010) found that many Black students considered buildings in segregated schools problematic. The students complained about the windows having no screens, the lack of indoor plumbing, and no cafeteria. The fact that the buildings were in disrepair and lacked facilities comparable to White schools is consistent with other reports of the state of some Black segregated schools. Understanding African American teaching within this context of oppressed external circumstances is critical to interpreting the teachers' behaviors and beliefs. The teachers' behaviors and beliefs were, in part, born of the difficulties they confronted (Siddle-Walker, 2001).

According to several scholars, during segregation Black teachers played pivotal roles in Black communities by functioning as leaders and agents of social change (Anderson, 1988;

Siddle-Walker, 1996). They were expected to fulfill an array of roles beyond that of school teachers, including public health workers, Sunday school teachers, home visitors, agricultural workers, fundraisers, adult literacy teachers, racial diplomats, moral examples, all around pillars of the community, and general uplifters of the race (Fairclough, 2007, p. 14). The tradition of Black teachers in segregated schools was marked by political activism, and teaching to advance and safeguard the Black race (Beaubeauof-Lafontant, 1999; Dixson, 2003; Foster, 1990, 1997).

Fairclough (2002) noted that education “has been one of the most important political battlefields in the South, and Black teachers were at the center of that battlefield. Southern Whites sought to control them, fearful that educated Blacks would lead to movements for equality” (pp. 1-2). Although they rarely challenged segregation overtly, Black educators played a significant role in combating White supremacy and promoting equality for Black children. Delpit (1988) explained that teachers held visions for their students that they could not imagine for themselves. The message consistently conveyed to them was “the one thing people can’t take from you is what’s between your ears” (p.158). In resisting the basic ideas of White supremacy, racism, and inequality, they helped to undermine the Jim Crow regime. Although White educational authorities controlled the allocation of tangible resources like materials and supplies that went to Black schools, they could not control the intangible resources, such as beliefs and practices that Black teachers employed in the classroom (Anderson, 1988). As Bond (1970) pointed out, in reality, separate facilities were hardly equal; disparities were evident in the quality and condition of school buildings and supplies (Delaney, Delaney, & Hill Hearth, 1993). Fairclough (2007) referred to material resources, not the quality of education that students received, as inferior. However, if the teachers did not have the resources that were needed, they purchased them, learned to do without, or found innovative ways to obtain them. Teachers,

principals, and parents mobilized to build stable and productive school communities across counties. Although they were confined within rigid boundaries, African American educators improvised strategies to live normal academic lives under abnormal circumstances (Ogletree, 2004).

Many African American teachers who taught in segregated schools had great ethnic pride and demanded that their students have pride, too (Clark, 1961; Sowell, 1976). For example, Jones (1981) explained that teachers served as “Black intellectual role models” and made sure that their students received more than just information about subject matter, but a “sense of racial and academic pride” (p. 10). The teachers connected academic success to racial uplift. According to Sowell (1976), Black teachers were “hard taskmasters” who gave lots of work, refused to lower academic standards and if you didn’t learn, you stayed after school as long as necessary to learn” (p. 31). They tended to accept the students and did their best to help them achieve. One technique used by some Black teachers was the creation of a community of learners, in which students supported and helped each other with assignments (Irvine, 2002).

Much of the research indicates that African American teachers “made” the students do their work; they would not allow them to fail. Teachers did not give students a choice between learning and not learning; failure to learn was “unacceptable” to the community, parents, peers, and teachers. In 1958, however, research shows low test scores among African American students and high drop-out rates (Cozart, 1967; Faculty Evaluation, 1960). Despite these statistics, several scholars report the effectiveness of African American teachers in segregated schools (Foster, 1990; Murrel, 1996; Siddle-Walker, 1996, 2000; Sowell, 1976). In her study of 20 effective Black teachers, Foster (1993) explained,

The teachers who participated in my study are successful because they are proficient in community norms—that is, they are able to communicate with students in a familiar cultural idiom. Moreover, their success is also due to their understanding of the current as well as the historical, social, economic, and political relationships of their community to the larger society. These teachers are not merely educating the mind—they are educating them for character, personal fulfillment and success in the larger society as well as for competence in the local community. (p. 391)

African American teachers of the past have been described as having a mission and assuming a moral responsibility for the education of children. hooks (1994), who attended segregated and desegregated schools as a youth, attributed her success to teachers' who were "on a mission" (p.7), and viewed learning as a "counter-hegemonic act, a fundamental way to resist every strategy of White racist colonization" (p.16). The teachers at her Black school were "committed to nurturing intellect so that students could become scholars, thinkers, and cultural workers—Black folks who used their minds" (p.17). One student in Pierson's (2010) study described her education in the segregated school as the creation of dual citizenship. She recalled teachers, "were preparing us to live in that duality, to understand dual consciousness and to not allow it to be an impediment" (p. 184). Some Black students who attended segregated schools have indicated that they wanted to be like their teachers because they admired their strength.

One of the students in a study conducted by Dingus (2006) said:

Segregated schools were good for me because Black teachers were an irreplaceable asset who impacted the person I became. I don't think I would be the person I am now. I have tenacity and assertiveness. My teachers told me, 'I got your back; you gon' be alright.'
(p. 222)

Foster (1991) noted that over half of Black teachers used kinship terms or metaphors to describe their relationships with students. Students were often referred to as "baby," "honey," or "sweetheart." In an ethnographic study of Caswell County Training School, Siddle-Walker (1993) emphasized the salience and pervasiveness of caring relationships within the educational environment. Specifically, she showed how caring was expressed in the daily interactions between teachers and students. The caring was demonstrated through encouraging and supportive behavior and expressions of confidence in their students' ability to succeed. Irvine (2002) described this interpersonal caring as setting limits, providing structure, holding students to high expectations, and pushing students to succeed. Other scholars who have applied the concepts of connectedness and care to schooling argue that the ability to relate to others is a critical component of responsible and responsive teachers (Gay, 2010; Lyons, 1983; Noddings, 1984).

Former student Cepheus Lea remembered Black teachers "would instill into us that education was our only hope for ever reaching progress. The less you know, the less you are going to make. So they would always try to instill that in us. They would always teach us to aim at the stars and not the moon. If you miss the moon, you hit the ground; if you miss the stars, you could get the moon" (cited in Siddle-Walker, 1996, p.126). Segregated African American

schools were, according to Irvine and Irvine (1983), educational institutions that addressed the deeper psychological and sociological needs of their clients. The students felt valued, respected, and smart. The teachers countered the negative messages heard outside of school and offered new ones of hope and possibility through education. Classrooms in segregated schools were based on academic content but also represented places to learn about life, and the liberating potential of education (Siddle-Walker, 1996).

Kelly (2010) used a quote from one of the teachers he interviewed who taught in segregated schools in North Carolina to explain the connectedness between students and teachers. One teacher said,

I enjoyed teaching because we bonded together... kids can tell when they're loved. We were special together. I would share my experiences with those students because I would say, 'You don't have to make excuses because we are Black... If you don't have anything now, it's okay. It is not your fault. If you have a home where you don't have steps, it's not your fault. But don't let me catch you ten years from now without steps.' (p. 55)

Anthropological studies of both rural and urban Black communities have demonstrated the continuing significance of these extended kinship networks to the well-being of Black children (Hill, 1972; Stack, 1974). Many young Black children are born into a personal kinship network of adults who often extend beyond biological ties. These persons are "fictive kin," and as such are socially recognized as active participants in children's lives. During the eras of segregated schooling, Black teachers generally were extended these privileges and responsibilities.

Siddle-Walker (2000) described exemplary African American teachers as having high expectations for student success, and exhibiting strong dedication and a demanding teaching style. Dingus (2006) added that Black teachers during segregation were personally invested in the academic, personal, and character development of their students. Although all teachers were not always effective with all students, the phrase most frequently used by teachers to describe their task was that it was their responsibility to be certain that every student “reached his or her highest potential” (Siddle-Walker, 1996, p. 126). The teachers intervened when a student’s personal issues interfered with classroom learning. For example, if a student seemed disengaged or listless, a teacher might take the student aside and ask what was wrong. The teachers saw getting at the source of the problem and improving the student’s attitude as important tasks that were necessary to engage learning. An example of this behavior was described by a former teacher in Siddle-Walker’s (1996) research:

When you are grown, what do you want to be? Some students would say teacher, doctor, truck driver. And whatever they would say, I would say, ‘Well, you can be that.’ I always tried to tell them that they are making a record of their life. I wanted them to know that they had control of whatever they wanted to do. (p.123)

Yet, a common theme among teachers revolved around the little choice Black students had in pursuing advanced education. A former student in Shircliffe’s (2001) study described her experience in a home economics class as “having to sew” although she could not and did not want to do it. Another student in this same study spoke of the need to be cautious when “over romanticizing” the all-Black school experience.

He explained that,

I have always had two thoughts about the predominately Black school experience. I think people look to over-romanticize it to a certain extent. The teachers were wonderful and their effort was incredible given what they had to work with. I remember all those dilapidated desks and I remember the second hand books. I remember not having enough books and having to share books and all that stuff. What made that work was the personalities and the energies of those teachers. I wouldn't doubt for one minute that the Supreme Court is right: segregated education is an inferior education. I can remember in college feeling that there were gaps that I had to compensate for...(p.71).

These testimonials illustrate the tension between valuing the Black school and community experience and recognizing some limitations and inequalities of segregated education. Neither the inferiority of the curriculum offerings and resources of Black schools nor the dedication and energy of African American teachers should be overlooked (Shircliffe, 2006). In studying the relationship between Black schools and communities, it is necessary to view the student, the school, and the community as components of a complex interdependent system (Rodgers, 1975).

Nostalgic recollections about the good qualities of segregated schools may gloss over the gross inequalities and political disenfranchisement imposed on African Americans during the Jim Crow era (Shircliffe, 2001). Memories of former students and teachers of all-Black schools are selective, retrospective, and often significantly romanticized. Nevertheless, these memories illustrate the construction of historical consciousness, and how former students and teachers can

validate the strengths of the Black community and the communal bonds that provided a framework for confronting racism.

Student-Teacher Relationships in Southern Desegregated Schools

During segregation, Southern school districts typically ran dual systems with completely separate schools for Whites and Blacks. In fact, on the eve of the *Brown* decision, the Southern Education Reporting Service (1965) found that essentially no Black children attended public school with White children and teachers in public schools in Deep Southern states (Alabama, Arkansas, Florida, Georgia, Louisiana, Mississippi, North Carolina, South Carolina, Tennessee, Texas, and Virginia), and only a few Black students in Border states (Delaware, Kentucky, Maryland, Missouri, Oklahoma, Washington, DC, and West Virginia) did. Therefore, federal district judges or state and local organizations made decisions based on how contentious the implementation of desegregation was in many locations. In the eleven states of the Deep South, federal judges forced compliance on unwilling school boards (Ogeltree, 2004). The school boards and members of White communities believed that Black schools had nothing to offer them and the schools were inherently inferior; thus, Black people were inferior (Wells et. al., 2009)

For virtually all Black teachers, the period immediately before desegregation was a time of uncertainty and apprehension. However, two powerful factors mitigated the desire to attack segregation head-on. The first was a feeling that Jim Crow laws and practices were so solidly entrenched that open opposition would be futile. The second restraining factor was a widespread fear that many Black teachers would lose their jobs if segregated schools disappeared (Fairclough, 2007).

During attempts to desegregate schools, many Black students were bused to majority White schools throughout Southern states, and many Black teachers and principals were fired (Madkins, 2011). As a result, nearly 39,000 Black teachers in 17 states lost their jobs from 1954 to 1965 (Ethridge, 1979; Holmes, 1990). It was common practice across the country, and particularly in the South, for the historically Black public schools to be closed once districts were forced to desegregate whether by judges, the federal government, or their own defensiveness.

The Black teachers who were transferred to desegregated schools, complained less about the loss of jobs, personal autonomy, and the individual or institutional acts of discrimination aimed at them, and more about their diminished ability to positively influence the educational futures of African American students (Foster, 1990). Without a class of all African American students, the African American teachers could not incorporate into their instruction the politically charged teachings that had once been a part of their curricula (Dingus, 2006; Jeffries, 1999). As a result, some Black teachers thought that desegregation weakened their solidarity with Black students, and limited their ability to engage in critical dialogue with them about their life circumstances.

In Black communities the loss of Black teachers represented something far more significant than Black students seeing someone in the classroom who looked like them. There was a loss of cultural and social capital in the Black community. Capital is defined by Kelly (2010) as preparing and motivating Black students to achieve academically, and to aspire for occupational and social mobility. During segregated schooling, Black teachers struggled to prepare students to live in a discriminatory, racially oppressive country. One goal was to address the consequences of their racialized positioning in the United States (Ladson-Billings & Tate, 1985). After desegregation, this explicit teaching ceased to exist (Ramsey, 2008). Some Black

teachers reshaped the message of racial uplift that they promoted in segregated settings to fit desegregated environments. They found themselves teaching in White schools with two different missions—one for White students to become acclimated into the environment and to learn, and another for Black students to become acclimated into the environment, to learn, and to deal with racism within the school (Milner & Howard, 2004). In reflecting on her experience as the only Black teacher at a desegregated suburban high school, a participant in a study conducted by Ramsey (2008) said,

I loved working with Black kids. I felt like I was giving them some things that integration wasn't doing for them. I could have asked for a transfer, but there were a few Black kids out there and I felt that I needed to stay to provide a role model. (p.118).

Desegregation placed some Black students into an environment that did not hold racial uplift and unity as the underpinnings of its teachings (Jeffries, 1997). A former African American student in Texas explained that he could talk about race with his classmates but noted that the teachers did not condone these discussions in the classroom. He stated:

In the seventies, everyone was still touchy-feely because they didn't want to stir up anything... so I can't remember any of the teachers offering us an opportunity to share... What is this student about? What is her culture about? They said, let's just get along. (Wells, et al, p. 149)

The teacher mentioned in the quote was remembered by many teachers and students as the Black teacher who had problems with the Black students. When students asked her to sponsor a Black student organization, she refused, not wanting to be accused of favoring the Black students.

The teacher recalled:

Although they wanted me to sponsor a Black club, I wouldn't. I wouldn't because I told them, 'You are here because you want to integrate. And I don't want to have something Black sitting out. We want to try to integrate.' (p. 149-50)

The African American students resented what they perceived to be neglect from teachers like this one who ignored their social experiences and cultural heritages. The other African American teachers and students at the school described this particular teacher as one who ascribed to a belief in colorblindness. Woodson (1933) would have accused her of miseducating Black students because she:

taught from the same books of the same bias, [as White students used], was trained by the Caucasians of the same prejudices or by the Negroes of the enslaved minds. In other words, a Negro teacher instructing Negro children is in many respects a White teacher thus engaged, for the program, in each case is about the same. (p. 23)

The advent of desegregated schools introduced race as a confounding variable in the learning environment (Irvine & Irvine, 1983). This variable is significant to the context of empirical studies that show the relationship between teacher expectations and their students' race. Several studies during the desegregation era between 1954 and 1978 identified positive teacher attitudes as a key in the academic success of Black students. For example, Kritek (1979) found that teachers bore the responsibility for making sure that desegregation worked. Teacher behavior, according to a 1974 Rand Cooperation report, was the most critical factor in the first generation of desegregated schooling (Dickinson & Freeland, 1981).

White teachers were part of the Southern context where many Whites still believed Blacks were intellectually and morally inferior, and that the *Brown* decision should be resisted by legal and extralegal means. Many White teachers believed educational quality declined because of desegregation. One such teacher in a study by Causey (2002) on the history of desegregation in Muscogee County schools stated:

It was a lost time, in my opinion, for many students. We watered down education to such a point that a high school diploma didn't mean anything. We were so intent on everybody passing so that you would not be perceived as being prejudiced or discriminatory in any way. (p. 5)

White teachers often did not expect Black students to perform at high levels in desegregated schools. A former Black English teacher in Causey's (1999) study found that White teachers had lower expectations for Black students due to what he characterized as "years and years of programming" (p. 37). One teacher in Fairclough's (2007) study stated that, "If you are not expected to do anything, you will not do anything" (p. 45). Some White teachers even resisted correctly pronouncing Black students' names, and Black students took offense at the Southern White pronunciation of, "Nigra" (presumably for "Negro") (Johnson & Hall, 1968). According to Causey (2002), some White teachers talked down to Black students, and oversimplified their vocabularies. A 1979 study in Texas supported this perception. It found that White teachers asked more product questions and directed lower level questions to Black students (Barnes, 1979). Barnes believed that teachers either felt that Black students were not capable of functioning at higher levels of intelligence, or they simply asked Black students quick answer questions to avoid prolonging the interaction. In contrast, a White teacher in Shircliffe's (2006) study stated that in her first year of teaching in a desegregated school, she taught an all-

Black honors class and described the class as one of her best and the students as some of the best students. But she noted that the following year, when the White students arrived, although the Black students were as capable as the Whites who came into the school, the honors classes became predominately White in a school that was only 50 percent White.

Socio-cultural research suggests that Black students have a rich oral tradition and are very adept in the use of language (Folb, 1980; Levine, 1977; Smitherman, 2000; Whitten & Szwed, 1970). Black teachers often faulted White colleagues for failing to adapt their teaching methods to Black students, complained that their approach was too didactic, and that they tended to lecture too much (Polidore, Edmonson & Slate, 2010). Racial prejudice, failure to serve the curricular needs of diverse students, and disregard for the insecurities arising from desegregation were not conducive to learning (Robinson, Robinson, & Bickel, 1980).

The curriculum at desegregated schools for the most part remained highly focused on what was often referred to as “dead White men” (Wells, et al, 2009). These curricula did not heed the advice Dubois (1935) offered more than 50 years earlier. He suggested that,

The community must be able to take hold of its individuals and give them such a social heritage, such present social teachings and such compelling social customs as will force them along the lines of progress, and not into the great forests of death. A group or community which does not know the message of the past and does not have within its own number, the men who can feel it, and is separated from contact with outside groups who can teach it—given such a community and you have a desperate situation, which call for immediate remedy. It is such a situation among the Negroes in the South. (p. 38)

Black students often entered majority White schools feeling resentful that their old schools had been closed to facilitate desegregation. Their new schools offered nothing to inspire them, with which they could identify, or to evoke loyalty, affection, and pride (Irvine & Irvine, 1983). Most White teachers did not understand the needs of their Black students and had a difficult time connecting with them on a personal level. A White teacher in Causey's (1999) study recalled her discomfort when a Black male student put his arm around her. She said "I remember looking down and seeing this Black hand patting my shoulder. I was shocked because I wasn't used to Black students and this hand was patting my shoulder."

A teacher in Dingus' (2006) study concluded that the most detrimental aspect of school desegregation was the continual struggle of Black students to obtain equitable and empowering education in school systems that chronically failed them. The struggle to desegregate schools, in this teacher's estimation, produced very little in the way of improved educational outcomes for Black students. However, some Black students sometimes noted that it was White teachers who showed the much-needed empathy when they were struggling to fit in or feel accepted (Wells, et al, 2009). A Black teacher in Ramsey's (2007) study maintained that she and her White colleagues wanted African American students to feel equal and special, and tried to "recognize kinships rather than differences" (p. 16). For example, a Black student in Causey's (1999) study proclaimed that her Home Economics teacher was an older White lady, and she just clung to her. She shared her positive experience with her teacher:

She and I really hit it off, and she would take me to Atlanta every year with her to the big FHA convention. I looked forward to it every year. She and my mom became friends. In addition, we had some teachers also that, I felt, because we were Black, they were a

little defensive and they really didn't take the time that the Black teachers had taken with us, before the integration took place. Their main thing was just keeping you quiet in class.

Cultural Awareness

According to Dubois (1935),

What the Negro needs is not a segregated or mixed school but an education. What he must remember is that there is no magic, in either a mixed school or a segregated school. A mixed school with poor and unsympathetic teachers, and hostile public opinion and no teaching of truth, is bad. (p. 7)

Teachers are pivotal in determining the kind of education students receive. According to Dubois, the proper education of any people is a empathetic touch between teacher and student, and knowledge on the part of the teacher, not simply of the individual taught but his surroundings and background, and the history of his class and group. Multicultural education principles or what was framed as cultural learning styles, or cultural studies in the 1950s (Hoggart, 1957; Williams, 1957) and in the 1960s (Thompson, 1963), would have been viable tools to use during the transition from segregated to desegregated schools. The cultural learning styles approach grew out of the need to ameliorate the inequitable and deplorable schooling experiences of poor and working-class students in U.S. public schools, predominately students of color (Gutierrez & Rogoff, 2003). Researchers attempted to leave behind deficit-model thinking, in which cultural ways that differ from the practices of dominant groups are judged to be less adequate without examining them from the perspective of the community's participants (Cole & Bruner, 1971; Hilliard & Vaughn-Scott, 1982). Ruling out discussions of cultural variation has often meant that the cultural practices of the dominant group are taken as the norm.

Culture must be a central theme in any educational institution. It is conceptualized as a lens through which people make sense of the world. Therefore, it influences how students behave, learn, and think within educational settings. Boykin (1986), Gay (2010), and Ladson-Billings, (2009) have written extensively about how to use the culture of students as the foundation of their academic success. Elements of what is important in schools include both culturally responsive teaching (Gay, 2010) and culturally relevant pedagogy (Ladson-Billings, 2009). They are two techniques that acknowledge the connections among culture, learning, and teaching. These paradigms are designed to filter curriculum and pedagogical strategies through students' cultural frames of reference to make the content and instruction more personally meaningful and easier to master. They are grounded in the belief that students are innately curious individuals, capable of learning complex academic materials, and can perform at high levels (Sleeter & Grant, 1999), but in different ways or styles of learning (Shade, 1997). Culturally responsive teaching is achieved through the use of assessment procedures, interpersonal interactions, instructional strategies, learning climates, and multicultural curricula (Gay, 2010). Dubois (1953) stated that the more closely education adjust to real life, the clearer perception of the Blacks' social responsibilities, and the sobering realization of the meaning of progress. Woodson (1933) believed that educators must find out exactly what students' backgrounds are, what their possibilities are, how to begin teaching them about who they are, and make them better individuals.

Bennett (1999) argued that the experiences and perspectives of students must be at the center of classroom instruction and curriculum development. Au (1993) supported these claims by suggesting that teachers can help students create conceptual bridges between their personal knowledge and new information by incorporating culturally relevant knowledge. Sleeter (2005)

argued that the ideals of social justice are not enough. Instead, culturally relevant content should help students name and actively challenge form of injustice, not just recognize and celebrate differences.

Comer (1984) argued that teachers who are attuned to the Black community's history and needs represent one of the best opportunities to prepare Black students for successful performances in school and in life. Additionally, looking through the lens of African American students in regard to the influences of their teachers may provide greater insight into their academic achievement while in school and their lives afterwards (Cochran-Smith, 2001; Siddle-Walker, 2000).

The Sociocultural Context of School and Community in the South

Schools are social settings with an organized life and momentum of their own that are the most immediate, determining forces in the lives of teachers and students inside classrooms (Lawrence-Lightfoot, 1979). This social context takes into account the cultural, institutional, and structural forces surrounding teachers and students that shape their behaviors and interactions. Lawrence-Lightfoot (1979) noted that people tend to remember the good and bad extremes of teachers' behavior while their retrospective memories obscure the subtleties and erase the complexities of their personalities and relationships with students.

Although much of the research indicates that the overall learning environment was positive for many urban African American students during segregation, some Black scholars felt that the Black community had no illusions about Jim Crow school in the 1950s. Irons, (2002) asked leading Black educators to assess the educational system. Without exception they blamed inferior Black schools on racial segregation. For example, Benjamin Mays (1950) asserted that

The Jim Crow system with its inevitable consequences of inequality has warped the minds and spirits of thousands of Negro youths. They either grow to manhood accepting the system, in which they aspire to limited racial standards; or they grow up with bitterness in their minds. It is the rare Negro child who comes through perfectly normal and poised under the segregated system. Furthermore, the greatest thing that anyone can do to improve the morale of Negro children and youth is to fight to destroy legalized segregation (p. 423).

Considering the varied social and economic predicaments of poor and rural Black children under segregated living, many Black teachers did not believe that students were doomed because they lacked cultural capital. They did believe that without qualifications in the form of skills and knowledge Black students would have very few life chances due to skin color prejudice, and social location in the Jim Crow South. However, Black teachers generally came from the community in which they taught or from similar African American communities, and used culturally relevant pedagogical acts in the classroom to contribute to the acquisition of skills and knowledge for future success and opportunities (Kelly, 2010). As Ladson-Billings (2000) noted, students own knowledge formed the basis of inquiry either as part of the official curriculum or as it interacted with the official curriculum. This educational capital that the student acquired was grounded in cultural and racial knowledge that would help them to endure the world outside of the Black community, citizenship, racial pride, morality, and responsibility.

When the *Brown* decision was announced in 1954, Georgia governor Herman Talmadge claimed the Court had made the Constitution “a mere scrap of paper” and promised that his state would “map a program to insure continued and permanent segregation of the races” (Irons, 2002, p. 165). Almost one year after the original *Brown* decision came *Brown II*, in which the Court

essentially returned the issue to the states, only specifying that desegregation efforts were to proceed with all deliberate speed. However, a decade after the first *Brown* decision, less than two percent of formerly segregated school districts in Georgia experienced any desegregation. Georgia was under court jurisdiction to desegregate all schools in 1971 (Causey, 2001).

White teachers in early Georgia desegregated schools were not trained to deal effectively with African American students although the scholarship of the period advocated preparing teachers to work across racial lines, especially training them in human relations, multicultural curriculum and instruction, and democratic problem solving (Crain, Mahard, & Narot, 1982; Johnson & Hall, 1968; National Education Association, 1980). Crain and associates (1982) suggested that a liberal staff made Black students more comfortable in a desegregated school, and teacher behavior mattered most, school-related racial attitudes less, and nonschool racial attitudes least of all. For example, Muscogee County School District in Georgia did not provide any in-service activities the summer before teacher and student transfers occurred, nor during the planning week just before school opened (Causey, 1999). However, in the two weeks preceding the start of the school for the 1964-65 academic year, the school district held an in-service training in which several White teachers served as consultants and leaders for the “Negro” teachers (Causey, 2001, p.5).

Across the South, many Black and White teachers in the first years of desegregation suffered culture shock at being thrust into unfamiliar schools and instructional situations. This unfamiliarity was discussed by a former Black teacher in Causey’s (1999) study who stated that in Columbus, Georgia you could have lived a life time and never experienced a relationship with a White person because that is how separate their worlds were. In addition, a former White

teacher in this same study exclaimed, “I grew up within three blocks of my Black school assignment, yet I never knew it was there” (p.5).

Symptoms of teachers being placed in the desegregated schools included depression, self-doubt, hostility, anger, seclusion, helplessness, and a longing for the company of one’s own culture (Fuschs, 1995). Orfield (2001) noted that some teachers after desegregation faced a professional crisis, realizing they were ineffective with diverse students. White teachers seemed to experience more culture shock, perhaps because Black teachers historically had to cope in a predominately White world and make accommodations (Buxton, et.al., 1974). For example, some White teachers in Southern schools lacked the experience, the training, and the desire, to relate effectively to Black students. A White Columbus, Georgia teacher described her reaction when the student composition at her college preparation school changed as “almost like joining the Peace Corps. Going to a place you have never been, living with people you have never dealt with, not understanding their culture, where they were coming from” (Causey, 2001, p. 415). Another White teacher explained, “Will they [Black students] ever learn to behave and act like White folk?” The other White teacher expressed:

We were teaching at the same standard [as before desegregation] and we couldn’t understand why these [Black] kids couldn’t meet the criteria. I just didn’t know how to reach them or to help them. And so there was a frustration that grew each year until in 1974 when I had an opportunity to go to a private school to teach where I could teach in the way that I felt comfortable. (Causey, p. 419)

A survey of 215 Southern teachers conducted by Buxton (1974) revealed that more than a third of White teachers acknowledged becoming more conscious of their qualifications as a teacher after desegregation.

Williams (2001) suggested that productive and positive school cultures should openly support the basic values that guide the African American students, which are likely to be at odds with White middle-class values. Orfield (2001) found this to be the typical reaction of teachers across the South. A former White teacher in Causey's (1999) oral history study describes an experience in which a White male teacher gave his retirement speech after the first year of desegregation. The former teacher remembered that in his farewell speech the retiree said he could not stand the noise and continued to speak about the changes that had occurred since desegregation, and everybody knew he meant he did not want to teach Black children. The White, suburban, middle-class teachers did not understand how to work effectively with students of color and linguistic minority students in complex, changing, interracial settings without good professional training designed to support multicultural education and diversity.

Summary

The research and scholarship review in this chapter included a wide range of works from the field of interpersonal communication as it related to teacher and student relationships during the segregation and desegregation of schools, and the sociocultural ideologies that were present in each schooling context. The complexities of interpersonal communication relationships and the sociocultural factors were evident. In addition, cultural awareness and cultural studies research was explored to explain the necessity of this theoretical framework during the African American students' transition from segregated to desegregated schools. The relationship between the sociocultural contexts of school and the local community in the South set the foundation for understanding the experiences of former African American students' in segregated and desegregated schools.

Chapter III

METHODOLOGY

A qualitative research design best accommodated the purposes of this study of former African American students' perceptions of their teachers and learning experiences in segregated and desegregated schools. The goal of qualitative research is to better understand human behavior and experience in naturalistic settings (Bogdan & Biklen, 1998). It allows for surveying the perceptions of others to understand what an event means to them, how it affects them, how they think about it, and what they do about it (Patton, 2002). Merriam (2002) described several other characteristics of interpretive qualitative research design that were applicable to this study. One is being able to understand the meaning people attach to their environments and the events that have occurred therein. Qualitative methodologies also make possible the study of specific issues in depth and in detail, including experiences, behaviors, emotions, and feelings about "organizational functioning, social movements, cultural phenomena, and interactions (Strauss & Corbin, 1998, p.11). According to Merriam (1988),

In the qualitative approach to research the paramount objective is to understand the meaning of an experience. Qualitative research assumes that there are multiple realities—that the world is not an objective thing out there but a function of personal interaction and perception. It is a highly subjective phenomenon in need of interpreting rather than measuring (pp. 16-17).

In this study, oral interviews were the best way to collect data, considering that I wanted to understand aspects of the participants' lives. Oral histories bring to life the importance of the

African American community and its role in shaping the experiences of children, community, and schools (Pierson, 2009). Atkinson (1998) noted that a life story is what a person chooses to tell about the life he or she has lived, told as completely and honestly as possible, what is remembered of it, and what the teller wants others to know of it, usually as a result of a guided interview by another.

An important task in a qualitative research interview is to design a series of the most effective and unbiased questions to elicit answers so that information is revealed about the reality of the issues under study (Biemer, et.al., 1991). This study employed a phenomenological method to examine the lived experiences of former African American students. Phenomenology focuses on the analysis of conscious lived experiences and the meaning individuals assign to them (Hussert, 1970; van Manen, 1990). Phenomenological interviews were used to examine how former African American students made sense of personal and academic experiences, how these experiences shaped their worldviews, and the ways in which the experiences were contextualized in larger socio-historical milieus (Marshall & Rossman, 1995). Communication scholars also have applied this interpretive, descriptive approach to illuminate issues (Orbe, 1998, 1994; van Manen, 1990).

The use of open ended, in-depth interviews is an effective means for gathering descriptions of people's experiences (Patton, 2002, van Manen, 1990). This approach highlights the importance of context and the multiple ways that individuals construct meaning. The open ended interviews in this study were used to understand how the participants made sense of their teachers' perceptions of and actions toward them and how these impacted their lives.

The phenomenological research approach was complemented by life history research methods to increase understanding of cultural, academic, and sociological experiences. Life history interviews are a means for capitalizing on the historical perspectives and elements within the lives of participants (Casey, 1993). These social phenomena, occurrences, and processes, as captured in autobiographical accounts, can be read as sociological texts (Measor & Sikes, 1992). The data reflected a more authentic illustration of the participants' perspectives. The techniques used by Herbert (1990) to elicit sensory and emotive memories of a specific place also guided the data collection in this study. Through documenting the participants' memories and stories, the past came to life in the present and hopefully provided a different lens for working with present and future African American students. These stories, memories, and traditions are powerful expressions of community life and values.

Research Setting

In the 1950s and 1960s, Columbus, Georgia was a textile mill town, and it exemplified the class and race relationships typical of that paternalistic industry (Hall, 1987). The "old Columbus" elite, who had gained their wealth through the mills and related industries, real estate, and other investments, ruled the city politically, socially, and economically. They tended to live in segregated north Columbus neighborhoods. Mill workers and their descendants clustered in exclusively White former mills villages in north Columbus that had been incorporated into the city limits (Causey, 2001). Fort Benning, home of the U.S. Army Infantry School and a center for airborne training, adjoined the city's southern boundary. Most of the Black population of Columbus lived in the central part of the city, although several middle-class Black neighborhoods had developed in south Columbus (U.S. Department of Commerce, 1970).

In 1958, Governor Vandiver of Georgia promised to maintain segregation in the state's public schools. In July 1963, the school board in the Muscogee County School District (MCSD) formed a Special Committee on Desegregation. In September, the day after the bombing of the Sixteenth Avenue Baptist Church in Birmingham, Alabama, the board unanimously approved a freedom of choice plan to desegregate the schools one grade per year. That pace was too slow for the local NAACP, which filed a court suit in January 1964 on behalf of Black students Gwendolyn, Jerry, and Jim Lockett (Causey, 1999). *Lockett v. the Board of Education of Muscogee School District* (see Appendix C) charged the district with operating a "superior public school system for Whites" and an "inferior school system for Negroes" (Johnson, 1964, p. 1).

The *Lockett* case was in and out of court for more than three decades. One reason for its continuance was the district court judge who presided over it. Judge Elliott pushed anti-civil rights legislature, including a literacy test and White primary. Superintendent Shaw of the Muscogee County School District testified that desegregation should be gradual to avoid "chaos." He pointed out that segregation was "a long and universal custom" and to abandon it suddenly would "injure the feelings and physical well-being of the children..." (Lockett, 1964, np). In September 1964, one Black twelfth grader peacefully desegregated Baker High School, in a working-class community that served most of the local military students (MSCD Board Minutes, 1964). NAACP pressure also helped speed desegregation in Muscogee County and the Superintendent and the Board wanted to avoid legal coercion.

The school board governing Columbus Muscogee County School District had desegregated some of the K-12 grades by 1967-1968 without judicial mandate. In September 1968, the MCSD Board ruled that all grades were to be integrated through freedom of choice and

placed a minimum of two minority race teachers in each school during the 1967-1968 school year. This meant that two White teachers went to predominately Black schools and vice versa. After the Fifth Circuit Court of Appeals ruled in the *U. S. v. Jefferson County Board of Education* case in 1967 that teaching staff had to be desegregated as well, the MCSD Board responded with a plan to employ teachers where “race or color shall not be a factor” and to assign two or more teachers to schools where they would be in a racial minority (Muscogee County Board of Education, Minutes, 1968, p. 546). Fifty-nine of the 67 schools in Columbus opened in September 1968 with one or more minority race teachers. The board assigned 42 White teachers to formerly Black schools and 82 Black teachers to formerly White schools (Lockett, 1968).

Teachers and students remembered little emphasis on academics during the first tumultuous years of school desegregation. A former White teacher who was interviewed in Causey’s (1999) study remembered little emphasis on academics but rather survival was the goal. He recalled “Our task was to get through the year and have reasonable order in the schools. Our task was not to look at curricular issues. Our task was to survive the year.” A former White student in Causey’s study agreed. He said, “Desegregation taught you more about survival than it did about school. However, studies by Rodgers and Bullock, (1974) and Mahard and Crain, (1982) indicate that the academic achievement of White students remained steady in southern schools during the first years of desegregation or rose slightly.

Superintendent Shaw made his resistance to integrating the faculties known when he commented in the newspaper that, “Ironically, we have come to the point where well qualified Negro teachers are very scarce” (Johnson, 1968, p. B1). This statement contradicted his testimony in the Lockett case when he noted that Black teachers in Muscogee County averaged

more advanced degrees than the White teachers (Causey, 1999). Black teachers often completed advanced degrees from prestigious universities, such as Columbia University, New York University, and the University of Chicago. One teacher in Causey's Study stated, "If a Black teacher sought a degree program not offered at one of the three Black state colleges, rather than desegregate the University of Georgia, the state paid the difference between in-state and out-of-state tuition" for Blacks to attend colleges and universities in other states (Causey, 1999, p. 405).

Transfers of White teachers conformed to the seniority standard, with the youngest in service going to traditionally Black schools (MCSD Board Minutes, 1971). Some teachers believed that placing young White teachers in Black schools was as intentional as assigning Black veterans to White schools. Additionally, the Black female teachers experienced new pressures in working with young and inexperienced White teachers and took on the additional duty of helping their new colleagues adjust so students would not suffer (Fairclough, 2007). The new White teachers were unfamiliar with Black culture and students and sometimes, relied on the Black teachers for information and guidance. One Black teacher described her experiences quite differently. As an exemplary teacher, she was accustomed to respect from colleagues and administrators. Her White colleagues used her ideas but never allowed her to take on a leadership role as a leader in team teaching situations. The Black teacher was surrounded by younger White teachers who did not value her experience, and refused to view her as an authority figure. This teacher experienced negative incidents daily with colleagues and administrators (Milner & Howard, 2004).

Black teachers and many Whites believed that the White schools simply took the most talented and experienced Black teachers. This practice of hand-picking veteran Black teachers was documented across the South (Buxton, et. al., 1974). Some of the veteran Black teachers

had been department chairs with 15 to 20 years of experience, yet were transferred to White schools (Causey, 1999). At one Black Columbus high school, every faculty member with an advanced degree was sent to a White school (MCSD Board Minutes, 1971).

In spite of the Muscogee County's freedom of choice plan to integrate the school system, by 1970, of a total 67 schools, 15 remained all Black and 12 were all White (Lockett, 1970). Only 12.5% of 13,000 Black students attended formerly White schools, and fewer than 1% of White students attended formerly Black schools (Causey, 2001). Most of the White schools employed only the required two Black teachers, but by 1970 one Black school had 11 White teachers and another had 14 (Lockett Individual School Reports, 1968).

Federal pressures for desegregation increased when the Supreme Court dealt a harsh blow to freedom of choice plans that did not produce unitary systems in the case of *Green v. New Kent County* (1968). The district court also ordered integration by use of student racial ratios and busing in *Swann v. Charlotte-Mecklenburg Board of Education* (1969). Shortly after the ruling, the federal Office for Civil Rights mailed letters to 112 Southern districts, including Muscogee County, telling them to desegregate by December 31, 1969, or face losing federal funds (Metcalf, 1983). This was no small threat to Columbus schools which received almost 1.8 million dollars of federal funds that year (MCSD Board Minutes, 1969). As a result, the Muscogee County School District was forced to make drastic changes. On January 5, 1970, the board transferred Black and White teachers to ensure the Black-White teacher ratios in each school was equal to the teacher ratios in the entire system (Johnson, 1970). On May 29, 1971, the Fifth Circuit Court ordered Muscogee County to do away with its dual system of education (Smith, 1971). In June 1971, the School Board approved a student assignment plan with 70 percent White and 30 percent Black students for elementary schools and 75 percent White and 25 percent Black for

junior and senior high schools. The faculty ratio was to be 75 percent White and 25 percent Black in every school. The board promised the teachers with the most seniority in each school would have the choice of remaining or transferring to a different school (Causey, 2002).

Maintaining White majorities meant Blacks lost ownership of their former schools. Those middle class children whose families had been the bedrock of support for Black schools were targeted for transfer to White schools. The Black schools lost some of their traditions, such as changing the school's alma mater to accommodate White students, removing portraits of famous Blacks from view, and modifying the choreography of traditional graduation marches (Causey, 2001). The portraits of George Washington Carver came down and the traditional "sway" in the seniors' steps at graduation gave way to a march to accommodate White student preferences.

The way the Black teachers were divided in Muscogee County made it inevitable that close teacher-student relationships among Blacks would end. As Causey (2001) noted, "Black students who may have felt psychologically threatened as they went from the majority to the minority had few mentors left. Black teachers believed Black children lost out without the academic and moral influence Black teachers traditionally had exercised" (p. 415). The Black community was upset due to the massive shifting of students and teachers, and responded with various sporadic events such as disrupting board meetings, student walk-outs, petitions demanding the resignation of the superintendent, boycotts, and scattered incidents of school vandalism (Causey, 1999). A school fire at Baker High School destroyed the entire school auditorium (Battle, 1970; Dunn, 1971; Smith, 1971). In spite of the community's reaction to the unfolding legal and social events, Columbus never experienced the high-level of turmoil that happened elsewhere, such as in Birmingham and New Orleans; nor did Columbus at the time

experience a mass exodus of Whites either out of the city or into private schools (Johnson, 1964). The Black student attendance at any school never exceeded 30% (Smith, 1971). Another reason for most Whites remaining in the schools was that there were no suburban schools in the district (Causey, 1999).

Changes in the school district leadership and demographics began to influence the direction of desegregation in Muscogee County. The former superintendent retired in 1973 and the new superintendent relaxed the criteria for transfers, which caused the schools in Columbus to quickly become re-segregated. Demographic trends also contributed to changes within the schools. The Black population of Columbus increased from 34 percent in 1980 to 40 percent in 1990 (Causey, 2001). In May 1991, the Columbus NAACP revived the law suit, charging the school board with intentionally allowing the racial ratios mandated in 1971 to become unbalanced. The same judge in the original Lockett case dismissed the case in 1972 because the original defendants had graduated. But, in November of that year the 11th Circuit Court of Appeals recognized class certification for Muscogee County's Black students, allowing the case to proceed.

The school board voted to dismiss the Lockett suit and seek a declaration of unitary status. Judge Elliott ruled in the district's favor but upon appeal, in August 1996, a three-judge panel of the 11th Circuit reversed his decision. However, in May 1997, the same three-judge panel reversed its former decision in declaring, that the district had dismantled its dual system of segregated schools and was no longer under the 1971 court order. On October 22, 1997, the last day possible for an appeal to the U.S. Supreme Court, the NAACP announced it would let *Lockett* die. The Columbus NAACP made six proposals to the school board to continue efforts to desegregate schools, increase the number of Black teachers and administrators, raise minority

student achievement, and reduce the number of dropouts, all to be effected with input from the Black community (*Columbus Ledger Enquirer*, 2002, p. F3).

Selection of participants

There were 10 participants in this study. They consisted of four female and three male African American former students of varying ages and socio-economic status who attended segregated schools in Columbus, Georgia between 1954-1970, and in 1971 and beyond attended a desegregated school; one African American former counselor; one African American former teacher; and one African American former principal. A strategy of maximum variation sampling was used to avoid a simple convenience sampling (Patton, 1990; Strauss & Corbin, 1998). The maximum variation sample, which is also called a maximum diversity sample or a maximum heterogeneity sample, is a special kind of purposive sample. The sampling allows the researcher to deliberately interview a variety of people to gain a broader perspective across various boundaries. The most useful strategy for the naturalistic approach is maximum variation sampling. This strategy aims at capturing and describing the central themes or significant outcomes that cut across wide participant or program variation. Any common patterns that emerge from this variation are of particular interest and value in capturing core experiences and major shared aspects (Patton, 1990). Patton suggested that findings from even a small sample of great diversity yields important shared patterns that cut across cases and derive their significance from having emerging out of heterogeneity. Maximum variation sampling can yield detailed descriptions of each case, in addition to identifying shared patterns that cut across cases.

The participants in this study were selected purposively and non-randomly from different social circles to create maximum variation. Siddle-Walker (1996) looked for variability in her

study of the all-Black school she attended in Caswell County, North Carolina. She stated, “I also sought interviewees who would have a range of relationships to the school, including students who completed high school and those who didn’t... and students who were involved in numerous school activities and those who were not” (p.22). The plan for choosing the participants for this study followed this example by speaking with as many persons as the researcher could. The researcher attempted to interview students who attended various schools within the Muscogee County School District, of varying ages and socioeconomic groups, high school graduates and high school dropouts.

Personal and professional networks of family members, former school mates, and former and present principals, were used to identify potential participants. Additionally, study participants, as well as staff members from the Muscogee County School District Records Department, volunteered their friends. I grew up in the area, my father was a junior high and high school principal, and my mother was a third grade teacher for the Muscogee County School District. The close knit relationships formed among the African American educators in Columbus, Georgia allowed me to recruit participants for this study. This insider association provided direct access to many of the participants because they knew my father.

Initially, phone calls were made to obtain preliminary information about potential participants to ensure a broad range of experiences were included. Additional recommendations for other participants were elicited from those who were called. The researcher contacted a total of twelve former African American students and five former African American administrators. Six of the former African American students immediately agreed to meet with the researcher. Five of those contacted did not return the researcher’s call, and one person was too ill to be interviewed but was very interested in participating in future studies. Three of the five former

administrators immediately agreed to be interviewed. One requested to be interviewed by phone but passed away before the researcher could conduct the interview, one administrator stated that he could not participate in the study because the period when he was a principal at segregated and desegregated schools were too painful to revisit.

After participants were selected, an informed consent form was provided to enable them to participate voluntarily in this research study. The informed consent form explained the purpose of the study, interview guidelines, rights to privacy and anonymity, the benefits of the research as compared to the risks to the individuals, and equity of participation in the study (Creswell, 2005). The consent form ensured that participants understood the conditions of participation, agreed to participate, and had the opportunity to not participate or withdraw from the study at any time without penalty or loss of benefit. Additionally, the consent form explained that the interview would be approximately one to one and a half hours in length and audio recorded to ensure accurate transcription. (A copy of the consent form is included in Appendix A).

Copies of yearbook photographs were shared with the participants to help them to remember their past experiences in the last segregated school they attended and the desegregated schools that they transferred to the first year of desegregation. Each of the interviews was recorded with a digital recorder, copied onto a computer disc to free space on the recorder for the next interview, and then later transcribed. The researcher followed up with phone interviews for clarification. These follow-up interviews varied in length, depending on the time called, the nature of the questions asked, and the willingness of the participants themselves.

Profiles of participants

Seven former African American student participants, (including myself), one former African American teacher, one former African American counselor, and one former African American principal participated in this study. As a way of increasing the consistency of data collection, I had someone else interview me. This person had experience with qualitative interviews and understood the design of the study. Based on the anonymity clause, the participants have been given a pseudonym. The former African American students and the former Principal, Counselor, and Teacher are identified by their pseudonym.

Table 1

Profile of former student participants

Pseudonym	Gender	Desegregation Age	Desegregation Grade
Daryl	Male	14	9
Barbara	Female	16	11
Lisa	Female	10	5
Sade	Female	13	8
Jim	Male	16	11
Bill	Male	15	10
Cathy	Female	10	5

Former African American Students Profiles

Darryl is a 56 year old male born and raised in Columbus, Georgia. He attended segregated schools through eighth grade and voluntarily transferred to a desegregated school in the ninth grade when Muscogee County School District had a choice desegregation plan. The participant grew up in a two-parent household in which education was valued, despite the fact that both parents had not finished high school. His mother had a third grade education and his father, eleventh grade. Darryl attended a postsecondary vocational program and has a certificate in Industrial Electronics. He owns a Cement Masonry business that was handed down to him by his father.

Barbara is a 56 year old female born and raised in Columbus, Georgia. She attended segregated schools until the tenth grade. This participant grew up in a two-parent household in which both parents highly valued education, and both received their high school diploma. She has an Associates Degree in Nursing and has been a Registered Nurse for over 30 years.

Lisa is a 51 year old female born and raised in Columbus, Georgia. She attended segregated schools until the fourth grade. The participant grew up in a two-parent household in which both parents highly valued education. The mother had a ninth grade education and the father, a sixth grade education. Lisa has an Associates Degree in Business Administration and is currently a Patient Access Supervisor.

Sade is a 54 year old female born in Hartford, Alabama and moved to Columbus, Georgia when she was eight. She attended segregated schools until her seventh grade school year. The participant grew up in a two-parent household in which both parents highly valued education. Her mother attained a Bachelor of Science degree and her father has two Masters degrees and

credits toward a doctorate. She has a Bachelor of Science degree and credits toward a Masters, and is currently a Customer Service Representative.

Jim is a 56 year old male born and raised in Columbus, Georgia. He attended segregated schools through the ninth grade. The participant grew up in a two-parent household in which both parents highly valued education. His mother has a certificate in Nursing and his father, a Bachelor's degree. He attended college but did not complete his Bachelor's degree. Jim owns a Mortuary that was handed down to him by his father.

Bill is a 55 year old male born and raised in Columbus, Georgia. He attended segregated schools through eighth grade. The participant grew up in a two-parent household in which both parents highly valued education. His mother has a Master's degree and father has three years of higher education and a Mortician's license. He has a Bachelor's degree and is currently the owner of a Mortuary, which is a family business, and is also a City Councilman.

Cathy is a 51 year old female born and raised in Columbus, Georgia. She attended segregated schools through the fourth grade. This participant grew up in a two-parent household in which both parents highly valued education. Her mother received a bachelor's degree in teaching, and her father a masters of education and credits toward a sixth certificate. The participant has a master of education degree and is currently working on a doctorate in education. She is employed as a community college instructor.

Former African American Administrators

Mr. M is an 80 year old male born in Phenix City, Alabama and raised in Columbus, Georgia. He holds a doctorate of education degree, and was a teacher and an administrator in the Muscogee County School District for 38 years.

Mrs. S is a 75 year old female born in Eufaula, Alabama. She moved to Columbus, Georgia in 1958. She holds a masters and an educational specialist degree, and was a teacher in the Muscogee County School District for 38 years.

Mrs. P counselor is an 84 year old female who was born and raised in Columbus, Georgia. She holds a counseling certificate and a master of education degree, and was a teacher and counselor in the Muscogee County School District for 21 years.

Data Collection

Interviews.

Two data sources were used in this study. These were interviews and historical documents. Using a variety of collection techniques helps to ensure that the researcher elicits the data needed to gain understanding of the phenomena in question, and to obtain different perspectives on them (Glesne & Peshkin, 1992). The data for this study were collected through one to one and a half hour interviews and follow up phone calls. Semi-structures guidelines were followed to keep the interview focused (Weiss, 1994; Seidman, 2006), as well as apply the three step process suggested by Atkinson (1998) for life story interviews. According to Atkinson,

A life story interview involves the three following steps: a) planning (pre-interview), preparing for the interview, including understanding why a life story can be beneficial; b) doing the interview itself (interview), guiding a person through the telling of his or her life story while recording it on either audio or video tape; and c) last, transcribing and interpreting the interview (post interview), leaving questions and comments by the interviewer and other repetitions, out (only the words of the person telling the story

remain so that it then becomes a flowing, connected narrative in the teller's own words), giving the transcribed life story to the person to review and check over for any changes he or she might want to make in it, and responding to the life story in the form of a subjective reaction or substantive reaction or substantive interpretation or analysis. (p.26)

Each interview was semi-structured in order to guide the conversation, yet remained open-ended. For example, a set of 36 open-ended questions (see Appendix B) that focuses on each participant's background, perceptions of teachers' classroom management, curriculum, and teaching methods in both segregated and desegregated education systems were used in the interviews. Some of the questions were: How did you perceive your teachers at the segregated school?; How did you perceive your teachers at the desegregated school?

Each participant was encouraged to share individual experiences and perspectives (Patton, 1990), and provide information that may not have been considered prior to the interviewing process. Each interview was conducted at the participants' homes, and was audio taped. Field notes were recorded immediately following the interview. The use of audio recorded material and use of field notes allowed the researcher to concentrate on the communication with the participants, and minimize the possibility of biased selective recall.

Documents.

A collection of oral and written documents and visual texts, helped the researcher validate the reflective memories of the participants, generated from the interviews, and to reduce the amount of nostalgic and romanticized recollections. This included Muscogee County School District archival audiotapes, written transcripts, and annual reports; transcribed oral histories of former African American students; teachers, and principals; segregated and desegregated

schools' archival records, photographs, and yearbooks; and local Black and White newspaper accounts. These multiple sources served to validate or contest various versions of history, and helped realize the deeper meanings around the past events (Jeffries, 1997). Wertsch (2002) introduced a more complex perspective of multiple or "multivoices" collective memories attributable to texts. According to him, "Memory, both individual and collective, viewed as distributed between agent and texts, and the task becomes one of listening for the texts, and the voices behind them as well as the voices of the particular individuals using these texts in particular settings" (p. 6). Glesne (1999) suggested that these documents add both contextual and historical dimensions to interviews.

The Muscogee County Records Department and the Columbus State University were easily accessible for data about schools in Columbus, Georgia. The Muscogee County School District has a collection of institutional handbooks, records, photographs, superintendents' reports, and school yearbooks. Although the Muscogee County School District office was easily accessible, the supervisor set stringent restrictions on access to these documents. The researcher made two separate visits over a one-year period. On the first visit, the supervisor allowed the researcher access to the documents in two-hour intervals, which produced a total of 10 copies. During the second visit, the researcher was allowed access to documents for three to four hour intervals in the morning and afternoon, and produced a total of five copies. Thus, the researcher had to record a significant amount of information from documents on a laptop computer.

Archives at Columbus State University serve as a repository for materials documenting the history of the greater Columbus region. The archives have an extensive collection of oral histories, newspaper articles, and photographs. The archival research allowed the researcher to acquire information about the research setting and create visuals for the participants. The

archivists at the Columbus State University allowed the researcher to have unlimited access to the archives and was extremely helpful in locating valuable documents.

Yearbook photographs of school activities and personnel such as clubs, teachers, administrators, and students prompted the participants to recall past memories of specific experiences at schools in Columbus, Georgia. Berg (1995) explained that analyses of documents strengthen one's understanding of the phenomenon being examined because they are natural parts of participants' lives. Institutional handbooks, photographs, newspaper articles, and school yearbooks, along with personal narratives, were used as sources to construct profiles of former Black students' experiences in Columbus schools during segregation and desegregation. While individual and collective remembering is "always subject to the nostalgic interpretation of experience," as Beaubouf-Lafontant (1999) explained, "the points of convergence in these separate investigations of Black segregated school are many and they suggest in a compelling manner that African Americans are recalling aspects of their history that warrant the attention of educational researchers" (p. 170).

Data Analysis

The descriptive units of measurement in this research project were the participants' responses regarding their perceptions of the teachers in segregated and desegregated schools. Preliminary units of investigation included the participants' backgrounds, perceptions of teachers' classroom management styles, curricula content, and teaching methods. The data analysis process encompassed practices associated with content analysis and interpretive analysis. Creswell (2008) described content analysis as a process used to identify the presence

of specific terms or theories between data or data sets. Interpretive analysis involves examining the data sets and providing meaning to what is discovered (Creswell & Plano, 2011).

An analytic-inductive process to organizing the data was used according to guidelines suggested by Miles & Huberman (1994). In this study, content and interpretive analysis occurred on three datasets: interviews, field notes, and historical documents secured from the archives of Columbus State University and the Muscogee County School District. The aim of each analysis was to identify emergent themes within each data set and commonalities among the data sets. The audiotapes from the interviews as well as field notes were transcribed by the researcher and archival documents were synchronized. All stages of data analysis were conducted in reference to the theoretical framework of the study. Detailed notes related to the various concepts discussed in the literature review were made. The process of data analysis began with the researcher coding, and sorting data associated with the three data collection instruments. Sorted data were then entered onto data analysis poster boards. Included on the poster boards were participants' responses, archival and field notes, and emergent themes.

Preliminary and secondary analyses encompassed Creswell's (2005) three-step procedure for analyzing and interpreting data. This procedure consisted of understanding and validating the data, comparing the data, and developing themes. Understanding the data constituted analyzing the degree to which responses of the participants related to the questions, and the degree to which the historical data, if at all, coincided with participants' responses, or produced common information not shared by participants. The data were read several times using a line-by-line analysis to organize it into conceptual categories to identify themes and patterns (Strauss & Corbin, 1998). Open coding was used to locate themes and assign labels in an attempt to condense the mass of data into categories (Neuman, 2004). Responses provided by

participants were separated into two categories: relevant and irrelevant data. Responses not associated with the questions were identified as irrelevant data and responses associated with the questions were identified as relevant data. After validating participants' responses, interview data were compared to archival data and scholarship addressing segregated and desegregated schooling.

After the initial interviews and follow-up interviews were transcribed and archival information were synchronized, relevant data excerpts from the interviews and archives were identified and coded (Bogdan & Biklen, 1998; Seidman, 2006; Weiss, 1994). Grouping concepts into categories is important because it enables the researcher to reduce the number of units. In addition, categories have analytic power because they have the potential to explain and predict. Four labels were used to identify comparison categories of emergent historical themes, perceptions of teachers' classroom management styles, curricula content, and teaching methods. Relevant data provided by participants and data extracted from historical documents were classified according to the identified categories. The final step in the analysis process involved the developing of relationships, themes, and codes as they related to the participant's perceived experiences with segregated and desegregated schooling, and historical scholarship.

The identified themes and patterns were placed on separate poster boards by categorizing data sources. One board consisted of content from the student participants; the second board contained interview content from the administrative participants; and the third poster was created from secondary data sources such as newspaper articles, yearbook pictures, school history books, superintendents' reports, and oral histories. After common themes and patterns were identified, the researcher coded and recoded the data looking for every instance in which a participant talked about a particular theme. A preliminary coding process, reflective of the conceptual

framework and research questions, was created prior to the fieldwork (Creswell, 2002). Creating category codes for the data and marking passages in the transcribed interview made it easy to retrieve the content for comparison and analysis. For example, the researcher labeled interpersonal communication as one descriptive theme and matched interview responses related to the principles (i.e., communication style used; perceptions of self and teacher, type of relationship between teacher and student, etc) to identify common and uncommon themes. Grouping concepts into categories was important because it enabled the reduction of the number of units and facilitated interpreting the data (Strauss & Corbin, 1998). Creating categories also allowed the researcher to analyze similar and contradictory experiences among the participants. The participants' perceptions of teacher-student interactions in segregated and desegregated schooling provided the basis for investigating the question, In what ways did African American students who attended segregated schools in Columbus, Georgia and later transferred to desegregated schools, perceived how these experiences affected their subsequent academic and life accomplishments?

Summary

The analyzed data sets were divided by generating themes. Interpretation of the data resulted from categorizing and coding texts. The conditions of the coding process stemmed from the common responses between reports of the participants and common themes among historical data. Descriptions, patterns, and phrases shaped the general categories and provided the framework for condensing the data into precise concepts and conclusive themes. This chapter described the qualitative methodology that was used in this study to facilitate these analytical processes. An extensive description of the study's research setting also was provided. In addition, the selection of participants and a descriptive profile of each participant were presented.

Chapter IV

FINDINGS

The purpose of this study was to investigate and gain insight into the perceptions of a group of African American former students' experiences in segregated and desegregation schools in Columbus, Georgia. To do so, seven former African American students who attended segregated and desegregated schools between 1954-1978, and three former school staff in administrative, teaching, and counseling positions during that same time period were interviewed. The findings are also based on analyses of secondary data sources including school annual history reports, school yearbook content, superintendents' reports, and articles from a Black newspaper (*Columbus Times*) and a White newspaper (*Columbus Enquirer*). The investigation of the African American students' perceptions included three concentrations: (1) students' perceptions of their teachers in segregated and desegregated schools; (2) students' viewpoints of their teachers' perceptions of them as learners in segregated and desegregated schools; and (3) students' viewpoints regarding the impact of teachers' perceptions on their academic and life experiences.

After examining the former students' responses eleven themes across all participants were identified. In regards to former students' perception of their teachers in segregated schools, kinship, caring, and disciplinarians emerged as perceptions of teachers in segregated schools, while uncaring and unwelcoming emerged as perceptions of teachers in desegregated schools. Additional analyses of students' views of their teachers' perceptions of them as learners in segregated and desegregated schools, resulted in a variety of responses and two recurrent themes coded as intellectually capable and intellectually inferior. Intellectually capable emerged as their teachers perceptions of them as learners in segregated schools, while they thought their teachers

in desegregated schools considered them intellectually inferior. In reference to the impact on the former students' academic and life experiences, motivation and success in segregated schools emerged. Sense of lost and determination to succeed surfaced as impacts on the former students' academic and life experiences in desegregated schools.

The findings in this study suggest that interactions with teachers in segregated and desegregated schools played a significant role in the former African American students academic and life experiences. Specific findings and data related to each research inquiry are presented with its associated themes. Quotes from former student participants and primary and secondary sources are offered to substantiate the findings. The first section addresses findings associated with segregated schools and the second section addresses findings associated with desegregated schools.

Segregated Schooling

There has been a conscious effect to produce counter-memories that challenge dominant perceptions of legally segregated schools for Blacks (Kelly, 2010). Over the last 15 years, several scholars have described segregated schools as “good and valued” (Dougherty, 1998; Fairclough, 2007; Siddle-Walker, 2005, 2000, 1996) in regards to educating Black students. Siddle-Walker (1996) suggested that valued Black segregated schools during the era of de jure segregation provided outstanding opportunities, exemplary teachers, engaging curriculum and extra curriculum activities, active parental involvement, and community leadership through school principals. The segregated schools attended by the former student participants in this study were identified as providing all of these qualities of a “good and valued” school.

An inspirational message written by the principal in the yearbook of a segregated high school that the majority of the former students attended stated the value of the Black student.

This type of message can enhance the students' academic and cultural identities. The principal declared:

The youth of today are trying to gain a definite place in society. These intelligent persons try to better society. They try to ameliorate problems instead of aiding them. They strive for a better life for all and not for some. While in school, the young people have to stop and look at their environment and make decisions in their own way (Carver High School, 1969, p. 10).

A significant finding related to teacher-student interactions in segregated schools was the degree to which the former students perceived Black teachers as caregivers, disciplinarians, and family members. All of them were motivated to be successful as a result of former teachers' sense of caring, disciplinary approaches, and parental guidance. These themes are presented next along with detailed responses from former student participants and secondary sources that confirmed these findings.

Students Perceptions of Teachers.

How former students perceived their teachers during segregated schooling was based on their verbal and nonverbal interactional styles. One of the features conveyed through these interactions was a combination of caring and kinship. Several of the former students shared how the caring nature of Black teachers went beyond teaching to assisting parents or primary caregivers with meeting their emotional, physical, and social needs.

Kinship and Caring.

Each of the seven former student participants used terminology that reflected a sense of caring that was synonymous with the concept of kinship. Five of them even used family oriented terminology in describing their relationship with their former Black teachers.

Several of the former students explained that the teachers managed the classroom like raising a child. Darryl, who attended segregated schools through eighth school remembered, “I was a little slow. A couple of guys picked on me and Mrs. F had my back. She cared about me and wanted me to be secure.” Lisa and Cathy who were both in segregated schools through fourth grade viewed former Black teachers as caring and identified them as parent figures. According to Lisa, “They were caring and [were] like the second parent at school,” and Cathy added, “the teachers talked to the students as if they were your parents; almost like a second set of parents.” Bill, who attended segregated school through eighth grade explained in more detail that:

The teachers were like your mother, father, auntie, grandmother...family oriented, who took a close interest every day. We always had the teacher who would put that arm around you. They constantly had 28-30 students, and every individual was important. The teachers were able to deal with that and made sure everybody learned...made sure you got your homework done, called the house, or came by your house. If students were still having trouble, they could come after school to meet with the teachers and this began in Mrs. L's class in 2nd grade. The students who were failing became C students and C students became A and B students. Kids in the projects felt sorry for themselves, and the teachers wouldn't let them; they pushed them to their limits. And now we have cardiologists straight out of the project.

Mr. M, a former principal, Mrs. P, a former teacher and Mrs. S, a former counselor who participated in this study also associated teachers with kinship and a sense of caring. Mr. M said “Black schools were caring institutions for Black kids, and that was the center of all activities for them. Teachers made sure that parents were involved in their children’s education whether they were from the Elizabeth Cady project or lived in a home in Cedar Hills.” Mrs. P stated, “We viewed the students as if we gave birth to them, and we felt like they were our children.” According to Mrs. S, “There was a warm, family-like atmosphere, and I was like their mother.”

Concurring with these viewpoints, Sade, who attended segregated school through seventh grade extended the concept of caring by Black teachers in segregated schools by giving more specific details of how these feelings were actualized in practice beyond academics. She recalled that,

Back then, if there were students who didn’t have material things, hygiene wasn’t up to par, or they were hungry, the teachers paid attention and tried to help by donating clothes and made sure they had a hot breakfast. They were concerned with more than just school life. They knew home life affected school life, so they tried to make sure students were well rounded, economically and socially, and they were not just concerned with education or their paycheck. They were dedicated.

The three administrators confirmed the additional support provided by staff and faculty at segregated schools. Mr. M and Mrs. S stated that they bought students what they needed and took them on field trips. Mr. M proclaimed that he and his wife, who was also a teacher, personally provided supplies and materials students needed in the classroom. Mrs. S commented on buying students breakfast and lunch, and purchasing clothes for those who needed them.

Sade, who attended segregated schools school until seventh grade, stated that one teacher stood out in helping the students to value their culture. She continued:

My 7th grade teacher taught us about Africa and African history when that wasn't something that was taught in school. Africa was referred to at that time as a dark continent and they would just tell us about the resources that came from Africa and not about Apartheid. We just knew Africa was rich in natural resources. He made us learn all the countries and capitols of those countries. He probably influenced me to be more interested in my African culture, our ancestors' culture.

Based on several school history books from the segregated schools (each school in the Muscogee County School District had a practice of presenting an annual status report in the form of a history book), the philosophy of reaching the whole child, as these former student participants implied, was promoted within the segregated school educational system. Specifically, caring for and the importance of reaching the whole child were reflected in Carver Junior High history book (Carver High School, 1968), the school that five of the seven former students attended. A quote from the 1968 Carver Junior High School history book emphasized the philosophy:

The school serves as that stream of experiences to develop the aesthetic, intellectual, moral, and physical powers of its students up to their fullest potentialities. This goal can be reached through experiencing good human relations, the unity of life that exists in promoting character, education, and developing good leadership traits among people. (p. 3)

This was also the ideology of another segregated junior high that three of the seven former students attended. The 1966 Southern Junior High history book stated that it offered a

comprehensive academic program to develop the whole personality of the child. In addition, it contained information related to this premise in that each student's residence, educational intent, occupational status of parents, and the elementary school attended was considered essential for relating to and understanding students. (Southern Junior High School, 1966, p. 3)

The teachers in segregated schools also were concerned about and interested in the futures of their students. A statement by Barbara implied that teachers in segregated schools cared about students receiving a quality education. She said, "They knew it was hard to reach the higher level of education that you needed and they stressed the importance of getting an education. They stressed what was needed and gave you the groundwork. Another student Lisa, remembered a teacher saying, "Your future is based on education, and life is not fair. It never will be. You will be qualified and told no, so you should have yourself prepared and educated so they can't turn you away because you don't have the credentials." According to Jim, as a result of the concern and caring nature of Black teachers in segregated schools, more intensive learning occurred since, "We learned more in segregated than integrated schools because the teachers really cared."

The Southern Junior High 1970 history book focused on how the caring nature of Black teachers led to the creation of study sessions for students who wanted and needed help in mathematics. After school help sessions were conducted twice a week for one hour for remedial math and for those students who wanted advanced work. Bill who attended this junior high commented on the extra help and study sessions provided by the math teachers at the school. He said,

A math teacher borrowed algebra books from a high school and brought them to our junior high school. On a voluntary basis, we could spend twice a week with her to learn

algebra. She made us pledge to her that we would not be placed in a general math class and would take Algebra when we got to high school, and we all did.

Causey (1997c) found similar practices in her study of segregated schools. For example, one of her participants stated:

The children were as progressive as they could have been. They were given standardized tests, and the county tests scores were combined. The school board would say that the Black kids would always bring the tests scores down. The principal said, 'They are not going to blame our kids for low scores.' So, the principal asked for a volunteer program. Just about every teacher volunteered to remain after school for tutoring children. After the first tutorial program, the children moved through about three grades. After the second tutoring session, it really helped them with their test scores in reading and math.

Disciplinarians and Partnerships with Parents.

Descriptions of their segregated learning environments provided by the participants in this study were consistent with those presented by Jones (1981, p. 23) as "one's home away from home, where students were taught, nurtured, supported, corrected, encouraged, and punished." All seven former students used terminology associated with the word "disciplinarian," when describing their perceptions of Black teachers in segregated schools. Their memories were sprinkled with words such as fear, firm, strict, and demanding. They also labeled discipline practices administered by the Black teachers as verbal reprimands and whippings, agreed that their parents approved of this disciplinary approach, and administered a replicated or similar approach at home in support of the Black teachers.

The consequences of not working hard or misbehaving are characterized through the following statement made by Sade who was the daughter of an educator and a former teacher.

She commented:

Overall, the teachers were loving, strict and made sure we were disciplined. The teachers were firm. They made sure you listened and behaved. We had corporal punishment at that time, and if we got in trouble we got whipped by the teacher. Because we got whippings, we knew to behave in school. At that time, children respected teachers a lot, and if you got in trouble at school, your parents would hear about it, and you also got in trouble at home.

Barbara, who attended segregated schools through tenth grade and Lisa also described the former teachers as concerned but firm. Barbara stated, “The language was one that most Black students were accustomed to. They would say, ‘Sit your behind down. They were like the 2nd parent at school.’” Lisa added,

The teachers’ communication style was like your mother’s. They said what they had to say and meant it. They didn’t care if you went home and told your momma because if you got in trouble at school, you got in trouble at home, too.

Former students recalled that teachers in segregated schools were strict and serious about students getting an education. Darryl declared, “You just didn’t play in class. You got whippings if you did wrong. They had leather straps.” In agreement, Cathy said, “I remember the teachers being very firm. We did not play around in class. We had to take our education seriously. They meant business, and if you misbehaved, you got spanked.” Jim, who attended segregated schools through ninth grade recalled, “Black teachers used fear, discipline, and punishment as a strategy. They made you listen and behave. Teachers really cared, and students were more apt

to graduate.” Another former student, Bill, described his classroom behavior as “mannerable” because he feared the consequences of misbehaving, and added:

My most memorable teacher was an excellent teacher but also a disciplinarian. She gave us lectures when we misbehaved, and she laid us across her lap and spanked us. Then she sent us to the principal’s office, and we were spanked. And when she called home, I got another spanking.

The three administrators also commented on their disciplinary actions. Mrs. P stated that she “had to play the role of a firm disciplinarian based on what I was accustomed to in my family and within the Black culture. The students also expected this behavior.” Mrs. S remembered, “Students thought I was mean but I just wanted the best for them. I didn’t want them to think they couldn’t do well.” Mr. M stated simply, “I was firm but fair.” Additionally, the Black community noted these disciplinary approaches and authoritative behaviors by referring to Black teachers as an influential, semi-militaristic, and vocal segment of the community (*Columbus Times*, 1970, p. 5).

Students Perceptions of Teachers’ Perceptions

Comments of former students addressing teachers’ perceptions of them in a segregated learning environment yielded a variety of responses and one reoccurring theme classified as intellectually capable. Much of the research on African American teachers in segregated schools report that the teachers “made” the students do their work. They would not allow students to fail. These descriptions of teachers provided by the former students in this study are consistent with the findings of several scholars such as Foster, (1990), Murrell, (2001), Siddle-Walker, (1996), (2000), and Sowell, (1976). Four former students explained that their teachers

in segregated schools viewed them as “smart.” The other three addressed personality traits as well as their academic abilities.

Barbara described the teachers’ perception of her as,

a person who wanted to learn and excel, and a student who wanted to be the best that she could be. They saw me as smart. I wanted to be in the top 10%, and the teachers encouraged me to be the best that I could be. It started at home though with my parents. Sade explained that, “Teachers perceived me as smart, and they treated me like I was smart. They encouraged me, made me feel more positive about myself, and made me feel like I was smart.”

Cathy stated that teachers perceived her as smart but lazy. She said:

I perceived myself as smart but I remember when I was in the second grade (I think it was the second), I could not figure out how to tell time. I could not remember how to determine that the eight and nine on the clock meant that it was twenty till or a quarter till. I just could not understand this concept and was so frustrated every time we covered time. And then I finally got it. My teacher helped me figure it out by teaching me a technique of how to remember it.

Jim concluded,

They [teachers] perceived me as being an A student. Teachers thought I was bright and I strove to stay that way. They would see our parents at grocery stores, church and fraternity or sorority meetings and kind of enforce behaviors about you getting your lesson done.

Even the three former students who focused more on personality traits in their assessment of Black teachers' perceptions of Black students in segregated schools also mentioned academic abilities. It was as if they needed to explain why the teachers perceived them as quiet, sneaky, and a joker in spite of their academic performance. Darryl stated that the teachers perceived him as sneaky. He continued:

I didn't cause trouble and tried not to get taught. I cheated myself out of an education. I was just cruising through. If I could do it over again I would approach school differently. I would try to learn more. I was like a C/D student. Sometimes, I couldn't catch on. I was a little slow, but not "special."

Lisa said she was motivated by the teaching methods used in classes. She remembered,

Teachers perceived me as quiet. One teacher said, 'You are too quiet for your own good,' but I was a good student who made As and Bs. I could not read something one time and it stuck. I was motivated through their use of repetitiveness and memorization techniques that helped me with my reading. I was glad that if we were learning something that required memorization, we put the time in to do that. If it was math, we were spending the time to learn tricks of the trade to get it done. If you couldn't remember something, they showed you short cuts and other memory devices.

Additionally, Bill stated that some of the teachers perceived him as a very nice person but who was a jokester. He explained,

I would do things and they would see people laughing but not see me laughing. I told jokes and had a straight face looking at the teacher. Along the way, I had a few teachers who saw me as a silver spoon child whose mother was a teacher doing all his homework.

My mother assisted me but she didn't do my work for me. I was a straight A student.

What segregated times did for us is we had time to develop study habits because we didn't have much else to do. We went out and played after we did our homework. When I look back, that was the blessing in life for my foundation.

Mr. M attributed the higher academic performance of students during segregation, and their lower drop-out rates to high expectations of the principals and teachers. He said that poverty was no excuse and it was not accepted as a reason for not learning. Mrs. S and Mrs. P both agreed that the students at Carver also were self-motivated.

Impact on Academic and Life Experiences

The common theme among the former students in relation to the influence of their experiences in segregated schools was motivation. The teachers had high expectations for student success, and exhibited strong dedication and a demanding teaching style that motivated students academically. However, the effects on their life experiences were not as strong and definitive. All of the former students made reference to the caring, disciplinary, and culturally congruent features of their teachers' instructional and relational styles. Only six stated that the motivation caused them to want to excel academically. This attitude is consistent with those reported by Foster (1990, 1997) that African American teachers demonstrate a strong belief that Black students are capable of succeeding in school. Three of the former students claimed that their lives were not impacted by their experiences in segregated schools, three stated their experiences in segregated school positively impacted their lives due to the motivation their Black teachers provided, and one did not respond to the question.

Two former students suggested that Black teachers motivated them by providing information and encouragement needed to continue their education. Barbara stated, “They knew it was hard to reach the higher level of education that you needed, stressed the importance of getting the education, and gave you the groundwork. I wanted to be in the best in school, and in life.” Jim agreed in explaining, “They gave you the ground rules for what was needed for college. They went the extra mile to give you the tools to proceed on to college. The teachers knew it was hard and they gave you the tools you needed to get jobs.”

Bill shared how teachers in segregated schools used psychology as an assessment tool, a motivational device, and a means to facilitate academic and life success. He explained:

I’ve always been amazed. They were so far ahead of their time. There have been national programs like No Child Left Behind and teachers at that time were practicing it. You would not be left behind by Black teachers. The teachers assessed each individual in the classroom and knew your personality, hot and cold spots, and approached everything through psychology. Psychologically, they got in your head and motivated you to do your math and science. I liked to play with the science kit and do experiments, and if I did well in class, they would let me play with the science kit for 15-20 minutes in a group. They put groups together to help each other, and that helped me to stay focused. The teachers taught us the world belonged to us and we can become anything we wanted to in life. They taught us that civil rights and education would provide opportunities in the job market. The teachers’ perceptions impacted my academic and life choices because they wouldn’t allow me to settle for mediocrity. I was an A student.

Although Darryl said Black teachers in segregated schools motivated him to learn, he “wished he had been a better student.” He stated that the motivational techniques used by the teachers did not affect his long-term academic or life experiences. According to him,

In the 60s and 70s, [Black teachers] had already been through this. They knew you had to learn because they knew the struggles and wanted to prepare you for the future. They didn't affect my life choices. I didn't do anything the year after high school. I had a street mentality. I thought I was going to be a player. I was taking the wrong outlook.

Of the former students, Sade who had also been a former special education teacher and Cathy, a current teacher, implied that Black teachers during segregation motivated them personally, facilitated their academic success, and affected their subsequent lives through role modeling. Sade, the former special education teacher said,

When we were little, we played school a lot and pretended to be teachers. I wanted to be like them because they were positive role models. I was influenced by them to continue my education, to have a stable job, and to help someone else. They divided us into groups and worked on a program called SRA. There were short stories, and it went by the reading level you were on and progressed from yellow to red to green. Students didn't feel dumb when they worked on the SRA because you worked based on your ability and to not be stagnant. Everybody was excited to move on. This motivated students and it excited me so much that it influenced me as a special education teacher. I liked it so much I ordered it for my special education students when I taught.

Cathy stated:

I felt a sense of belonging, and I looked up to those teachers who looked like me. I think I did well academically in the segregated school because of them. As I look back at my time in the segregated school, I think those initial teachings helped bring me where I am today, my experiences as a learner or a teacher, how I teach, and why I teach.

Mr. M and Mrs. P stated that they often ran into their former students who have graduated from college and are doing well. Mr. M argued that Black teachers taught Black students to respect themselves and live a good life. He continued, “Many of the students that I taught went to college; the success rate was greater and the drop-out rate was less.” Mrs. P noted that, “At Carver, we produced some of the best Black kids. They became doctors, lawyers.... We got great productivity out of that school.” Mrs. S declared that during the one year she taught twelfth grade English, the Black students excelled.

Several yearbooks of the segregated schools emphasized the importance of academic and professional success for Black students. The documents depicted an all-Black administration overseeing clubs and organizations within the schools. Black teachers were depicted mentoring students in various ways such as supervising cheerleading squads, coaching basketball and football teams, and advising a variety of academic clubs and organizations such as the Allied Medical Club, Dramatics Club, English Club, Future Teachers of Tomorrow, Lawyers of Tomorrow, National Honor Society, Nurses of Tomorrow, Science Club, and Student Council. The yearbook of the high school, attended by five of the former students in this study included the message, “We expect our students to be strong symbols of strength and knowledge. We

progress through their experiences and learn from their examples.” (Carver High School, 1970, p. 22)

In addition to providing extended support to students, this same school demonstrated that Black educators, leaders and role models existed beyond the segregated school system by inviting eminent community members as graduation speakers. These included former Senator Leroy Johnson; historian, Horace Mann Bond, and Cornelius V. Troup, former president of Fort Valley State College. (Carver High School history book, 1965, 1966, 1967) In the 1968-69 school yearbook, the principal of Carver High wrote the following inspirational message to students:

Today, we are on the threshold of a new era. Negroes, who are qualified and competent are being placed in industry and in local, state, and national government. In fact, they are actively participating in the mainstream of our society. What does this mean to you? These changes offer a challenge to you. As the result of these changes, the graduates should not stop here but should further their pursuit of education and preparation by entering college, vocational school, or industry. The opportunity is yours. Take advantage of it. (Carver High School, 1968, p. 5)

These messages from community leaders, principals and teachers through the years of segregation may have stimulated academic performance. At Carver High School, students received scholarships to prestigious universities; won first place prizes in the Muscogee County School District’s Regional Social Science fair; four first place awards in the state science competition; two first place awards in the regional science fair; and a third place ranking in the state science competition. One student at the school was selected to participate in the Governor’s Honors program in mathematics, another won second place in Chemistry at the Muscogee

County Regional Science Fair, and a third received honorable mention for zoology and bacterial research. Another student won the State's Essay Award, was invited to the Governor's mansion to participate in the Governor's honor program in mathematics, and received a \$200 prize and a trip to Washington, D.C. (Carver High School History Book, 1970). These achievements are similar to ones reported by teachers in Causey's (1997d) oral history project of the academic achievements of Black students in segregated schools.

Desegregated Schooling

A letter from the Office of the Superintendent of Education dated August 6, 1971 (see Appendix D), addressed parents of the students attending school in the Muscogee County School District. It stated that the students would be assigned to designated schools based on a 70:30 ratio effective September, 1971. That is the racial composition of student populations in schools would be 70% White and 30% Black. A direct quote from the letter states:

Our plan requires that all White students equal in number to 70% of the capacity of the school to which they have been assigned, living nearest to said school, and all Negro students equal in number to 30% of the capacity of the school to which they have been assigned, living nearest to said school, shall attend said school for the year beginning, 1971. (Muscogee County School District, 1971, p. 1)

According to Causey (2001), the educational climate during the first year of desegregation was antagonistic and resentment for both Black and White students, Black staff working in predominantly White desegregated schools, and for White staff working in desegregated Black schools. Causey also reported that every high school in Columbus experienced significant conflicts the first year. The most persistent acts were a school fire, riots,

anti-busing protests, and a protest at a desegregated White school for not having Black cheerleaders.

The school board meetings were also hostile environments. An article entitled, “Hot and Hectic School Board Meetings” in the *Columbus Times* (Black newspaper) described the first year of desegregation as tumultuous. It contained photographs of Black and White citizens crowding around the school board members with the captions, “This man spent most of the meeting shouting insults at the superintendent and the board members,” and “Another abusive voice is heard.” Although, most of the comments made at the meeting were described as brutal and bigoted, one man’s remarks were calm and reasoned. A Black army officer stated:

Why can’t we, as a total community look at some of the positive aspects of this plan and start to assist the school board in working out some of the inherent problems we are going to face when two ethnic groups are merged together. ... You can say tonight, that there was one ‘nigger’ who stood up for this school board. Thank you. (*Columbus Times*, September, 1971, p. 8).

The first two tumultuous years of desegregation resulted in the Superintendent of schools writing a report focusing on the specific future needs of the school district. In the June 30, 1974 report the Superintendent of Muscogee County School District asked, “What does the future hold?” He then answered with the following statement.

The Muscogee County School District shall consolidate gains already made, and shall take further steps forward. It is the goal of the Board of Education to bring the blessings of a good education, consistent with the aptitudes and interests of the child, to each and every child within the School District. With the continued support of the citizens of

Muscogee County, it is hoped that this goal will be achieved. (Muscogee County School District Superintendent's Report, p.1)

In relation to desegregated schools and the impact on the former students who participated in this study academic and life experiences, a significant finding was the degree to which they succeeded under such adverse conditions. The findings of this study in response to the challenge for the former students who participated in this study are presented according to a description of their perceptions of their teachers in desegregated schools, their perceptions of the teachers' perceptions of them, and the impact of desegregated schooling on their academic and life experiences.

Students Perceptions of Teachers.

Desegregation rulings put Black students into formerly all-White classrooms, usually with White teachers. The former students in this study remembered their White teachers as uncaring and unwelcoming, compared to the caring and embracing demeanor of Black teachers. In her study, Causey (2001) reported similar results but the Black students in her study declared they just tolerated desegregated schools but had little or no feelings of connection to and affiliation with them.

Although felt unwelcomed the first year of desegregation and thought White teachers did not care as much about her as the Black teachers, she considered the overall experiences as positive, as evident in the following statement:

The first year, it was like I was a mouse in the white house. I didn't get to know the teachers on a one-on-one basis. It was strictly business and not welcoming. After the first year, you felt welcomed, but it was different. You had to find your way. The

teachers had an open door policy, and were willing to help you. I had three Black teachers and one White teacher. I don't feel I was treated unfairly.

The other former students in this study did not share the same memories. For example, Jim remembered that, "A lot of the teachers were just waiting to retire when the Blacks came even though it was a predominately White school. They were just going through the motions with the Black students; they really didn't care."

Several former students felt they were ignored or invisible in the desegregated schools they attended. Lisa said, "The teachers were very prejudice. They were not concerned with Black kids coming up in that school. They would always ask the White kids what they thought. You raised your hands and you were overlooked." Two other former students also recalled being overlooked. Sade stated, "The teacher basically ignored me. She [the teacher] treated me like I didn't exist;" and Cathy added, "I would raise my hand and the teacher didn't acknowledge me at all."

Two students commented on feeling as though their teachers did not care for or understand them. Lisa explained:

Some of them didn't care. I had an English teacher, and I just sat there. I don't think I learned anything. I was just passed to the next grade. I don't know what I learned that year. I ended up going into remedial math. It didn't help. I mean, I see where she was trying to help me. But she just placed me somewhere because she didn't know what to do, and that bothered me.

Similarly, Bill described in detail how White teachers in desegregated schools were "learning about Black students for the first time," and,

They didn't understand what made us click. I felt unclothed. The student ratio was 70% White and 30% Black, and teachers 75% White and 25% Black, so we only had a few outlets when we had trouble to go and find the teachers we could lean on. The caring was gone. Everybody was on his or her own, and you had to survive the best way you could. There was a group of Black students who looked out for each other. We talked about how the White teachers really didn't care about us like the Black teachers did in the past. There were some good teachers but many of them spent their time trying to trip us up every day. They spent a lot of time trying to trip us up so we wouldn't make the A; you would make the B or C. Some did it in the manner of not answering any more than you asked knowing that they could have gone into B, C, and D to give you a good understanding. When you get to the point of reflecting back on segregated schools; Black teachers pulled your coat tails on a regular basis. But when we got exposed out there [desegregated school] and did things just to see if they would reach out to pull us back, nobody did. They wished you would end up in the Dean of Students office.

Cathy transferred to a primarily White school in the fifth grade and felt this negativity during the early phases of desegregation. She recalled her experiences as, "I had a fairly poor experience my first year with one teacher. She was very negative, demeaning, and didn't seem like she wanted us [Black students] there." Sade concurred, in noting that, "They seemed like they didn't want to be there. I didn't feel the same connection about them caring for our welfare outside of school." Darryl who chose to attend a new all-White high school the first year of freedom of choice, also described the teachers as just doing their job, and nothing more.

Mrs. P agreed with the former students that some teachers in desegregated schools did not care and others "just didn't know better." Mrs. S recalled "my son went to Baker and it

looked good on the outside but it wasn't on the inside. There was a school fire and protests because the Black students didn't feel like they belonged.”

According to Mr. M said that there was some unfairness at the beginning of desegregation toward the students and him as an educator. He said,

It took something from the Black students. They put the Black boys out of school too much. The White teachers were also apprehensive about having a Black principal, and I had to earn respect by showing them I knew what I was doing.

Students' Perceptions of Teachers' Perceptions.

Several participants stated that White teachers in desegregated schools perceived them as a collective who was less intelligent, rather than as individuals of varying intellectual abilities. The use of “we” or “us” was common in their descriptions of these perceptions. This negative stereotypical view was also reflected in former teachers' responses as well as media representation in the local White newspaper.

A 1970 article in the *Columbus Enquirer*, (the local White newspaper) addressing the Black community about Black students may have contributed to how Black students constructed their perceptions of White teachers reactions to them.

The article stated,

You're black. You live in the ghetto. You are trapped in a low-paying job. Good schools and a good education are the key to a better life for your children. Past experience has demonstrated that good schools are those attended by a large number of whites (*Columbus Enquirer*, April, 1970, p. 10).

How the former students' thought their teachers perceived them in desegregated schools was congruent with the negative media message of intellectual inferiority and low expectations

such as the *Columbus Enquirer* article. Five of the seven former students made reference to White teachers perceiving them as having a low degree of intelligence. Three used the words “stupid and dumb” in describing White teachers’ perception of them; one did not answer the question, and one said that the White teachers did not treat him the same as the Black teachers, but he could not share any details about the differences.

Thus, in the first year of desegregation, a yearbook of a school that was attended by four of the study participants, depicted no Black counselors or principals, two Black teachers, one Black player each on the basketball, baseball and football teams, and the only group of Blacks depicted were cafeteria workers and custodians. The lack of visibility of Black authority figures in positions of leadership, power, and prestige could have added to the White teachers perception that Black student were incapable of intelligence.

Perceiving their White teachers as considering them intellectually inferior was a source of discomfort for the former Black students in desegregated schools. As Bill explained, “Teachers perceived us as aliens. They later learned that we had brains that worked; we didn’t have to cheat. We actually could listen in class and do well on pop quizzes. Later we were accepted as real people.” Jim added, “The teachers perceived us Blacks as coming into their school. In the integrated schools, they wanted to put you in the remedial classes. The school was in a pretty affluent part of town. The Whites were upper crust and Blacks were from different socioeconomic backgrounds.” Sade stated, “In high school, I got lost in the crowd. The teachers saw me as an average student and not smart anymore.”

Lisa, Bill, and Cathy thought White teachers considered Black students as stupid or dumb. As Lisa declared, “The White teachers perceived me as dumb or illiterate somehow because I was quiet. Jim referred to Black students collectively when recounting White teachers’

perceptions of him in desegregated schools. He said, “Some Black students were perceived as dumb or remedial because they were put in special education classes. And I think they were just students who needed tutoring, a little bit more attention.” Cathy agreed in stating, “I believe the White teachers perceived me as stupid, dumb, or, at least that is how they treated me.” Sade elaborated on these perceptions that Black students were considered dumb, and White students were assumed to be smart. She explained that,

One teacher divided the class into White students and Black students. Black children faced the White students and White students were facing the board and the teacher’s desk. I was placed on the White side in the back. How we got divided, I don’t know. I felt like she knew I was a child of an educator and maybe that is why she did it. I think she put me over there because my father was a principal and my mother a teacher. I felt funny about it. I don’t know if she tested us or what. First I thought, we are divided; why did she put me over here with the White kids? I would have preferred to be with the Black students because they looked at me like, ‘Why is she over there with the Whites?’ I think she wanted to make us feel like the smart people are over here and the dumb people are on the other side.

In the following statement, Lisa shared a similar experience of Black and White students being separated based on perceived abilities and expectations. To illustrate, she described her French class:

I had a White French teacher, and she never took the time with Black kids and always put us up in a corner. She said ‘I will get to you in a minute’, then she said ‘we are out of time.’ She separated the White and Black students and I went home and told my mother.

My mother came up to the school but nothing was done because they thought they were right in what they were doing. We were predators on their property. It was 85% White and 15% Black. Teacher ratio was about 10% Black and 90% White. Most of the [Black] kids knew what type of environment they were in and they knew that the teachers were not concerned about them progressing. If you just sat there and fed into their way of things, you got left behind. Teachers perceived me as dumb or illiterate somehow because I was quiet. It's like you sit here in my class every day and stare at me; you are not supposed to make As in my class. I'm not engaging you, and you are not engaging me, is what I used to think.

Impact of Desegregation on Academic and Life Experiences

As a result of cultural incompatibility and social divisions, disproportionate numbers of Black students were suspended and expelled from desegregated schools. Kritek (1979) described this consequence of incompatibility as the push out phenomenon, which led to many Black students leaving school before graduation. Although none of the former students in this study dropped out of school, some of them remembered others who did. Common themes among their responses to how their experiences in desegregated schools impacted academic outcomes, were feeling lost, negative effects on academic goals and performance, overcoming feelings of isolation and being determined to succeed academically in spite of teachers' assumptions that they could not or would not. With regard to how experiences in desegregated schools affected their subsequent lives, some of the former students in this study said the results were negative in the form of low self-esteem, lacking motivation, and not pursuing certain careers paths.

In the community, the local newspaper published articles related to the changing academic times. Many of the articles focused on the ratios of White to Black students and teachers in the schools and very few on the student impact. However, two articles, both written the first year of desegregated schools in the Black newspaper referenced the psychological and sociological impact on the Black student. One article addressed that desegregation dismantled dual educational systems based on race and the other focused on the ways in which the Black student was impacted. The first article stated that progress was being made in the early adjustment period with regard to the psychological and sociological functions, but there was no concrete evidence of this in the article. The progress, it stated was measured by the number of Black students in majority White schools. According to a report written by Richardson, (Columbus Times, 1972) the Secretary of Health, Education, and Welfare, progress was reported as:

The only measure of desegregation enforcement is results. It cannot be measured by a level of rhetoric or the amount of money cut off from financially distressed school systems. It can be measured only by the persistent fulfillment of our legal and education mandate—the elimination of dual schools based on race and on that score, this Administration has a documented record of solid performance. (p.2)

The second article written by Wilkins (1972), a Black civil rights activist focused on the importance of educating Black children. He stated that,

Maybe this student generation is lost. Hardly a day goes by without some riot, some attack, some clash, some closing down of schools due to racial tension. Perhaps so much time has been spent on racial violence that insufficient time is left for schooling. It could

be that we will have to write off the racial fighters and concentrate on the younger pupils. ...It is one thing to be dumb and think Black is beautiful, but it is another and much better thing to be smart and to know why Black is beautiful. (p. 17)

The strong negative consequences of transitioning from an all-Black segregated school to a predominately White school left the majority of the participants in this study with feelings of being lost or decentered. One stated that he used survival strategies that he learned in segregated schooling to navigate desegregated schools. Two of the six former students who felt lost did not allow those feelings to affect their academic experiences because they were determined to succeed.

Five of the seven former students stated that their experiences in desegregated schools impacted their life experiences, and the other two saw no effects. Four former students were negatively affected and felt lost in at least one aspect of their personal lives, and one was positively impacted.

The following accounts provided by Cathy is illustrative in the feelings of being lost and how those feelings affected the academic, personal and professional lives of some of the other former students.

She said,

Academically, it affected my life. I felt like an empty shell; I gave up. It kind of still affects my life today, where I doubt myself, my intellect. Professionally, it affected me in that I don't want my students to go through what I went through, so I try to push them to be the best that they can be. I try to provide culturally relevant examples and pedagogy. As I look back today, I just don't think the White teachers knew what to do with Black students.

Sade identified similar effects. In reflecting on her early school desegregation experience, she declared,

I felt kind of lost. After desegregation, I don't know if I learned more and just went with the flow. I don't think my writing skills improved, or I learned anything new after seventh grade. I always wanted to go into the medical field and wanted to be a veterinarian. I didn't focus a lot on math and science because I lost interest in school. In college I didn't do well because I didn't have the math and science background to do what I wanted to do. If I had stayed in school where I was cared about and felt motivated, I would have been more motivated to study and do well in college. I wasn't pushed in high school to take higher science and math. If I felt they cared as much as other teachers with your performance in schools, I probably would have been a better student, pursued the goals I had planned if they were more concerned with my welfare and educational development.

Although Bill did not want to cast dispersions on his desegregated school because it was a good school, he admitted "there were just pockets within the school that were not about the right thing." He continued:

If you didn't get it in our segregated timeframe, you were pretty lost in the integrated side because you had to know coming in this is why you came. In four years, you are supposed to graduate and get as close to honors as you can in order to go to college to get you a decent job. It was all about the end result. It was a jump rope exercise; everybody doesn't do it well. If you did it well, you could keep up and if you didn't you got left behind. You had to be very careful. Those of us who came up looking after each other still did. Segregated schools taught us that, and we never left it. All the training from

segregated schools made me think that I needed to hit the books. I was in the top 10% of my class. Their [White teachers] behavior didn't affect me academically or in my life experiences.

Although several former students felt a sense of being lost or misplaced in desegregated schools, most were still determined to succeed despite the adversity experienced. The degree of determination is evident in the following statement made by Lisa:

Most of the kids knew what type of environment they were in, and they knew that the teachers were not concerned about them progressing. It did bother me academically in that I skipped my junior year because I didn't want to be there in that environment. It brought me to senior status, and I graduated early. I didn't want any obstacles to get in my way or anything to stop me like my grades. I didn't want any reason to not go to college or do this or that. My mom and dad had instilled those values in me. They always told me you are going to encounter certain things and you have to look pass them but it was the biggest culture shock of my life.

In the first year of desegregation, Barbara initially felt lost but her "in born" determination to succeed compensated of these feelings. She described the persistence it provoked, as well as some positive aspects of her desegregated education:

In an Algebra class, I felt lost when asked to go to the board. I had not had algebra, and I felt dumb standing at the board. But I knew I was going to college. With my family's history and dad's genes, everybody in my family was determined to be a college graduate...Going to this high school actually prepared me for the S.A.T. It was a positive experience going there. I went to school with one of the doctor's and the

Director of Nursing I work with. If schools had not been desegregated, I would not have known these people and it wouldn't have helped me with my career.

Mrs. S believed the impact of not having Black principals and only 30% Black teachers at a school caused some Black students to give up. She said "They were so accustomed to the nurturing that Black teachers provided and they didn't have that anymore." Mrs. P believed that the lack of Black parental PTA involvement in the desegregated schools created a barrier for Black students to achieve academically. She said "In segregated schools, parents were very much involved in students' progress; home room mothers would contact the other parents, and every teacher visited each student's home. This no longer existed in desegregated schools." Mr. M believed that Black students were not pushed to succeed. He thought, "[desegregation] was a forced type of thing that didn't really work."

The *Columbus Times* (1970) quoted a report from a National Education Association (NEA) Task Force on desegregation that echoed the sentiments of Black educators. It stated:

The early stages of a unitary school system in the South are affecting the education of Black youth...and the economic and political aspiration of Southern Black communities in a way that could not have been anticipated during the long struggle for integrated education (*Columbus Times*, 1970, p. 10).

Summary

The findings presented in this chapter fall into three categories. The first was that segregated schools had positive effects on students academic and life experiences, due to Black teachers who were caring, supportive, disciplinarians, and related well with parents. The second category characterized the uncaring and unwelcoming nature of desegregated schools, Black

students being perceived as intellectually inferior; and the existence of an overall negative learning environment for the Black students. Third, what influenced the academic and life experiences of Black students in segregated schools was very different from the experiences they encountered in desegregated schools. In segregated schools these students were expected to follow their dreams and were held accountable for high performance because they were capable of being whatever they wanted to be. In desegregated schools these former students had to prove that they were not of low intelligence, but were capable of academic success. While their segregated schools and teachers provided supportive and facilitative networks to help fulfill their academic potential, in desegregated schools the Black students had to succeed or fail under their own volition with the guidance and assistance of caring and personally invested teachers.

The meanings and implications of the findings of this study are discussed further in Chapter V. A brief summary of the study, limitations, significance, and recommendations for future research also are presented.

Chapter V

Summary, discussion, and recommendations

In this chapter, a summary of the findings is presented. It is followed by a discussion about the implications that these findings have for understanding the ways in which a group of African Americans who were former students in one Southern city, perceived their learning experiences prior to and after desegregation, and the impact that those experiences had on the students' subsequent academic and life experiences. This discussion is followed by some comments on the significance, and the limitations of this study, and recommendations for future research and educational practice.

Summary

This study was designed to investigate and gain insight into the perceptions of a group of former African American students of their former teachers prior to and after the desegregation of schools in Columbus, Georgia. The theoretical framework for this study incorporated ideas from interpersonal communication and sociocultural theory. The major research question was, In what ways did African American students who attended segregated schools in Columbus, Georgia and later transferred to desegregated schools, perceive how these experiences affected their subsequent academic and life accomplishments?

Data were collected from interview responses from ten participants, and a number of primary and secondary sources, such as school annual history reports, school yearbook content, superintendents' reports, and articles from a Black newspaper (*Columbus Times*) and a White newspaper (*Columbus Enquirer*). The participants for this study consisted of four female and three male African American former students of varying ages, educational levels, and socio-economic status who attended segregated schools in Columbus, Georgia between 1954-1970,

and in 1971 and beyond attended a desegregated school. In addition, a former administrator, counselor, and teacher were interviewed. The data collected were subjected to descriptive and interpretative analysis.

This study produced eight major findings; four were associated with segregated schooling and four related to desegregated schooling. The segregated schooling findings included: (1) the former Black students overwhelmingly perceived their Black teachers in segregated schools positively due to their caring, disciplinary and family oriented traits; (2) the majority of the former Black students thought their Black teachers perceived them as intellectually capable; (3) the Black teachers perception of the Black students in segregated schools motivated them to want to succeed academically; and (4) the impact on the Black students' life experiences in segregated schools was related to them feeling motivated. The four findings related to desegregated schooling included: (5) the former Black students perceived their White teachers in desegregated schools as uncaring and unwelcoming; (6) the former Black students thought their White teachers in desegregated schools considered them as having low intelligence; (7) the former Black students felt lost in the desegregated schools; and (8) the experiences with White teachers in desegregated schools negatively affected aspects of the former Black students' personal and professional life experiences.

Discussion

Although these academic experiences occurred 40 to 50 years ago, the memories for the majority of the participants were as if they occurred recently. The findings in this study indicate that the former students were impacted by their interactions with teachers in both the segregated and desegregated schools that they attended. Interpersonal communications and relationships in

the sociocultural realms of the school systems and the context of the South played significant roles in their lives. However, these relationships should not be viewed as the only factors that affected the former students' academic and life experiences; other influences beyond the scope of this study probably resulted from the history of the local context of the South during the 1950s through the 1970s.

When interpreting the findings of the experiences of students in segregated and desegregated schooling, it is important to view them from a culturally relevant lens. The lens in which their perceptions were framed consisted of experiences and membership in the Black culture in a southern, segregated city. Based on the sociocultural perspectives of the segregated South and the vastly different academic systems, it can be expected that the former students' perceptions of their experiences in each setting would vary based on their individual and cultural lens.

The construction of the segregated schools that the former students attended appeared to be a replica of the Black culture in which they belonged. Kinship and caring are two characteristics that are prevalent in Black culture in relation to its members' social identity development. They are synonymous with the supportive nature found within the African American sociocultural environment in which fictive kinship is prevalent. The importance of having caring relationships in the academic environment was extremely important to the former student participants. The participants in this study grew up in the same regional environment and despite their different socioeconomic conditions, all of them stated that their former Black teachers were caring, treated them like family members, and provided encouragement, support, and connected with them on a personal level. Therefore, the similarity among the Black students in this study conveyed a sense of familiarity and cultural congruity. According to

Berman (1987, p. 347), caring involves “assistive, facilitative, and enabling decisions or acts that aid another individual, group, and or community in a beneficial way.” This definition of caring describes how former Black students remembered their interpersonal relationships with Black teachers in segregated classrooms and communities.

These former students agreed with Martin (as cited in Irvine, 2003) that teachers can turn school houses into school homes where care, concern, and connection are as important as the academic knowledge and skills. The study participants believed that all of these components produced a positive learning environment. Research has shown that teachers who study aspects of the care theory have more positive interactions with their students because teachers move toward a more student-centered pedagogy (McAllister & Irvine, 2002).

The seven former students described their most memorable teachers in segregated schools as caring disciplinarians, also known as “warm demanders.” They perceived this interactional style as teachers communicating personal care while using an instructional style that demanded academic excellence. Although the students believed that the Black teachers were demanding, they viewed this behavior as a concern for their welfare and knew that they were expected to perform at their highest academic level. Six of the seven students did perform at their highest level. One student stated that he did not perform at his highest level because he perceived himself as being cognitively delayed, and did not have aspirations to pursue higher education. He did believe that Black teachers encouraged and motivated him to learn and regretted not taking school seriously when he attended segregated schools. The teachers’ behavior toward him was related to what Delpit (1988) explained as teachers having visions for their students that they could not imagine for themselves.

One of the major influences in former students succeeding academically was based on the consequences of them not doing well in school. They would be verbally reprimanded or physically punished by the teacher, the principal, and at home. Punishment was placed in the larger context of the Black community (Shircliffe, 2006). The disciplinary actions that were used by the Black teachers and principals were endorsed by the parents of these students. Consequently, the Black teachers were continuously referred to as second parents or close family members by the former students, as if there was a parental partnership between the parents and the teachers. All of the former students explained this family connection among the teachers, parents, and students as a natural part of their upbringing. This parental partnership seemed to be expected as part of the Black culture and sociocultural perspectives of the segregated school. Valk and Brown (2010) noted that family socialization is consistently deliberate in attempts to prepare children for life across social, economic, and educational contexts, and is the means through which culture is created and transmitted. Adding to this theme of parental partnering and disciplinarian approach to classroom management, a former teacher from Causey's (1997) oral history project stated:

If the child got into trouble, the teacher had to go to the conference with the parents so that the two of you would know what was going on with "your" child. The child did a whole lot better after that conference.

Similarly, the Black community noted these disciplinary approaches and authoritative behaviors by referring to Black teachers as an influential, semi-militaristic, and vocal segment of the community (*Columbus Times*, 1970, p.5).

The impact of the former students' perceptions resulted in overall academic success. The former students communicated that there was a strong link between their Black teachers' motivational techniques and their academic success. Tillman (2009) suggested that the teachers saw potential in their Black students, considered them to be intelligent and were committed to their success. They stated that the teachers observed their behaviors with regard to strengths and weaknesses to learn more about who they were emotionally, psychologically, and socially. This holistic approach was a common practice in segregated schools by Black teachers, in which they cared for the whole child and created classrooms that represented places to learn about life, and about the importance of education. The focus on the whole child can allow the teacher to gain insight into the cultural behaviors and learning styles to increase the understanding of individual students.

The Black student-Black teacher relationships described by the participants in this study implied a sense of community. Community refers to a sense of belonging within a positive classroom climate. The classroom climate was inviting and instructional practices were described as connecting to culturally relevant experiences and different learning styles. The former students commented on the promotion of student-student and student-teacher mentoring and tutoring practices within and outside of school. These practices seemed to stem from teachers ethical commitment to and belief in each student (Siddle-Walker, 1996). This community oriented relationship also reflected a psychological connection which created influential and reciprocal behavior. The former students recognized the teachers' behavior as supportive and wanted to give back by succeeding academically. For example, they commented that the Black teachers "had their backs," and the students did not want to disappoint them.

Community building processes in school and the classroom have been identified as having a profound impact on students' attitudes and beliefs about school (Delpit, 1988).

These motivational techniques used in the classroom were also a means to personal and professional success for some of the former students. The teaching techniques and personalized care from the Black teachers aided in the students developing positive self-concepts. They stated that they viewed themselves as they believed their teachers perceived them, intellectually capable. With regard to professional skills, the former students commented that the Black segregated school and teachers helped them to establish a foundation to excel in life, not settle for mediocrity, and taught them career development skills.

The Black school was an extension of the Black community, and thus the school attempted to provide sociocultural perspectives in its teachings. Therefore, Black staff and teachers discussed civil rights, leadership skills, future employment opportunities, and socioeconomic conditions of Blacks. Rodgers (1975) suggested that segregation made it possible for Blacks to use the resources of their social institutions in ways that contributed directly and indirectly to the development and prosperity of the Black community. Perhaps, academic and social success is connected to the holistic development of the student. Developing and teaching these skills to Black students could bring the promise that they would become the next generation to improve the cultural, economic, and political dimensions of the Black community. Gay (2010) described these techniques as culturally responsive teaching. Banks (1991) asserts that if education is to empower marginalized groups, it must involve helping "students to develop the knowledge, skills, and values needed to become social critics who can make reflective decisions and implement their decisions in effective personal, social, political, and economic action" (p. 131). The bridges of meaningfulness between home and school

experiences, as well as between academic abstractions and lived sociocultural realities must be essential parts of the curriculum (Gay, 2000).

In September 1971, the schools in the Muscogee County School district became legally desegregated. The former students in this study were required by law to transition from the segregated to desegregated school system. Desegregation and integration are often viewed as being synonymous, and were used interchangeably by the study participants and in the documents used for this study. Rodgers (1975) distinguished the two by defining desegregation as schools that are not purposefully separated based on race, and integration as the deliberate mixing of the races and true inclusion within the school system. Based on these definitions of desegregation and integration, the schools in the Muscogee County School District were never integrated. The findings showed that during the few first years of desegregation, some schools did not have Black leaders, only had a few Black teachers, and the only Black groups of people depicted in the yearbooks were custodians and cafeteria workers. These practices did not depict unrestricted inclusion within the desegregated school system. Had the goal for these schools been to create greater integration, the educators would have made more of an effort to value and embrace the traditions and experiences that Black students brought with them to desegregated schools (Shircliffe, 2006).

The high quality of care and concern that Black students received in the segregated schools were not present in desegregated schools. These students came from a home-like environment in which they felt safe and protected by Black teachers and schools to an environment they felt was cold and unfamiliar. All of the former students described their initial feelings as uncaring and unwelcoming as they explained their perceptions of their teachers in desegregated classrooms. Their feelings were corroborated by a former White Social Studies

teacher interviewed by Causey (1997) who implied that White teachers may have contributed to Black students feeling unwelcomed. The teacher said,

A couple of years into desegregation, I put up posters of people in the classroom, then realized there were no dark-colored people. I quit using them [posters] because it was almost like saying to the students that were a darker color, you don't fit in here.(n.p.)

The uncaring and unwelcoming feelings that the Black students experienced in desegregated schools may have been a result of cultural incongruity, a difference in instructional practices, prejudicial behaviors, or all of these. One must remember that the South was one of the most extreme and comprehensive systems of racial subordination, and deepest resistance to racial change (Boger & Orfield, 2005). The lack of care and concern may have had more to do with social arrangements, and the restricted interaction between Blacks and Whites in the segregated South than with the value of caring (Shircliffe, 2006), which in turn, could have caused cultural misunderstandings, false assumptions, and avoidance for both White teachers and Black students. Two statements in Causey's (1997) report, one from a former Black teacher and the other from a former White teacher focused, on this lack of knowledge and restrained subsequent interactions. The Black teacher stated "In Columbus, you could have lived a life time and never experienced a relationship with a White person because that is how separate their worlds were" (p. 7). The White teacher exclaimed, "I grew up within three blocks of my Black school assignment during desegregation, yet I never knew it was there" (p. 9).

The former students remembered the teaching styles of White teachers as impersonal and dependent heavily on written language to explain assignments and for class participation. They noted this major difference between the teaching style of Black teachers in segregated schools and White teachers in desegregated schools and how they related to them. The former students

felt that the White teachers did not want to spend the time to orally communicate with them, and the teachers' main goal was to keep them quiet. They were unfamiliar with the White teachers teaching style of less discussion, and more written assignments. Several of the former Black students recalled Black teachers being more oral and multidimensional in their teaching styles. The teachers were known to differentiate their instruction based on students' learning styles and skill levels. The students desire for oral communication may be related to the cultural proclivity of African Americans for orality and its presence in the segregated school, and in their homes. According to Boykin (1986), orality has been documented as part of African American students' learning styles. Irvine (1991) suggested that White teachers become cultural translators and bicultural, "thoroughly knowledgeable and sensitive about Black student's language, norms, style of presentation, symbols, and values" (p. 126). In addition, several former students commented on the White Teachers practice of separating Black and White students in class, which seemed to mimic the racial separatist environment of that time. This practice created a form of segregation among the students, and between Black students and White teachers. Rist (1964) stated that, "during desegregation, Black students confronted a school setting that either rejected or ignored their existence" (p 24). These experiences may not have been intended to segregate within desegregation, although some participants perceived them as prejudicial.

Instead of desegregated schools being warm and welcoming learning environments for Black students, they were alienating and isolating in which one either survived or succumbed. The most noted issues in the first few years of desegregation were the racial conflicts in schools. Some of the former students attended desegregated schools in which they either experienced, or they were aware of school arson, busing boycotts, protests, and riots. According to data compiled by Causey (2001) during the opening of school in September 1971, three elementary

buildings were damaged by arson. That same month, the mayor placed undercover police in high schools. By the Christmas holiday, every high school had hall monitors and off-duty firefighters who patrolled the corridors. The high schools were inundated with racially motivated conflicts around busing, not having Black cheerleaders, and fighting among students. An article in the local Black newspaper by Wilkins (1968) stated that hardly a day went by without some riot, some clash, or some closing down of classes due to racial tension during the desegregation of schools. This tension was also in the community, including school board meetings. The majority of the comments made by White community members at school board meetings were described as bigoted and brutal. These community and school incidents contributed to the Black students' feelings of not being cared for and unwelcomed in the desegregated schools.

Since the school and community are interdependent in local contexts, the racial tension that occurred in the desegregated schools and local environment of Columbus, Georgia, along with personal and historical experiences in the South, probably affected White teachers' perceptions of Black students. White teachers were part of the Southern sociocultural context that assumed Blacks were intellectually and morally inferior, and that the *Brown* decision should be resisted by legal and extralegal means. Kailin (1999) found that in a society in which there is racial domination, racial assumptions and categories left unchallenged and unlearned will be reproduced in institutional practices and personal behaviors. Fundamentally, teachers' assumptions, beliefs, and perceptions shape their professional practice, which can impact students' academic performance. If the teachers perceived Black students as having low intelligence, as the former students in this study believed their White teachers in desegregated

schools had of them, it probably affected their motivation to learn. During that time, students respected teachers, valued their opinions, and viewed them as role models.

In secondary schools, including Columbus' high schools, minority students were overrepresented in vocational, special education tracks, and underrepresented in college preparatory programs (Causey, 2001). The former students' explained that feelings of being lost impacted their academic outcomes. Some of the former students gave up on their academics, they lost motivation to succeed, and their academic performance declined. Other students felt lost but they were self-determined and academically thrived in the desegregated school. Although the academic atmosphere was altered, the students had to assert themselves and venture outside of the typical psychological embrace of their primary reference group (Rodgers 1975). Some commented that they used the skills that they were taught in segregated schools with Black teachers as survival tools, as well as relied on their family values of achieving academic success. Hence, the social-cultural constructions of self, including racial identification, may be made more through personal experiences and by agency of individuals themselves than by the ascription of ethnic or racial category made by others (Carter, 2005).

In describing the impact on some former students' life experiences, Black participants in Causey's (1997) oral history project of desegregation in Columbus, Georgia, stated that there were local NAACP meetings that focused on the psychological ramifications of desegregation. The impact on the majority of the former students' lives in this study consisted of both the psychological (internalized oppression) and social ramifications of self-doubt, lack of motivation, and not pursuing career paths. One former student discussed how her experiences in desegregated schools left her with self doubt. The self-doubt continues to haunt her today with regard to questioning her own intelligence. Another former student spoke about losing the

motivation to learn, which resulted in a lack of interest in school to follow her career path. McPartland and Braddock (1981) pointed out that Black students' career tracks are the result of individual decisions that are shaped by their secondary school experiences. The difference in these students' perceptions of the impact of their desegregated school experiences could have been that some students may have needed the warmth and firmness that they were accustomed to in segregated schools to feel safe in an unfamiliar environment. A former student in Shircliffe's (2006) study stated "Integration cost Black people a whole generation of kids.You don't just take a kid out of a neighborhood, and throw him in a classroom with a bunch of strangers." In contrast, most of the former students who stated that they excelled in desegregated schools were older when they transferred from segregated schools. They may have already developed coping skills and were able to adapt to or endure their new schools easier and more effectively than younger ones. Although one of the younger participants in the study stated that her experiences in desegregated schools did not impact her life, she mentioned several behaviors that suggested the opposite. Lisa stated that she went to summer school to graduate a year early, to remove herself from the negative desegregated academic environment, and she described the desegregation experience as the biggest culture shock of her life. This is consistent with Lawrence-Lightfoot's (1979) theory about how the social context that surrounds students shapes their perceptions, behaviors, and interactions.

It is evident that the interpersonal relationships and construction of the sociocultural perspectives of community and school played a major role in these students' academic and life experiences in segregated and desegregated schools. The two environments were vastly different, and so were the results they generated. The students indicated that during segregation, they felt a sense of connectedness and alienation, during desegregation.

Significance

The significance of this study lies in the attempt to gain understanding of the African American learner and add to the broader arena of scholarship on the impact of segregation and desegregation schooling for Black students. Research indicates that attitudes, expectations, and perceptions influence classroom climates, shape what is taught and how it is taught, and thus, have a determining effect on the achievement of students (Graybill, 1997). Efforts to understand differences across both segregated and desegregated academic environments is important to better understand the impact that they had on the academic and life experiences of these and other students of diverse backgrounds, which can be taken into consideration when analyzing the experiences of Black students in contemporary educational institutions. This quasi-historical study also may have value for contemporary educators relative to current and future possibilities for Black student education. Given the realities of school re-segregation or what scholars are referring to as the second-generation segregation, in which the student population may be primarily Black, and the teachers, primarily White, the quality of education available to Black students continues to be problematic. Teachers in these situations could learn some useful strategies from the stories of former students in this study, as well as some instructional attitudes and behaviors to avoid. Educational policies and programs have a responsibility to help teachers and students develop a level of comfort in learning environments that are ethnically, racially, and culturally diverse.

This study addressed a source of educational data that has been highly invisible; that is, the voice of students about their experiences during segregated and early desegregated schooling, and educational research in general. It is essential that students' voices are heard so that knowledge and meaning are constructed from their perspectives. In listening to the stories of the

former students, educators can gain insider perspectives of their lives in schools and of the human impact of changing from segregated to desegregated learning environments. These stories may help educators better understand the missed opportunities of the 1970s, especially in light of the move back toward more racially segregated schools (Wells, et al., 2009). The lessons learned from those former students who had experiences in both environments can help teachers with understanding African American culture, history, and life that facilitate the academic achievement, development, and participation of African American students (Murrell, 2002).

Another reason why this study is important is because perceptions of former African American students may increase the understanding and dynamics of segregated and desegregated schools from the experiences of students who actually lived them. The temporal distance from occurrence of the actual experience allowed the former students to gain perspective on their experiences and enriched their memories as well as possibly cause them to have selective recall, but what they remembered and how they understood those learning experiences were more deeply textured. Their stories may be instructive for many African American students in contemporary school settings that are both segregated and desegregated. While many African American students value education today, and believe it is a stepping stone to life success, they also realize that they live in a racist society and their progress toward life success may be severely impeded by social barriers. Teaching them how to persist in volatile situations is essential. This study disclosed some teaching elements that are essential to the academic success of African American students, many years ago that still may have saliency in contemporary schooling.

The study also provided strong support for teaching and learning through a cultural lens. There is compelling research that students and teachers bring their personal and cultural

attitudes, beliefs, and perceptions with them into the classroom. This study reaffirmed for teachers the need to self-reflect and be aware of their internalized thoughts, to better understand the behaviors and perceptions of their students from cultural perspectives, and to recognize that cultural compatibility (or the lack thereof), the nature of classroom settings, and classroom climates have major consequences for student achievement. All of these components may cause teachers to hold false assumptions about African American students. For instance, Fine (as cited in Edwards, et al., 2010) noted that urban high school students have been dissuaded from incorporating elements of their own community cultural practices, personal experiences, family traditions, and language in academic learning situations. Even though some students are able to prevail in adverse school and classroom conditions (as some of the former students did) the painful memories of ineffective teacher-student relationships and classroom environments last a life time. Therefore, educators should aim to create better legacies for African Americans and other students of various ethnic backgrounds as well.

The results of this study support the understanding that teachers have the ability to influence, positively or negatively, and consciously or unconsciously, the academic and life experiences of their students. The study showed the values that were ingrained in the Black segregated schools to help them succeed and the values that were missing in the desegregated schools.

Limitations

Despite efforts to conduct a carefully designed research investigation, this study had several notable limitations. The limitations were related to the time period of the study, the researcher as a participant, a selective group of participants, and the short duration of the study.

The first limitation was the time period of this study as it related to the data sets. Conducting research about events that occurred over 50 years ago can be challenging based on the availability of respondents, their selective memories, and acquiring relevant historical content. A majority of the former faculty and staff who were part of both segregated and desegregated educational systems are no longer living, are unable to be interviewed due to health issues, or have limited memories about their experiences during the targeted time period. The same is true for some former students, while others are not interested in resurrecting memories about times and experiences in their lives that were not necessarily pleasant. Furthermore, the memories of those who did participate could have been distorted by age and limited recall abilities. There are caveats when dealing with people's memories because they are based on their perceptions. In addition, the study focused primarily on perceptions and excluded some other environmental factors that could have affected the former students' experiences in segregated and desegregated schools, such as curriculum content, the family heritages, and socioeconomic status of students.

In addition, constraints on obtaining access to historical data were difficult. Attaining records of school board minutes, superintendent reports, yearbooks, and history books from schools for the time period of this study impacted the findings. Some information was missing from the archives and the Muscogee County School District Records department was in the

process of moving. Therefore, some content was in a separate storage area and was not accessible. However, the researcher was able to attain enough historical data to stimulate the possible fading memories of the former students. After the researcher showed the participants photographs of events and experiences related to segregated and desegregated schools, many of them were able to recall personal experiences and share their stories in detail.

The second limitation was the researcher was also a participant in the study. This could possibly create bias since the research setting was one in which the researcher's own primary and secondary academic experiences had occurred. To counteract this possibility, the researcher was subjected to the same interview questions as the former students to elicit information about the issues under study as Biemer, et al., (1991) have advised. Additionally, the researcher interviewed all of the study participants first, and was then interviewed by a skilled qualitative researcher. This technique had some elements of what Lawrence-Lightfoot (1997) called portraiture. It allowed the researcher's voice to become an important part of the study by providing both insider and outsider perspectives. Consequently, this method enhanced the qualitative researcher's understanding of human behavior and experience in naturalistic contexts (Bogdan & Biklen, 1998).

The third limitation of the study was focusing primarily on a small selective group of former Black students and Black school personnel in leadership positions. The seven former students' and three school personnel self-reported their perceptions of experiences in segregated and desegregated schooling environment, and the impact of the experiences as they transitioned from segregated to desegregated schools. The specific personal characteristics, historical experiences, and social conditions of these participants could have influenced their perceptions about their subsequent academic and life experiences. Due to this small sample, the findings

cannot be generalized to other former African American students and their experiences in segregated and desegregated schooling. Furthermore, the voices of White students and teachers, and Black and White teachers and parents, are missing from this study. Undoubtedly their perceptions would have added different texture and more depth to the results obtained.

The fourth limitation was the relative short duration of the study. If the researcher had conducted more than one face-face interview and several follow-up phone interviews, deeper insights into the participants' lives might have been gained. Thus, this study only provides a glimpse into the world of a small group of former African American students' considerations of their teachers in segregated and desegregated schools in one Southern city.

Recommendations

The synchronization of the literature review outlined in Chapter 2 and the findings presented in Chapter 4 led to four recommendations for future research about segregated and desegregated schooling. The recommendations hold the potential for addressing the recurrent achievement gap between African American students and their European American counterparts.

The first recommendation is to investigate the degree to which White teachers are able to effectively differentiate their instructional practices to meet the needs of Black students. Part of the training for this differentiation could include some features learned from the effective Black teachers, and White teachers doing critical cultural analyses of their own teaching. For decades, some researchers (Delpit, 1986; Irvine, 1990; Sleeter, 2004) have expressed grave concerns about the abilities and will of White teachers to meet the learning needs of Black students. The former students in this study expressed similar concerns about their desegregated schooling experiences. Current research suggests that cultural incongruity continues to exist between

Black students and White teachers. White teachers, who make up the majority of the teaching profession, continue to struggle with teaching students of color, specifically African Americans. Historically, the focus of this struggle has been on the dispositions and cultural dissonance of teachers towards racial differences. An examination of teachers' capacity to differentiate their instructional practices to meet the needs of culturally diverse learners also holds promise for reducing the achievement gaps. Such practices warrant investigation and may lead to a critical requirement for ensuring that teachers are proficient in providing instruction for diverse groups of students. This exploration may ask: To what degree do White teachers differentiate their instructional practices to meet the needs of culturally diverse learners? To what extent does culturally responsive differentiated instruction impact the academic achievement of Black students?

The second recommendation would be to conduct a study similar to this one that examines the perceptions of White teachers and White students as they relate to the impact of segregated and desegregated schooling on their academic experiences and life choices. Situational factors such as teachers' and students' experiences, reactions, skills, support systems, and culturally compatible and incongruent learning environments can influence attitudes, practices, and performance levels. For example, how were/are White teachers and White students psychoemotionally and socially prepared to engage constructively with teaching and learning with unfamiliar people and in a possible unfamiliar setting? How do various levels and types of teacher preparedness for racial, ethnic, and culturally diverse students they teach affect the academic performance and life experiences of the students?

The third recommendation is to expand on studies that compare the difference between the academic success of Black students in schools in which the majority of the student population is Black such as Dr. Steve Perry's Capital Preparatory Magnet School, and Geoffery Canada's Harlem Children's Zone (HCZ), the tools they are using in their schools, and those schools that are designed to educate all students, such as state funded public schools. Data collected by NAEP since the 1970s demonstrate that Black students continue to perform at the bottom of the achievement scale in virtually all subjects taught. Yet, on a smaller scale, numerous private preschool, primary, and secondary schools have achieved noteworthy success with Black students. For example, since its inception in 2005 the Capital Preparatory Magnet School (2013) has 100 percent graduation rates, and all have gone on to college. Community and parental education programs initiated in the Harlem Children's Zone (2013) have shown success in each of their areas of support services since 2000. For example, in its program designed for four-year-olds, 99.5 % of the students attained a school readiness classification of average or above average; 100% of third graders tested at or above grade level on the math exam, and outperformed Black and White students in New York state; in English and Learning Arts, 93% of the students tested at or above grade level, and 90% of the high school students in their program were accepted to college in the 2010-2011 academic year. In addition, the HCZ conducts training at seven local elementary schools, and provide individual, group, and family counseling services for student and their families. These small scale education innovations work consistently for Black students. Such success warrants investigation, comparison, and if possible duplication on a mass level. Analyzing each academic setting for the tools that are successful and unsuccessful with regard to promoting academic success for the African American student would be worthy of future study.

While the schools may not be segregated by law, future research should examine elements present in these schools that are successful with Black students and how they can be duplicated or replicated in state funded desegregated public schools. Another worthy query for these investigations is: What cultural, economical, political, and social factors, if any, may impede mass duplication?

A fourth recommendation is to repeat this study over a longer period of time with more students, teachers and school leaders, and with students who attended more “stable” desegregated schools for long periods of time. Policy regulations related to teacher preparation for ethnic, racial, and cultural diversity also should be carefully scrutinized. The investigation might explore the role that these regulations play in teacher receptivity to and classroom practices in working with students of the same ethnic background and those working with various student groups of color.

The final recommendation is to explore in greater detail the role that kinship and caring play in Black students’ academic success and life choices. Such research should examine similarities and differences in how Black and non-Black teachers convey caring, community, and other elements of culturally congruency for Black students, and how these affect performance both within and beyond various classroom environments. The knowledge gained from research investigating specific ways and reasons why caring, community, and kinship positively affect Black students’ academic success can serve as a starting point for designing effective schooling systems for Black learners. This type of knowledge may assist teachers in confronting their misunderstandings, beliefs, and perceptions that impede the development of caring classroom climates, positive relationships with their students and families, and ultimately their students’

academic success. Thus, this type of learning environment may create a community of learners, and a community of achievement for African American students.

Conclusion

This study represents only one account of African American students' perceptions of their experiences in segregated and desegregated schools, and the impact that those experiences had on their subsequent academic and life experiences in one geographic location. One might ask, why share the narratives of ten study participants over 50 years later? As both a participant and the researcher in the study, I believe these stories are relevant to understanding students' perceptions are a valuable but underused source of information for educational reformers. This historical information offers valuable lessons for the contemporary life and learning of Black students. If one poses the question, did the journey from segregation to desegregation lead to academic excellence or academic despair, my answer would be, the journey is not over. Time will tell!

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APPENDIX A:**UNIVERSITY OF WASHINGTON****CONSENT FORM****Segregation to Desegregation: The Journey of African American students to Academic Excellence or Academic Despair**

Investigator: Marian C. Lyles Researcher: Student University of Washington
Telephone: (206) 624-9004 Email: mlyles001@comcast.net
Academic Advisor: Dr. Geneva Gay

Researchers' statement

The researcher is asking you to be in a research study. The purpose of this consent form is to give you the information you will need to help you decide whether or not to be in this study. Please read the form carefully. You may ask questions about the purpose of the research, the possible risks and benefits, your rights as a volunteer, and anything else about the research or this form that is not clear. When I have answered all your questions, you can decide if you want to be in the study or not. This process is called "informed consent." I will give you a copy of this form for your records.

PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

This dissertation combines cultural awareness perspectives, interpersonal communication, and sociological ideas, theories, and methodologies in examining the degree of influence teachers' conceptualization of African American students had on the students' learning and life experiences during segregation and desegregation. This study will be conducted in Columbus, Georgia with African American students who attended local segregated schools between 1954 and 1970, and in 1971 when the Black schools became a part of desegregation. Interviews will be conducted with five to seven individuals who attended both segregated and desegregated schools to determine how their experiences impacted their subsequent lives through their own reflective memories. (To supplement the students' findings, interviews will also be conducted with African American counselors, teachers, and principals who were part of both segregated and desegregated schools during this time period)

STUDY PROCEDURES

If you choose to be in this study, an interviewer will visit you so you can get to know her, and she can explain and schedule the interview session. The interviewer will audio record an interview in which you are asked a series of questions to ask about your background, which includes your family, experiences growing up, going to school, subsequent academic and life experiences in both segregated and desegregated schools. You are always free not to answer any question you do not wish to answer and feel free to ask why certain questions may be posed.

The entire interview will take approximately one-two hours, depending on the nature of your experiences and the amount of detail you wish to provide. The interviewer is audio recording your interview so that there will be an accurate record. The tape recording will later be transcribed and will be used to compare what you tell me with what other interviewees tell us about their experiences. If you choose, you may review the tape and/or transcript and ask that portions be deleted.

RISKS, STRESS, OR DISCOMFORT

While my hope is to make the academic and life history interview process an enjoyable experience for you, some stress or discomfort may result from looking back at your life. Some people feel that providing information for research is an invasion of privacy. I hope to minimize the stress, but you will be free to stop the interview at any time or refuse to answer any of the questions.

OTHER INFORMATION

As a participant, you may refuse to participate in this study at any time. Your identity will not be revealed in this study. I may need to re-contact you to clarify information from your interview. In that case, I will telephone you and ask you for a convenient time to ask further questions. Giving your permission for re-contact does not obligate you in any way.

If you have any questions about the research study, please contact Marian Lyles at the telephone number listed on page one. If you have questions about your rights as a research participant, you can call the Human Subjects Division at (206) 543-0098.

Printed name of Researcher

Signature of Researcher

Date

Segregation to Desegregation: The Journey of African American students to Academic
Excellence or Academic Despair

Participant's statement

This study has been explained to me. I volunteer to take part in this research. I have had a chance to ask questions. If I have questions later about the research, I can ask the researcher listed above. I will receive a copy of this consent form.

Printed name of Participant

Signature of participant

Date

APPENDIX B: INTERVIEW QUESTIONS.**Biographical Information**

1. When and where were you born?
2. What were your parents' educational levels?
3. How did your parents value education?
4. What year did you graduate from high school, if at all?
5. What additional higher education and/or technical training have you attained, if at all?
6. What is your current occupation?

Memories of School Experiences with your Teachers during Segregation

1. What segregated school did you attend and what year(s)?
2. Please describe your teachers.
3. Please describe the type of relationship you had with your teachers.
4. Please share a story about your most memorable teacher at the segregated school.
5. How do you believe your teachers perceived you at the segregated school?
6. How did you perceive yourself as a student at the segregated school?
7. Please describe the type of communication style/language used by the teachers.
8. Please describe the classroom management strategies.
9. What do you remember most about the course content at the segregated school?
10. What teaching methods did teachers use at the segregated school(s)?
11. How would you describe your academic performance at the segregated school?

12. Did the teaching methods motivate you to learn? Why or Why Not?
13. How did the teachers' perception of you affect your identity development, if at all?
14. How did the teachers' perception affect your life choices, academically, personally, and professionally, if at all?
15. Please share any additional comments or thoughts that would enhance my understanding of how you perceived your teachers' perception of you in the segregated school, and the impact that they had on your life experiences, if at all.

Memories of School Experiences with your Teachers after Desegregation

1. After schools were desegregated, what school(s) did you attend?
2. Please describe your teachers.
3. Please describe the type of relationship you had with your teachers.
4. Please share a story about your most memorable teacher at the desegregated school.
5. How do you believe your teachers perceived you at the desegregated school?

6. How did you perceive yourself as a student at the desegregated school?
7. Please describe the classroom management strategies.
8. Please describe the type of communication style/language used by the teachers.
9. What do you remember most about the course content at the desegregated school?
10. What teaching methods did teachers use at the desegregated school?
11. How would you describe your academic performance at the desegregated school?
12. Did the teaching methods motivate you to learn? Why or Why Not?
13. How did the teachers' perception of you effect your identity development, if at all?
14. How did the teachers' perception affect your life choices, academically, personally, and professionally, if at all?
15. Please share any additional comments or thoughts that would enhance my understanding of how you perceived your teachers' perception of you in the desegregated school, and the impact that they had on your life experiences, if at all.

APPENDIX C: LOCKET CASE

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Received from Mr. Hatcher 7-15-71
Send copies to all Board members.
W.H.S.

IN THE UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT
FOR THE MIDDLE DISTRICT OF GEORGIA
COLUMBUS DIVISION

JERRY LOCKETT, et al.,
Plaintiffs

v.

BOARD OF EDUCATION OF MUSCOGEE
COUNTY SCHOOL DISTRICT, GEORGIA,
et al.,

Defendants

CIVIL ACTION NO. 991

FILED at 1:30 P.M.

JUL 14 1971

Deputy Clerk, U. S. District Court
MIDDLE DISTRICT OF GEORGIA

ORDER

In compliance with the mandate of the United States Court of Appeals, the Board of Education of Muscogee County School District, Georgia, was required by order of this Court to submit a revised plan for the further desegregation of the Muscogee County School System which will satisfy the requirements of the Court of Appeals and the Supreme Court as referred to in the mandate. Such revised plan was filed and a copy served upon counsel for the Plaintiffs within the time prescribed in the order. Thereafter, Plaintiffs filed their response, which response contained certain objections to the plan. A hearing was scheduled and held before me on July 12, 1971, at which time counsel for both parties were present and heard.

After careful consideration of the plan submitted by the Defendants, and the objections thereto as set forth in Plaintiffs' response, and of the argument of counsel, the Court is of the

opinion, and so finds, that the amended plan submitted by the Defendants meets the requirements of the order of this Court and the mandate of the Court of Appeals, and the plan is approved by the Court.

In determining that the plan meets the requirements of the mandate the Court is of the opinion that it would be helpful to deal with each of the objections raised and state the basis of the Court's determination that they are not valid.

Faculty Assignment

While expressing approval of the assignment of teachers in the same proportion to the racial ratio of the faculty of the elementary and high schools, Plaintiffs seek to have added to the plan an appendix dealing with the assignment of teachers, which they say controls "hiring, firing, promotion, displacement and the like".

The plan submitted by Defendants calls for the assignment of teachers in each elementary school in the system on the basis of a 70% white - 30% Negro ratio, and a 75% white - 25% Negro ratio in the junior and senior high schools. It is not questioned that this is the same ratio of white and Negro teachers now in such schools. To bring this about, there has been no necessity for the discharge or displacement of any teacher, white or black. Likewise, there has been no necessity for demotion or promotion of the teaching staff to carry out the plan. This representation was made to the Court at the hearing.

The method of determining which teacher shall be reassigned is the same as that in the proposal of the Plaintiffs in that "the oldest teachers in point of service in each school shall be given the choice of remaining in such school or being assigned to a different school". In addition, the plan specifically provides that discrimination based on race in the employment of teachers and other professional staff members shall not be practiced.

If the voluminous matter suggested by the Plaintiffs having to do with faculty were incorporated in the plan it would have the effect of putting the administrators of the school system in a virtual strait jacket and would make this Court a sort of super-Superintendent. It is to be remembered that we are dealing here not with a School Board that has a history of evasion but instead a Board that has always complied completely with every order entered in this case and has had its plans twice approved by this Court and by the Court of Appeals.

The Court is of the opinion that the plan as presently proposed sufficiently insures the desegregation of the faculty in the Muscogee County Schools and that if implemented as represented, no discrimination will result.

Student Assignment

In the course of the hearing it was represented to the Court by the Defendants that the administrative staff is working diligently in making assignments in accordance with the plan for the 1971-72 school year. It was estimated that this task, which appears to be substantial, will likely be completed around the

first of August. Lists will be maintained at all schools containing the names of all pupils heretofore assigned to that school and showing whether that pupil is reassigned to another school or remains at the school to which such child was previously assigned. In the case of transfer, the name of the school to which the pupil is reassigned will appear on the list. The school staff will likewise make such information available at the Superintendent's office. With this assurance, the Court is of the opinion that adequate provisions are made under the present plan for notice of the assignments without incurring the expense and time involved in sending such notice by registered mail.

Transportation

The proposed plan calls for transportation to be furnished all students who are entitled to transportation under State law, without regard to race or color. This provision will secure transportation for transferred students if they live the required distance from the school to which they are transferred, and this applies whether they make up a part of the 70% white or 30% Negro ratio in attendance at such school. It will likewise apply to children who are permitted to remain at the school. Although a considerably larger number of children will require transportation under the proposed plan, the Court is assured by the Defendants that plans have already been made to provide such transportation.

To use the language suggested by Plaintiffs would result in providing transportation to many children who live much nearer the school which they attend than others who are denied transportation. The proposed plan provides such transportation based upon the distance a child lives from the school and treats all alike. It is my judgment that the provision for transportation in the present plan is the one best suited to accomplish the objective of the plan.

Muscogee County has operated a kindergarten program for a number of years, although such program is not a part of the State school system. Transportation has never been supplied to kindergarten children and consistent with this practice none will be provided under the plan to either white or Negro children. Transportation of kindergarten children would not only involve considerable additional expense but would involve added problems and planning which the Board does not wish to undertake at the present time. The Court does not feel that it is necessary or proper to require the Defendants to assume this added financial burden at this time.

New Construction

The proposed plan recognizes the possible effect of new construction. It provides that the effect of such new construction shall be consistent with "the proportionate representation of each race in each school". Reports to the Court, and to the Plaintiffs' attorneys in this case, are to be made which set forth schools under construction, schools intended to be commenced in the period prior to the next report, and the location of such schools or schoolrooms.

The Court is of the opinion that adequate safeguards are provided by the plan so that "construction shall be done in a manner which will prevent the recurrence of the dual school structure".

Reports to Court

Plaintiffs do not object to the reporting provisions except as hereinbefore set forth.

Review and Amendments

The Court construes the plan submitted as requiring that any amendment thereto be filed with the Court and a copy served on Plaintiffs' counsel. This will insure that any objection to such amendment may be heard and determined by the Court.

Publication

Plaintiffs do not object.

Attorney's Fees

The request of the Plaintiffs that the Defendants be ordered to pay the Plaintiffs' expenses and attorneys fees is denied because the Defendants have in good faith and promptly undertaken to fully comply with the orders and judgments made by the Court in this case.

IT IS SO ORDERED this 14th day of July, 1971.

UNITED STATES DISTRICT JUDGE

APPENDIX D: MUSCOGEE COUNTY SCHOOL DISTRICT LETTER.

Muscogee County School District

Columbus, Georgia 31902

OFFICE OF
SUPERINTENDENT OF EDUCATION

August 6, 1971

Dear Parent:

Under the Amended Plan to Desegregate the Schools of Muscogee County, your child, _____, has been assigned to Southern Junior High School, 4150 Guscotta Road, for the school year 1971-72. Please have your child report to the newly assigned school according to the following schedule for enrollment and class assignment:

Seventh Grade 9:00 a.m. - 3:00 p.m., Wednesday, August 11, 1971
Eighth Grade 9:00 a.m. - 3:00 p.m., Thursday, August 12, 1971

Our Plan requires that all white students equal in number to 70% of the capacity of the school to which they have been assigned, living nearest to said school, and all Negro students equal in number to 30% of the capacity of the school to which they have been assigned, living nearest to said school, shall attend said school for the year beginning in September, 1971.

The Plan further provides that all other students assigned to said school shall be assigned by the Superintendent and his staff to the school nearest to the residence of said student which does not then have its quota of white or Negro students as above stated.

The assignment of your child has been made in accordance with the above Plan.

If you have any questions, won't you please telephone the office of either of the undersigned and we will be pleased to undertake to give you whatever information you desire.

Sincerely yours,

Robert E. Lyles
Robert E. Lyles, Principal
Southern Junior High School

Wm. Henry Shaw
Wm. Henry Shaw
Superintendent of Education