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Exploring Teachers' and Black Male Students' Perceptions of Intelligence

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EXPLORING TEACHERS' AND BLACK MALE STUDENTS' PERCEPTIONS OF INTELLIGENCE

By

Patrick Anthony Williams

A DISSERTATION

Submitted to the Faculty
of the University of Miami
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EXPLORING TEACHERS' AND BLACK MALE STUDENTS' PERCEPTIONS OF INTELLIGENCE

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This study explored teachers’ perceptions of intelligence of 11th-grade Black male students and how students themselves perceived their own intelligence in light of Howard Gardner’s Theory of Multiple Intelligence. Qualitative research methods were used to gain novel understanding of the students’ and teachers’ feelings, and perceptions as outlined in the research questions. Two versions of ecological systems theory provided the underpinnings for the framework of this study:

1) Brönfenbrenner’s Ecological Systems Theory, and

2) Spencer’s PVEST (Phenomenological Variant of Ecological Systems Theory) model, which is an adaptation of the ecology model to Black students in the United States. In a large urban school district in the Southeast section of the United States, twenty-six students completed an online survey of Gardner’s Multiple Intelligences. Seven Black male students were selected and interviewed along with ten of their teachers. The study found that despite the
negative stereotypes toward Black males by society, the Black male students in this study interpreted intelligence to be multifaceted and perceived themselves as intelligent Black males. The teachers of the Black male students perceived them as intelligent and also interpreted intelligence to be multifaceted. The Black male students were resilient in debunking the idea that Black males were not considered intelligent in a society where negative Black male stereotypes abounded.
DEDICATION

This dissertation is dedicated to my maternal grandparents, Mr. Hyman Gordon (deceased) and Mrs. Berlyce Gordon (née Wilson, deceased).

For your caring and guiding hands.
For not sparing the rod and spoiling the child.
For loving each other 'til death.
For raising me with strict discipline.
For instilling in me the knowledge of self-acceptance.
For understanding and compassion.
For modeling.
For LOVING me.

I will always remember you both.
I love you.
I miss you.

THANK YOU!
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TABLE OF CONTENTS

LIST OF APPENDICES ....................................................... viii
LIST OF TABLES ............................................................ ix
LIST OF FIGURES ............................................................ x

CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION ................................................ 1
  Statement of the Problem .............................................. 1
  Theoretical Framework ................................................. 4
  Personal Perspective .................................................. 6
  Purpose of the Study ................................................... 7
  Research Questions .................................................... 8

CHAPTER 2: REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE ............................. 9
  Historical Context ..................................................... 9
  Ecological Systems Theory ........................................... 12
    • Brönfenbrenner .................................................. 13
    • Spencer’s PVEST Model ........................................ 16
    • The Ecology of Schooling .................................... 20
    • Theories of Underachievement ............................... 24
    • Curriculum ...................................................... 26
    • Types of Minority Status .................................... 31
  Ecology, Identity and Schooling ................................. 34
    • Understanding Racial Identity Development ............. 34
    • Black Ethnic Identity Development ....................... 37
    • Duality of Identity ............................................. 40
    • A Triple Quandary ............................................. 42
    • Social Identity and Self-Esteem ............................ 44
    • Racial Prejudice as a Stress Factor ....................... 46
    • Stereotype Threat as a Stress Factor .................... 47
    • Hyper-Masculinity ............................................. 50
    • Resistance as a Coping Strategy ............................ 51
  Learning Styles ......................................................... 54
    • Culture and Learning Styles ................................. 55
    • Field Dependence vs. Field Independence ............... 57
  Intelligence ........................................................... 61
    • The Meaning of Intelligence ................................. 61
    • Measurement of Intelligence: IQ Tests ................ 64
• Intelligence and Schooling .......................67
• Response to the Bell Curve ......................71
• Piaget and Vygotsky on Intelligence ..........74
• Intelligence and Culture .......................75
An Alternative View of Intelligence ...........77
• Multiple Intelligences ..........................77
• Criticism of the Multiple Intelligence Theory ..81

Summary of Intelligence & Black Male Identity ....83

CHAPTER 3: METHODS ........................................87
Key Concepts in Qualitative Research ..........87
Grounded Theory ..................................88
Techniques for Establishing Credibility in Qualitative
Inquiry ........................................90
Research Questions ................................97
Setting ..........................................98
Participants .....................................99
Data Collection ..................................102
Data Analysis ..................................104

CHAPTER 4: FINDINGS ...................................108
PEACE High School Profile .....................109
Black Male Students’ Profile ....................110
• Jason ........................................111
• Steve .......................................112
• Tyrone ....................................112
• Junior .....................................113
• Roy ........................................113
• Ali ........................................114
• Carter .....................................114
Themes from Students’ Interviews ............115
• Research Question 1 .........................115
• Research Question 2 .........................119
• Research Question 3 .........................129
• Research Question 4 .........................139
Teachers’ Profile ................................142
Themes from Teachers’ Interviews ............143
• Research Question 5 .........................143
• Research Question 6 .........................153
• Research Question 7 ........................................157
Conclusion..........................................................174

CHAPTER 5: DISCUSSION..................................................175
Researcher’s Reflection.............................................176
Interpreting and Reflecting upon Findings....................177
• Implications of Spencer’s PVEST to these Data ........179
  Net Vulnerability .................................................179
  Net Stress Engagement ........................................180
  Reactive Coping ..................................................181
  Emergent Identities .............................................181
  Coping Outcomes ...............................................182
Connection to Gardner’s Theory of MI.........................183
Dilemmas & Limitations in the Study.........................184
• Limitations .........................................................184
• Dilemmas ..........................................................186
  Verbal-linguistic Orientation ...............................186
  Demographics of the Sample .................................188
Possibility for Future Studies .................................189
Significance and Implications .................................189

REFERENCES ..........................................................191

APPENDICES..........................................................210-242
• Appendix A: Students’ Guided Questions ................210
• Appendix B: Teachers’ Guided Questions .................212
• Appendix C: Parent Consent Form – Survey ..............214
• Appendix D: Parent Consent Form – Interviews ........216
• Appendix E: Student Assent Form – Survey ..............219
• Appendix F: Student Assent Form – Interviews ..........221
• Appendix G: Teacher Consent Form .........................223
• Appendix H: Online Survey Assessment .................225
• Appendix I: Example of Online Assessment ..............231
• Appendix J: Full Board Approval – IRB .................234
• Appendix K: IRB – Final Report .............................236
• Appendix L: Data Analysis Map – Students ..............238
• Appendix M: Data Analysis Map – Teachers ..............239
• Appendix N: Demographics of Black Male Students ...240
• Appendix O: MDCPS Research Approval Letter ........241
LIST OF TABLES

Table 2.1 - Gardner’s Multiple Intelligences .............. 79
Table 4.1 - Enrollment by Race/ethnicity .................. 110
Table 4.2 - Enrollment by Gender .......................... 110
Table 4.3 - Enrollment by Grade ............................ 110
Table 4.4 - Teachers’ Profile Chart .......................... 142
LIST OF FIGURES

FIGURE 2.1 - Brönfenbrenner’s Ecological Model...........13
FIGURE 2.2 - Spencer’s PVEST Model..........................16
FIGURE 5.1 - Spencer’s PVEST Model.........................183
CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

The traditional model [of intelligence] may be a cause of rather than a potential answer to educational problems, in particular, and societal problems, in general.


Statement of the Problem

Many would say that education is the surest route to social equality. Yet, for many Black students in the United States, education has been the surest way to their underachievement (Ferguson, 2003; Ogbu, 2003). Black and white students enter the public school system with essentially the same amount of enthusiasm toward learning, but after 12 years of public education, the achievement gap between Blacks and Whites widens (Hale-Benson, 1982; Carter 2005; Diamond, 2006). Ginsburg (1986) posited that children of every group and social class have the same basic ability and develop those abilities in ways that reflect their individual cultural situations. Yet, the longer Black children stay in school, the more they fall behind (Steele, 1992; Gougis, 1986; Cross & Slater, 2000).

In addition to underachievement, there is a historical view of Black students as less intelligent than Whites. Black Americans’ underachievement is both an educational...
and a societal problem. Sternberg (1998) argues that the traditional view of intelligence, based on limited conceptions and measures of intelligence as an immutable trait, is more a barrier than a boost to African American achievement and to the achievement of all students (Sternberg, 1998).

In the United States, as in other industrialized nations, schools serve as powerful agents of socialization and social mobility. They are major institutions of cultural transmission in which students learn the values and beliefs of the schools’ culture (Spindler & Spindler, 1991). Educational theorists and researchers have described schools as “sorting machines” in which children are classified, sorted, and tracked according to their ethnicities, abilities and needs (Bowles & Gintis, 1976; Oakes, 1982; Rist, 1970; Tyack, 1993).

According to Johnson (1992), the ubiquitous view of education is that one particular culture must be accepted as standard and dominant within the structure of the school. Pollard & Ajirotutu (2001) contend that “the historical and contemporary experiences of Europeans and European Americans have been presented as dominant and as the monocultural standard for academic, personal, and social socialization” (p. 80).
In terms of quality of life indicators, African American males are in deep trouble. They lead the nation in homicides, both as victims and perpetrators (Skolnick & Curie, 1994) and now have the fastest-growing rate of suicide (National Research Council, 1989). In terms of schooling, African American students, in many school districts throughout the United States, have traditionally received the most negative treatment from public educators (Porter, 1997; Kunjufu, 2002). Moreover, the statistics on African American boys reveal that they cluster at the top of the distribution of almost every indicator of school failure, including dropout, absenteeism, and low academic achievement (Garibaldi, 1992; NCES, 2005; Whiting, 2004). They are more likely than any other group to be suspended and expelled (Meier, Stewart, & England, 1989) and are more likely to be classified as mentally retarded or suffering from a learning disability (Donovan & Cross, 2002; Porter, 1997). In advanced placement classes they are hardly seen (Oakes, 1986; Lucas, 1999). In terms of teacher expectations, they are considered as low-achievers and receive fewer positive and more negative interactions from their teachers (Dunkin & Doenau, 1987).

Those black males who successfully make it out of high school and/or college and enter the labor market are faced
with yet more difficult challenges. They are the least likely to be hired and/or the most likely to be unemployed (Massey & Denton, 1993; Feagin & Sikes, 1994).

Beset with such an ominous array of challenges, two overarching questions of concern were constructed:

1) Can Black male students whose culture, racial identity, linguistic preference, and intellectual ability are devalued by this ubiquitous Eurocentric curriculum see schooling as their chance for successful educational achievement and upward social mobility in society?

2) Can a non-traditional view of intelligence (i.e., Howard Gardner’s Multiple Intelligence Theory, 1983) contribute to the improvement of Black students’ underachievement and thus make education the surest route to their academic success and social mobility?

This study explored the relationship of Howard Gardner’s Model of Multiple Intelligences to the education of a group of high school Black male students. The self-perception they hold regarding their intelligence and their teachers’ perceptions of them were explored in the light of Gardner’s model.

Theoretical Framework

Because individual achievement is embedded in social systems, two versions of ecological theory provided the
underpinnings for the framework of this study:

a) Bronfenbrenner’s Ecological Systems Theory

b) Spencer’s PVEST (Phenomenological Variant of Ecological Systems Theory) model, which is an adaptation of the ecology model to Black students in the United States. The review of the literature will detail the relevance of these models to the study.

The PVEST framework model was of particular importance to this study given that African American males tend to underachieve on standardized tests, experience greater drop-out rates (Garibaldi, 1992; Spencer, 1999), and are often categorized as a population at-risk in educational settings (Bailey & Moore, 2004; Davis, 2003). Others (Blout & Cunningham, 1996; Belton, 1995; Harper, 1996) cite cultural messages about Black males and how they are negatively constructed and perceived in the media and in everyday life. These images portray the young black male as violent, disrespectful and threatening. These cultural messages are carried over into the schools and thus negatively influence the way they are treated.

The PVEST model provided a framework for understanding how Black male students in this study defined their identity, their views of intelligence, and the coping mechanisms they used to survive in the classroom.
Personal Perspective

Being a Black male immigrant of Jamaican ancestry did not provide me with an understanding of the African-American experience and perspective. I had always held the belief that despite one’s racial/ethnic makeup, one could accomplish one’s goals and dreams and that such a person did not need the company of others to provide support amidst a white cultural setting such as that formed in the United States.

For the past twenty years, I have been teaching in inner-city schools that consisted of predominantly Black and Hispanic students. I had given particular attention to the males (i.e., particularly the Black males) in my classes because of the overwhelming negative societal statistics and referrals being written on them for their “inappropriate” behavior. As a Black male teacher, I felt that I had a responsibility to do something in order to help the Black males in my classes debunk the negative stereotypes, see themselves as intelligent, and view schooling as their chance for successful educational achievement and upward social mobility.

As a requirement for a doctoral level qualitative course, I conducted a project using an inductive approach to qualitative research. In this mini study, (Williams,
I investigated Black students’ use of space in the formation of Black identity and recognition on university campus. Grounded theory techniques, as recommended by Strauss & Corbin (1998), were used in the collection and analyses of observations and interviews. Themes emerging from the data were images of blackness, male dominance, conversation, communication-style, perception of group membership, in-group conflict, and significance of setting. The study found that on the University of Miami campus, Black students’ use of ‘separate’ space offered them a place where they challenged the social stereotypes and definitions perpetuated by the wider culture. This action (re)affirmed their ethnic identity. The ‘separate’ space acted to empower them in their search for ethnic identity in a society that fundamentally devalued them. This mini-study was the motivating factor for my dissertation.

**Purpose of the Study**

The purpose of this study was to investigate Black males’ perception of the concept of intelligence, and more specifically, their own intelligence. It sought also to understand if and how their schooling had affected their perceptions of intelligence.
**Research Questions**

The major overarching research question in this study concerned how eleventh grade Black male students view their intelligence and how this compares to their teachers’ estimates. In addressing this question, I used qualitative methods to probe the following seven questions.

**Students**

1. How do Black male 11th graders define intelligence?
2. Do Black male 11th graders include the concept of Multiple Intelligences in their definition?
3. How do Black male 11th graders describe their own intelligence?
4. What do students perceive to be the factors that contributed to their definition of intelligence generally and their own intelligence specifically?

**Teachers**

5. How do the teachers of these students define intelligence?
6. Do these teachers include the concept of Multiple Intelligence in their definition?
7. How do these teachers describe these Black males’ intelligence?
CHAPTER 2

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

The current underachievement of African American students must be seen in the context of history. Reviewing the history of African-Americans, more specifically African-American males, will provide the reader with a better understanding of contextual lived experiences of Black male youths in the United States.

Historical Context

One central ill-fated result of the American slavery experience in the United States was the de-Africanization of people of Africa. They were not permitted to use their own language and were forced to adopt the English language. Their names were changed. Their ethnic and cultural identities were no longer those of Yorubas or Ashantis. They were re-labeled, and re-identified as coloreds, Blacks or Negroes (Allen, 2001; Hale, 1986).

These newly re-identified Africans were eventually destined to be part of the American society. But where in the American society would they be placed and how would society perceive them? The institution of schooling was one of the main vehicles of socialization that would accomplish the acculturation to and assimilation of Blacks into the American tradition.
Hale (1986) described the position that Blacks would have, and how society would observe them in American society. Citing Herskovits’ (1958) work in the 1930’s, Hale (1986) argued that:

[The American] society had perpetuated the myth that Africans had no culture or civilization and that they swung through trees and ate each other. They taught Black Americans that Blacks had attained the highest level of culture by having been brought to America and having been civilized by white man (p. 11).

The rise of the West was accompanied by indifference and/or hatred toward these human beings of non-western origin. African American life, social structure, and identity reflected a group of people caught in a cultural abyss. Before the Diaspora, life in Africa was characterized by group affiliation that employed separate languages, rituals and beliefs. Being part of the same group was very important and was preserved via oral narratives (Asante & Abarry, 1996).

When Africans were taken out of Africa and brought to the United States to be made into slaves, the African people from these multilingual nations were forcibly thrown together, and thus the eventual creation of an African-American culture was born - shaped by their African past and the brutal vicissitudes of slavery as well as the
American social philosophy (Hecht, Jackson, Lindsley, Strauss, & Johnson, 2001).

The historic Supreme Court decision of Brown v. Board of Education in 1954, outlawed segregation in our nation’s schools and set forth the policies that would govern the relationship between Blacks and Whites (Hall, Freedle & Cross, 1972). The Brown decision did very little to change the enduring attitudes Whites had toward Blacks or even the manner in which they continued to treat them. The result is that decades after the Brown decision, decades after the enactment of the 1964 Civil Rights Act, Black students attend schools that are often inferior to their White counterparts and receive less challenging academic programs that contribute to the wide academic gap between them (Kunjufu, 2002).

The literature that supports this proposal addresses four main aspects of African American males’ experience. First, I consider how society as a whole creates an ecology that is not conducive to Black males’ success. Second, I address the impact of this ecology on these students’ identity. Third, I explore how their experience in the ecology of schooling affects the students’ learning styles. Finally, I investigate their self-perception of
intelligence and the relevance of Gardner’s Model of Multiple Intelligences.

**Ecological Systems Theory**

Steinglass (1978), as cited in Mikesell, Lusterman & McDaniel (1995) suggested that the term ‘systems theory’ is characterized by “the concentration on patterned rather than on linear relationships, to a consideration of events in the context in which they are occurring rather than an isolation of events from their environmental context” (p. xiv). This concept of systems theory gives strong evidence that, in order to understand the achievement of Black males, one must understand the effects of the social environment.

Ecological systems theory and research focus on describing and explaining the thoughts and actions of individuals and groups within the specific contexts of their lives. Raymore (2002) argued that “an ecological perspective of human development is concerned with understanding the contexts in which an individual exists, and incorporates the interactions between the individual, other individuals, and the social structures of society to explain human development” (p. 41-42).
FIGURE 2.1. Bronfenbrenner's Ecological Model describing the set of nested environmental influences on a child.

Bronfenbrenner’s Ecological Systems Theory looks at human development within the context of a system of relationships that forms the human environment. Each layer of the system (environment) has an effect on the individual’s development. The interaction between factors in the individual’s maturing biology, and the immediate family and community environment fuels and steers one’s development. If changes or conflict happens in any one particular layer, a ripple effect throughout other layers will occur. Thus, to study a child’s development, it is
imperative not only to look at the child’s immediate environment, but also at the interaction of the larger environment (Berk, 2000).

Bronfenbrenner’s structure of the environment consists primarily of four nested systems: Microsystem, Mesosystem, Exosystem, and Macrosystem. The microsystem is the layer closest to the child and holds the structures with which the child has direct contact. Structures in the microsystem include family, school, and neighborhood. At this level, the relationship between the child and these social structures is marked by reciprocity. Bronfenbrenner (1977) identified this reciprocity as bi-directional influences. He argues that the bi-directional influences at the microsystem level are strongest and have the greatest impact on the child.

The mesosystem layer provides the connection between structures of the child’s microsystem. For example, this layer involves the relationship between a child’s parents and his teacher, and between his neighborhood and his church. How the adults in his microsystem interact affects the child.

Unlike the microsystem and the mesosystem within which the child functions directly, the exosystem layer characterizes the larger social system in which the child
does not function directly. The structures in this layer impact the child’s development by interacting with some structures of the child’s microsystem. Examples of some of the structures in the exosystems are: mass media, school board meetings, and the workplace of the child’s parents.

The outermost layer of Bronfenbrenner’s Ecological Systems Theory is known as the macrosystem. This layer consists of, for example, widely shared cultural values, beliefs, customs and laws. For example, if the belief of the culture is that parents should be exclusively responsible for raising their children, then that culture is less likely to provide help or afford resources to help parents. This, in turn, shapes the structures in which parents function. In addition, the parents’ ability or inability to carry out such a charge toward their child within the environment of the child’s microsystem is equally affected (Huitt, 2003).

Because children are not born and raised in isolation, these differing layers of Bronfenbrenner’s (1977) systems theory will contribute to the understanding of how Black male youths cope with the environmental challenges that make it difficult for them to survive in American society generally, and in schools, specifically.
Spencer’s PVEST Model

**FIGURE 2.2.** Phenomenological variant of ecological systems theory (PVEST; Spencer, 1995, revised in 2004).

Spencer’s (2004) Phenomenological Variant of Ecological Systems Theory (PVEST) model, which introduces the idea of an individual’s view or perception of his/her ecology, is a variant of Bronfenbrenner's (1989) ecological systems theory. Spencer’s PVEST Model provides a comprehensive, integrative framework to examine the complex interdependent relationships between the subjective
experiences, stressors/supports, coping strategies, and emergent identities and life outcomes of Black male youths within the context of the family, peer relations, community, school, and societal race/class relationships.

Brown’s (2001) interpretation of Spencer’s PVEST model explored the implication of the model for the study of human development and for on-going intervention efforts with African-American males and other youth of color. According to Brown (2001), the PVEST model is marked by several key features: (1) its cross-disciplinary nature, (2) its conceptual and empirical grounding in an understanding of the normalcy of development processes for youths of color, despite the pervasiveness of deficit-models, (3) its attention to history, the role of social inequality and racism, (4) the pivotal role of self-appraisal in interpreting and responding to/cop ing with life experiences, (5) the interdependent relationship that exists between the individual’s social, emotional, intellectual, and physiological processes and interpersonal relationships across a range of cultural and social contexts; and (6) the link drawn between coping responses, emergent identities, and life outcomes.

Spencer’s (2004) PVEST model consists of five components: 1) risk contributors, 2) stress engagement,
3) reactive coping strategies, 4) emergent identities, and 5) coping outcomes. Risk contributors consist of factors that may predispose individuals to experience adverse outcomes. For Black males, these risk contributors may include, but are not limited to, socio-economic conditions, poverty, race, immigration status, and discrimination.

Stress engagement refers to actual experience of situations that challenge the individual’s psychosocial identity and sense of well-being. For Black males, the threat of being stereotyped, violence, and daily discrimination are examples of some of the challenges they confront. In response to stress engagements, reactive coping strategies are employed. These reactive coping strategies are utilized to resolve conflict-producing situations. These involve use of specific coping strategies to solve problems that may be either adaptive (e.g., heightened school engagement) or maladaptive (e.g., hyper-masculinity by males). As an example, a Black male’s response to inferred disrespect from his teacher may be to invoke a negative attitude toward academics. The coping strategies employed over time result in stable emergent identities. Emergent identities define how individuals view themselves within the various contextual experiences. They become stable over time and across different settings, and not just within family and
school. The individual’s sense of identity lays the foundation for future perceptions and behavior. The emergent identities lead to either productive or unproductive coping outcomes. Productive outcomes may include positive and supportive relationships with friends, academic achievement, school completion, and effective motivation while unproductive outcomes may include dropping out of school, and dismal academic achievement (Spencer, 2001).

The PVEST model describes the identity processes and the coping mechanisms that individuals develop over time. It provides insights for intervention supports and seeks to understand and improve human developmental outcomes generally, with regard to African-American males specifically. It affords an understanding of the specific challenges that African American youth face during development (Swanson, Cunningham & Spencer, 2003).

Spencer, Fegley & Harpalani, (2003) found that by using religion, spirituality, and cultural pride as a form of coping, a healthy sense of self and a healthy sense of self in relation to others develop. They argued that the PVEST model is helpful in understanding the normative developmental processes, such as growth and identity formation of African-American males. Moreover, Swanson,
Cunningham & Spencer (2003) suggested that the major challenge in understanding the PVEST model in relation to Black males “may lie in the limited way in which we conceptualize African American males’ experience across life course” (p.626). They further proposed that another critical oversight is our inclination to overlook the plethora of expressions of Black males’ resilience in the face of chronic challenges (Swanson, Cunningham & Spencer, 2003). Without an understanding of the five components and processes of the PVEST model, it may become easy for Black males to be blamed for the ‘problematic’ character they exhibit. Similarly, without the recursive contextual analysis that the PVEST model offers, it may be just as enticing to infer that individuals who enjoy considerable privileges may solely credit their own efforts in experiencing successes throughout their life courses.

The Ecology of Schooling

Schools exist within the students’ microsystem and are important vehicles of the socialization process. They serve as venues where students are instructed in the values and norms of the macrosystem. These values and norms are transmitted through bureaucracies in the exosystem via the interactions of teachers, administrations, and families within the Mesosystem (Spring 1994). They are places where
students learn how to interact with others in culturally acceptable ways and how to deal with authority (Apple, 1982; Spring, 1994).

However, schools serve up more than just the three Rs – reading, ‘riting, and ‘rithmetic. The hidden agendas of schooling provide lessons in how we see ourselves in terms of race. Although school is certainly not the only place where children formulate ideas about race, it is a place where children are more likely to encounter persons of a different race or ethnic group (Noguera, 2003).

Social reproduction theorists Bourdieu (2005) and Bowles and Gintis (1976) contended that schools maintain and perpetuate the social-class positions of people in a given society. Bowles and Gintis (1976), in particular, hypothesized that the capitalist economic system is a hierarchical structure that is sustained by people from different social origins and educational preparation. To ensure that the social stratification of the world of work is maintained, schools, as social institutions, are instrumental in delivering to the workplace people who will fill these differing categories of work. In another way, schools further perpetuate this stratification by emphasizing respect for authority and following school rules.
In the light of social structures of desegregation and equal opportunity laws, in an ideal world, all students irrespective of race, would receive a quality education. As a result, gaps in educational achievement would be eliminated. The social institution of schooling would ensure equality as well as equity in the education of all students. But as schools open their doors to an ever-increasing diverse population, schools differentiate among students internally (Banks & McGee-Banks, 2003; Banks, 1988).

Differentiating among students can be a good thing because it can provide children with what they need in their context. On the other hand, tracking is one of the most overt ways in which schools differentiate - discriminate and disempower - among students. Educational theorists and researchers have described schools as sorting machines in which children are sorted, classified, and grouped according to their abilities, intelligence, and educational and social needs (Rist, 1970; Tyack, 1993; Oakes, 1982; Oakes & Rogers, 2006; Anyon, 1997). These practices affect teachers’ perceptions and expectations of students’ abilities.

Studies by Oakes (1986) and Slavin (1987) showed that African-American students’ opportunities to learn
mathematics are diminished through the use of tracking. For example, Oakes (1986) found that basic mathematics courses contained disproportionate numbers of African American students while advanced mathematics courses, such as geometry, served mainly White students. Furthermore, Oakes (1990) found that in elementary grades, the science and mathematics attainment of children of low-income families, as well as African American and Hispanic children, were not significantly different from their White peers. However, in the secondary grades, their experiences were strikingly different.

Several explanations of the disparities between African American and White students are framed in biological, psychological, and sociological contexts (Jacob & Jordan, 1993). Despite decades of national concern and the high incidence of school dropouts, the poor performance of African American students is still the rule rather than the exception (Boykin, 1986). Boykin also argued that even if we could eliminate the performance gap between African American and White children, other dilemmas would remain. He argues that it is the process of schooling “embedded within the postindustrial capitalist society” (p. 58) that represents a form of social domination, or hegemony. The
formation of schooling itself plays an overarching role in shaping the nature of the schooling process.

Tracking is nearly ubiquitous in secondary schools despite evidence suggesting its general ineffectiveness and likely negative effects on students in low tracks (Braddock II, 1995; Lucas, 1999; Oakes, 1987; Oakes & Rogers, 2006). It is a powerful schooling process that determines the academic future and social mobility of all students. For the African American males whose culture is devalued by the school they attend, tracking becomes one of the main contributors of their academic failure.

Theories of Underachievement

Three of the most prominent theories that have materialized over the years to explain the underachievement of African Americans are: deficient intelligence theory (IQ), cultural deficit theory, and critical theory (Jacob & Jordan, 1993). While the ‘deficiency’ approach to Black culture assumes that the “so-called deprived children [African American] come from a group with no cultural integrity” (Boykin, 1986, p.60) the IQ deficit theory suggests that differences in achievement are the results of genetic variations. Jensen (1969) and Garrett (1971) emphasized that African Americans’ tendency to score lower on IQ test is, in principle, due to inferior innate
intellect. The cultural deficit theory focuses on the culture of poverty and holds White middle-class culture as the norm. It theorizes that poverty breeds its own culture, which is deficient in providing the values, attitudes and experiences needed to succeed in school (Payne, 2001). In contrast to the IQ deficit theory and the cultural deficit theory, critical theory addresses the role of schools and societal structures in the educational achievement of African American students.

Counterarguments to the above-mentioned deficit theories reveal strong contentions. The IQ deficit theory has been vilified (Gould, 1981; Biesheuvel, 1975; Blau, 1981; Gardner, 1988). Hereditability, the model on which the IQ deficit theory is based, “does not take into account the fact that genes can influence test scores indirectly by interacting with the environment in which an individual develops” (Jacob & Jordan, 1993, p.4). Critics of the cultural deficit theory have argued that the concept of culture is not applied appropriately in that it addresses lower-class groups from an ethnocentric, middle-class perspective. Moreover, the cultural manifestations in the lives of African Americans reflect the way of life of an exclusively independent and whole Black culture that
insulates African Americans from the mainstream dominant White society (Boykin, 1986).

Critical theorist Ginsburg (1986) argued that the school performance of African American children is affected by political, social and motivational factors. Additionally, “the academic performance of Black children in America has little to do with their race or their genes: it is a consequence of the structure of the society as a whole” (Neisser, 1986, p. 4).

The deficit theories of underachievement constitute a major risk factor in Black males’ achievement and may themselves contribute to African Americans’ unsuccessful attainment of educational success. However, the success of students cannot be explained without an examination of what occurs in the curriculum.

Curriculum

A Eurocentric curriculum is prevalent in schools across the United States. This Eurocentric curriculum ignores the cultural capital that Black children take with them to school. It also ignores the learning styles and linguistic preference of such a group. It is this Eurocentric curriculum that fails to embrace the background of African American youths that is the cause of their underachievement. In light of this, Ogbu’s work (1992)
provides a fresh look at core curriculum and offers new insights as to how educators can address concerns related to a multicultural curriculum.

Ogbu argued that neither the core curriculum nor multicultural education approaches in the current school reform movement adequately address the problem of minority students who have not traditionally done well in public education. He argued that core curriculum advocates falsely assume that, as a result of instituting a core curriculum, all students will perform as expected. With regard to multicultural education, Ogbu (1992) asserted that multicultural education programs are inadequately designed and that they focus primarily on cultural differences. Concurring with Boykin (1986), he contended that the crucial issue in cultural diversity and learning is the relationship between the minority cultures and the American mainstream culture. Minorities whose cultural frames of reference are oppositional to the cultural frame of reference of American mainstream culture have greater difficulty crossing cultural boundaries at school.

According to Ogbu (1987), advocates of a core curriculum (Hirsch, 1987, 2006; Bloom, 1987) are more concerned about the status of U.S. economic and technological advances in international competition than
about assimilating culturally diverse groups into the mainstream culture. The ability of a core curriculum to increase the school performance of minority groups is limited in scope because it does not take into account the nature of minority cultural diversity. For example, children bring to school their cultural capital—cultural modes of understanding of social realities, their communities, the educational strategies used by their families—in seeking a proper education. The children’s cultural capital, if not adequately addressed, is as important as the within-school factors (i.e.; test scores) (Ogbu, 1988).

Multicultural education, a movement led largely by minorities, emerged primarily in the 1970s and 1980s in response to cultural deprivation theory. Before then, minorities had argued and protested against a differential and inferior curriculum. They wanted the same curriculum that was offered to Whites (Ogbu, 1978). Many have offered definitions of multicultural education, but has continued to be a debate regarding the definition of what multicultural education really is and what it should address (Appleton, 1983; Diaz, 2001; Banks & McGee Banks, 2003; Gay, 1979; Sleeter & Grant, 1999). Citing Gibson (1976), Ogbu (1992) explained that Gibson’s survey found
five models of multicultural education: 1) multicultural education for cross cultural understanding which stresses teaching strategies affirming the right to be different and the need for members of different cultures to respect one another; 2) culturally responsive education to enhance minority school learning by including minority cultures in the content of the curriculum as a medium of instruction; 3) bilingual education designed to reinforce minority students’ cultures, languages and identity while teaching the languages and skills of the mainstream culture; 4) cultural pluralism designed to preserve and strengthen ethnic-group identity and to increase minority groups’ social, political, and economic participation in society; 5) multicultural education as the normal human experience, enabling individuals to competently participate in a multicultural society (Ogbu, 1992).

In sum, multicultural education instills and fosters pride in ethnic heritage, reduces prejudice and stereotyping, and promotes intercultural understandings (Banks & McGee Banks, 2003; Banks 1989). But the crucial question is to what extent will multicultural education improve the academic performance of those minority children who have not traditionally done well in school?
Multicultural education may improve school learning for some minority children. However, according to Ogbu (1992), it is not an adequate strategy to enhance the academic performance of those minorities who have traditionally not done well in school. Ogbu (1992) contended that one of the reasons is that multicultural education “ignores the students’ own responsibility for their academic performance” (p.6). He argued that comparative studies show that success in school depends “not only on what schools and teachers do but also on what students do” (p. 6).

Some (Trueba, 1988) have argued that Ogbu (1992) is, in part, blaming the students for their failure in school. Further, Spencer’s PVEST model and Bronfenbrenner’s Ecological Systems Theory serve as counterarguments to Ogbu’s ‘blaming the victim’ assumption. Both Spencer’s PVEST and Bronfenbrenner’s Ecological Systems Theory argue that the institution of schooling is a salient contributing factor to minority students’ failure. They stress the importance of school as a social structure and how minority students struggle to overcome academic underachievement within schools. These models also stress the need for support and guidance at different stages of students’ lived experiences. However, Ogbu was not arguing that the
environment does not play a part in minority students’ failure in school. He was asking the research community to include children’s responsibility as a criterion when implementing multicultural education or core curricular programs.

In order to understand minority groups, their culture, language, and what makes crossing cultural boundaries and learning in school difficult for some and not for others, an identification of the different types of minority groups is essential (Ogbu, 1992).

Types of Minority Status

Ogbu (1986, 1990, 1992) contended that while several minority groups coexist, some succeed in school and some do not. He attributes this fact to the differential histories of how various ethnic groups became minorities within the United States. As mentioned before, Ogbu’s theory is widely respected. There are those who see it as tending to blame the victim.

He argues that minority groups can be classified into three groups: autonomous minorities, who are numerically in a minority (e.g. Jews, Mormons), immigrant or voluntary minorities, who have moved, more or less voluntarily to the United States (e.g. the Chinese in Stockton, California, the Punjabi Indians in Valleyside, California), and
involuntary minorities, whom the majority group has incorporated unwillingly through slavery or colonization (e.g. Blacks, Native Americans).

In examining the affective dimensions of the relationship between Black and White Americans, Ogbu (1990) focused on voluntary and involuntary minorities. He contended that the relationship between Black and White Americans is unique and is marked by an oppositional cultural identity, in which Black Americans had developed a sense of identity in opposition to White Americans because of social, political and economic subordination they had encountered. Ogbu also argued that Black Americans have developed protective devices to reactively promote Black identity by reinforcing invisible boundaries between themselves and the dominant White culture.

All minority groups attend school with some degree of cultural and linguistic differences, including differing cultural frames of reference. Nonetheless, according to Ogbu, it is the involuntary minority group that has more difficulty crossing cultural and linguistic boundaries at school and is generally less successful within it. While voluntary minorities see these differences as barriers to be overcome in order to achieve academic success, involuntary minorities view their cultural and language
differences as symbols of group identity to be maintained, not as barriers to be overcome. Because of this interpretation, they do not make a clear distinction between what they have to learn or do to boost their school success and what they must do to maintain their minority cultural frames of reference and identities that are distinct from their white counterparts (Ogbu, 1990). Ogbu (1987, 1992) contended that interpretation of cultural and linguistic differences is something that evolved historically and is not just a creation of minority children in their present school setting. He further argued that minority youths should be "show[n] how to succeed by practicing accommodation without assimilation" (Solomon, 1992, p. xi). This, he asserted, is what most successful minorities do.

In this study, the Black male students are not all African-Americans. While some are considered as Ogbu’s involuntary minorities, others are voluntary minorities who have migrated from various countries located in the Caribbean islands. Since identity is a fluid construct, affected by various levels of the ecology, it seems likely that since many of them have lived in the United States for most of their lives and have been schooled in the American tradition, they may have, generally, assimilated to and
have adopted an involuntary-like attitude, demeanor, and disposition. The following section discusses how these identities became expressed in the education system.

**Ecology, Identity, and Schooling**

Drawing upon the works of major scholars of identity theory, Black studies, and schooling, this section attempts to outline, clarify and answer questions related to Black males and the education they receive from the institution of schooling, how they respond to their schooling, and how the school environment affects their success or failure.

**Understanding Racial Identity Development**

Helms (1990) defined racial identity and racial identity development as:

> a sense of group or collective identity based on one’s perception that he or she shares a common racial heritage with a particular racial group...racial identity development theory concerns the psychological implications of racial-group membership, that is belief systems that evolve in reaction to perceived differential racial-group membership. (p. 3)

Tatum (1992) posited that in a society where racial-group membership is emphasized, the development of a racial identity will occur in some form in everyone. Given the dominant-subordinate relationship of Whites and people of color, Tatum (1992) argued that the racial identity
development of Black youths will manifest itself in different ways.

The black male students in this study are from different parts of the United States, as well as from different countries of the world, including the Caribbean islands. I argue that although some of these Black males did not experience the same caliber of blatant racial discrimination as Black Americans did during the Civil Rights Era, they have experienced much of the psychological racial discrimination that was passed down from earlier generations and they have experienced this during their lives in the United States.

Many Black students in the United States have experienced some form of racial discrimination. The discrimination they experienced comes to them in different forms. In recounting part of the life of Malcolm X in his autobiography, Tatum (2003) explained how Malcolm X despite living in a foster home, was an A student. In discussing his career with his English teacher, Malcolm decided that he wanted to become a lawyer. His teacher responded that his goal of becoming a lawyer was not a realistic one. In another example where a substitute teacher was covering a class in a school and the majority of the students planned to attend college after graduation, one young black man was
told by the substitute that he should consider going to a community college instead. The substitute teacher had recommended four-year colleges to all the other students.

These scenarios are examples of the lived experiences of many Black students; where the message is very clear—that they are not as intelligent as their White counterparts, or as able to choose either the profession of their liking or to attend the college of their choice, simply because of the color of their skin.

White students as well as Black students struggle with the quest of identity, but Blacks think about themselves in terms of race because the rest of the world thinks of them in that term. White students rarely identify with their race as their primary identity. Self-perceptions are shaped by the messages that humans receive from others. So when Black males enter adolescence, the racial content of those messages intensifies. In other words, the idea of race is salient for Black youths because it is salient for others (Tatum, 2003).

Fordham & Ogbu (1986) claimed that notions of identity became rooted in ‘fictive kinship,’ an intense sense of group loyalty and membership extending beyond the traditional family relationships, and which is described as having its roots in slavery. It refers to a kinship-like
connection between and among persons within a given society, not related by blood or marriage, who, according to Fordham (1988) “have maintained essential reciprocal social or economic relationship” (p. 56). The term conveys a sense of ‘brotherhood’ and is evident in the various terms that Black Americans use to when referring to one another, such as “brother,” “sister,” or “blood” (Liebow, 1967; Fordham, 1985). Because of this notion of fictive kinship, Black Americans may continue to emphasize group loyalty in situations involving conflict and competition with White Americans.

Understanding racial identity development is essential in addressing my research questions regarding Black male students’ perceptions of self and their intelligence. It sets the stage for the reader to adjust his/her thinking—allowing him/her to comprehend the manner by which Black males develop their sense of identity in U.S. society.

**Black Ethnic Identity Development**

Racial identity theories have been developed over the past three decades, with each theory building on the others. Thomas (1971) developed five hypotheses concerning the stages through which Blacks pass in attempting to work out their identity. He asserted that most blacks suffer from what he calls “Negromachy” prior to the Negro-to-Black
identity movement. For him, Negromachy is marked by a mystification of self-worth and demonstrates reliance on white society for defining themselves. Thomas (1971) suggested that African Americans must first withdraw into themselves before renegotiating relationships with other racial or ethnic groups. This stage of withdrawal represents the first stage. The second stage represents testifying to all the pain previously endured in the denial of self as a person. He also included in the second stage a need to learn to express one’s anxieties about becoming black. Information processing around black cultural heritage marks the third stage. The information processing in which a person engages, leads to the fourth stage, activity. Here, a person finds a link to a larger black experience. The fifth and final stage is called transcendental—which is characterized by losing all ‘hang-ups’ about race, age, sex and social class and seeing oneself as part of humanity in all of its flavors.

A similar stage hypothesis concerning black identity is Cross’ (1971, 1978, 1991) model. Through a careful examination of a wide segment of the Black American population, Cross conjectured that there exists a series of well-defined stages through which Black Americans pass when they encounter blackness in themselves. The five stages in
this process are identified as Pre-encounter, Encounter, Immersion/Emersion, Internalization and Internalization-Commitment.

In the first stage of Pre-encounter, the individual has absorbed many of the beliefs and values of the dominant White culture including the notion that Whites are superior intellectually. The individual at this stage seeks to assimilate and be accepted by Whites while distancing him/herself from Blacks. Movement into the Encounter stage is usually precipitated by an event or series of events that forces the individual to recognize the impact of racism in one’s life. At this stage, the individual comes to believe that the world should be interpreted from a Black perspective. The Immersion/Emersion stage is exemplified by the concurrent longing to surround oneself with visible symbols of one’s racial identity and an active avoidance of symbols of Whiteness. According to Parham (1989) “this stage is also characterized by a tendency to denigrate White people, simultaneously glorifying Black people” (p. 190). While still maintaining connections with Blacks, the individual at the Internalization stage is willing to establish meaningful relationships with Whites and is ready to build relationships with members of other oppressed groups. Cross suggested that there are few
psychological differences between the fourth stage, Internalization, and the fifth stage, Internalization-Commitment. However, Cross (1991) suggested that those of the fifth stage have always found their “personal sense of Blackness in a plan of action or a general sense of commitment” (p. 220) to the concerns of Blacks as a group.

Tatum (1992) offered an interesting nuance to the linear models proposed by Thomas (1971) and Cross (1971, 1978, and 1991). She explained that though the process of racial identity development has been seen from a linear perspective, she argued that “a person may move from one stage to the next, only to revisit an earlier stage as a result of new encounter experiences” (p.12), thus signifying that it is more accurate to think of these stages in a spiral form. The most current theory by Helms (1990) is a refinement of Cross’ Theory.

**Duality of Identity**

As the forgoing theories suggest, racial identity is neither monolithic nor static. Indeed, the multiple aspects of identity are evident in the term African-American. The term fittingly signifies the fusion that has taken place in the collective experience of Africans and their descendants. Foster (1971) contended that “when one speaks of the ‘twoness’ of the Black experience in America,
recognition is being given to the duality in having Western roots and non-Western roots” (p. 9). The historical experience of alienation of African Americans is one of belonging and not belonging. It is an experience of DuBois’ ‘twoness.’ It is being African, from a different place, and American at the same time. DuBois (1964) poignantly captured the character of the African-American identity as:

this sense of always looking at one’s self through the eyes of others, of measuring one’s soul by the tape of a world that looks on in amused contempt and pity. One ever feels his two-ness— an American, a Negro— Two souls, two thoughts, two unreconciled strivings; two warring ideals in one dark body whose dogged strength alone keeps it from being torn asunder. The history of the American Negro is the history of this strife—this longing to attain self-conscious manhood, to merge his double self into a better and truer self...He would not Africanize America, for America has too much to teach the world and Africa. He would not bleach his Negro soul in a flood of white Americanism; for he knows that Negro blood has a message for the world. He simply wishes to make it possible for a man to be both Negro and an American without being cursed and spit upon (p. 16-17)

DuBois’s double consciousness construct encapsulates the psychological and socio-historical realities of oppression and draws attention to the strength of the African American culture. As suggested by Allen (2001) Dubois’ conceptualization and discussion of double consciousness “leads to neither assimilation nor separation but to a permanent tension, a certain hyphenated identity” (p. 30).
**A Triple Quandary**

Boykin (1986) offered a powerful extension of duBois’ double consciousness theory. He cast it in terms of the interplay among three realms of pragmatic compromise or experiential negotiations: 1) the mainstream experience, 2) the minority experience, and 3) the Black cultural experience (Boykin, 1986).

According to Boykin (1986) the mainstream and minority cultures do not juxtapose themselves in society. One of them has hegemony over the other. Apple (1979) stated that hegemony “leads to and comes from unequal economic and cultural control” (p. 5). For many African Americans, the mainstream experience exposes African-Americans to the dreams and goals of the larger society. An African-American is an American, yet the African-American is made to feel less of an American by the larger society. The mainstream experience supports the existing unequal distribution of wealth and power in society. The proverbial phrase that “all men are created equal” ends up not only being a dream deferred but one denied to many African Americans in their pursuit of upward mobility and educational attainment.

On the other hand, the minority experience is based upon the exposure of African Americans to social, political and economic oppression. This oppression is linked to race.
Boykin (1986) contended that the status of the African American in the minority experience produces “adaptive and compensatory reactions, social perspectives, and defensive postures...to cope with the predicament created by the oppressive forces” (p. 66). This minority experience will be crucial in examining the coping strategies employed by Black males in this study as they encounter the triple quandary.

The third realm of African-American identity is the Black cultural experience in which African-Americans participate and is rooted in a traditional African ethos - the underlying sentiment that informs the beliefs, customs, or practices of a group or society. Boykin (1986), like Spencer (1999, 2003) and Bronfenbrenner (1977), contended that to understand the African American child within the context of school and society, an understanding of not only the coping mechanisms and oppressive conditions under which the African American child lives, but also the African cultural roots that have survived in African American cultural expressions and social structures.

Concurring with Boykin (1986), Ogbu (1986) argued that it is not merely the children’s genes or the types of homes or environments they come from, but the diligence with which schools teach children and how the children
themselves perceive and respond to schooling that makes children succeed in learning and demonstrating what schools teach them. While Brönfenbrenner’s theory (1977) examines the ecology of systems, Ogbu’s theory (1986) incorporates an historical view of the systems theory in attempting to address the issue of cultural diversity and multicultural education.

**Social Identity and Self-Esteem**

Social identity theory posits that an individual’s social identity is a result of the knowledge that an individual has of belonging to a group and the positive or negative values that the individual appends to being a member of a group (Phinney, 1990). Being a member of a group provides an individual with a sense of belonging, but as Allen (2001) suggested “being a member of an ethnic group represents a special case” (p. 88). This special case suggests that if the dominant group looks upon an ethnic group as having low self-esteem, the potential exists for members of that ethnic group to view themselves as having a negative self-concept.

The self-fulfilling prophecy suggests that when the perceived behavior of a group is based on false or negative beliefs of that group, such that the beliefs are confirmed by the behavior of the target group, the members of the
target group tend to act in a manner that is compatible with the false or negative expectation that are attributed to them (Crocker & Major, 1989; Major, Sciacchitano, & Crocker, 1993; Tatum, 2003).

The theoretical formulation of Cooley’s (1902) looking-glass self posited that one’s self-conception is determined to a large extent through the eyes of others. I argue that the portrayal of negative images of Black boys in the media, a Eurocentric curriculum, prejudiced teachers, racial stereotyping, and the pervasive traditional view of intelligence that exists in schools is harmful to African Americans. This is especially true for young black males who often come to view themselves, both cognitively and socially, as less intelligent than their white peers. As cited in Allen (2001), Allport (1954) emphasized the destructive effects of such negative forces by contending that

since no one can be indifferent to the abuse and expectations of others I must anticipate that ego defensiveness will frequently be found among members of groups that are set off for ridicule, disparagement and discrimination. It could not be otherwise (p.57).

Furthermore, because African Americans are aware of past injustices and continuing racial prejudices toward them as a group, they attribute some of the blame to shortcomings in the social system (Hughes & Demo, 1989).
Racial Prejudice as a Stress Factor

Racial prejudice in American society is, according to Gougis (1986), an “environmental stressor that must increase emotional stress of blacks over and above that experienced by other groups in the U.S.” (p. 147). This stress is more likely to have a negative effect on students’ daily academic performance by reducing their willingness to stick with academic task. It also interferes with their cognitive processes involved in learning. As this process continues, Blacks often do not develop the necessary cognitive skills for high academic achievement. Emotional stress due to racial prejudice affects adversely the academic performance of black youths. It can reduce motivation to learn, and interfere with memory and other cognitive processes. While the academic performance of both Blacks and Whites is affected by stress, Blacks are more burdened with the added stress of racial prejudice throughout their academic lives (Gougis, 1986).

Pettigrew (1992) found that about 75% of White adults in the United States hold some degree of prejudice against Blacks. Moreover, at the level of the macrosystem, racial prejudice has been expressed through institutionalized
practices (such as slavery), cultural bias, and personal attacks.

Within the microsystem, prejudiced teachers can affect students in a more personal way; low expectations, hostility, and differential treatment can adversely affect blacks (specifically, black males) in the classroom. Although direct exposure to extreme incidents of prejudice (like lynching or cross burnings) is fairly uncommon in this day and age, indirect exposure for Black males is frequently experienced via the media. Thus, racial prejudice touches the lives of all Blacks. Izard (1972, 1977) showed that racial prejudice is generally perceived by Blacks as a personal threat which causes a rise in the emotional stress they endure. Moreover, Gougis (1992) vehemently argues that as a result of the racial prejudice that Blacks experience over a long period of time, “they will have spent less time trying to learn academic material and will have made less efficient use of their cognitive skills” (p. 149).

**Stereotype Threat as a Stress Factor**

The threat of being academically stereotyped has received particular attention in recent research (Steele, 1992; Howard & Harmmond, 1985). This line of research argues that within the context of school and society,
African Americans face the daunting task of making themselves resilient to the many different challenges they encounter. Some of these challenges involve the risk of being racially marginalized and stigmatized about their intellectual ability. Whenever Black students perform a task that involves their intelligence or scholastic ability, they face the threat of a suspicion about their group’s skill and competence. They experience an uneasy awareness that if they do poorly on scholastic tests, they will validate the racial stereotype about the inferior intellectual ability of Black people. As a result, a self-fulfilling prophecy sets in. As this threat persists over time, these students tend to protectively distance themselves from academic achievement (Steele, 1992; Howard & Harmmond, 1985). Steele & Aronson (1995) identified that kind of label as ‘stereotype threat’—a logical phenomenon which Steele refers to as ‘racial stereotype vulnerability’ and define it as “being at risk of confirming, as self-characteristic, a negative stereotype about one’s group” (p. 797).

The anxiety of knowing that one is a potential target of prejudice and stereotypes affects African American students. They are more likely to internalize this negative view of their group as ‘inferiority anxiety,’ which
according to Steele & Aronson (1995) is “aroused by a variety of race-related cues in the environment” (p. 798).

Not surprisingly, others have contended that Steele’s theory depends on the assumption that Black students, before taking certain scholastic tests, already have such low self-esteem that they routinely assume they will fail. Gray-Little (2000) contended that, in contrast, teenagers with high self-esteem would believe that they are capable of doing well on scholastic tests and would not be intimidated by “some abstract fear of confirming other people’s negative stereotypes” (p. 105) about them. Students with high self-esteem would believe that this ‘stereotype threat’ is fiction and would not be inclined to believe that they would fail (Gray-Little, 2000).

Additionally, Gray-Little & Hafdahl (2000) have rejected the orthodox theories on black self-esteem. They found that Black teenagers not only have high self-esteem but that their self-esteem is significantly higher than White teenagers.

Gray-Little’s research is crucial to this study of Black males in that it shows the resilience of these young men; that despite the negative environment and their struggle to debunk the myth of their underachievement, they still “accumulate their high self-esteem through their
relationships with friends and family” (Gray-Little, 2000, p. 105). I believe that most black students have high self-esteem. It is within the context of schools that they are made to feel as though they have no self-worth.

**Hyper-masculinity**

In discussing Spencer’s (1995, 1999) work, Brown (2001) posited that as African-American boys are subjected to and become ever more conscious of racism and institutional and societal inequities that affect their lives, they develop gender-intensified behaviors in an attempt to gain the 'right-to-respect’ that they have been denied. She suggested that the need for respect that young Black boys demand is a reactive coping response that “grows out of the early cultivation of independence and assumption of responsibility that characterizes the lives of children in poor white and working-class communities of color” (Brown, 2001, p. 130). She attributed this response – the need for respect– to the ongoing efforts of Black males to combat the pervasive racial stereotypes that promote disrupted self-images in themselves and other marginalized groups. Spencer makes the argument that African-American males’ embracesment of hyper-masculinity can be linked to the history of slavery and to current realities in poor communities (Brown, 2001). Another reason commonly
mentioned for the poor academic performance and alienation of some Black males is that they perceive most school activities as feminine and irrelevant to their masculine sense-of-self and development. Black boys tend to embrace an accepted code of masculinized conduct. They adopt and display behaviors that they think convey a sense of ‘coolness’. The demeanors of these Black boys are often misunderstood by White middle-class teachers as defiant and intimidating (Majors et al., 1994; Majors & Mancini Billson, 1992). The development of a hyper-masculine image may be seen as an aspect of oppositional identity.

**Resistance as a Coping Strategy**

Oppositional culture theory provides a compelling account of school resistance among African-American students, more specifically, African-American males. It argues that members of the involuntary minority group tend to underachieve in high school for fear that they be accused of "acting white." Here, the underlying assumption is that academic success hurts the “fictive kinship” peer relationships for involuntary minorities more than it does for any other groups (Fordham & Ogbu, 1986). Embracing the school curriculum, speaking Standard English, using the library, and working hard to get good grades are perceived by Blacks as “acting white.” Fordham & Ogbu’s (1986)
ethnographic study found that black students who were engaged in academic pursuits were labeled as ‘braniacs’ and were alienated, ostracized or even sometimes physically beaten by other Black students.

Marotto’s (1977) ethnographic study as cited in Solomon (1992) found that the activities of the Boulevard Brothers’ street-corner behavior conflicted with the authority of the school’s structure, and with their White peers and teachers. Their street-corner behavior and lifestyle included activities such as the manipulation of others, breaking school rules, noninvolvement in academic pursuits, and preserving group solidarity and identity through their style of dress and deportment (Solomon, 1992).

Resistance theories developed out of studies that examined the opposition and confrontation between the school’s authority structure and the students’ culture. Just as Black slaves had developed a culture of resistance to the institution of slavery, so do Black male students within school settings develop a culture of resistance to school structure through the use of certain behaviors that are considered inappropriate by the standards of the schools they attend. Like slavery, the institution of schooling is viewed as an oppressive force that stifles the
cultural capital, creativity, and enthusiasm that Black male students bring with them. When Black students rebuke their Black peers for “acting White,” they are actively resisting white structure and domination. Thus, Black male youths feel forced to alienate themselves from schools; forming and/or finding alternate places of belonging (i.e.: street corner, gangs). Spencer’s (2004) PVEST model sees these as “reactive coping strategies”.

Black male students’ resistance to school structure and authority contributes to their academic underachievement because their identity, culture, learning styles, linguistic preferences, and communicative styles are not addressed by the Eurocentric curriculum that exists within the schools. This, in turn, contributes to the negative perception they have of themselves and of those Black students who for them are “acting white.” However, Spencer’s PVEST model emphasizes that this is a negative coping outcome, but not necessarily the only possible outcome (Spencer, 2001a). The culture that they cultivate within the school is not only influenced by their orientation toward the rules and authority of the school, but also by the kind of identity they are determined to create within the school they attend and in the wider community (Solomon, 1992).
This study of eleventh-grade Black males is rooted in the notion that it is possible to educate all children, including Black males. This idea is one that is born from the vast amount of research on human development and from research on learning styles of Black Children (Hale, 1986; Lee, 2000). Despite the broad array of difficulties that confront African-American male students -- racial prejudice, and stereotype threat-- African American males’ academic performance can be improved by devising strategies that counter the effects of the harmful environmental and cultural forces that inhibits their success. I argue that the incorporation of Gardner’s Multiple Intelligence theory is one positive approach that can reverse the negative self-perception that Black boys have and the patterns of low achievement.

It is important to note the significance of learning styles when addressing notions of intelligence and when dealing with African-American students’ culture. The following section highlights some of the different ways in which students respond to their educational experiences.

**Learning Styles**

Students across cultures differ in the way they approach learning. Some need absolute quiet in order to study; others need music and background noise. Some need a
great deal of support, while others are independent and self-motivated (Bennett, 1995; Hale, 1986; Dunn & Dunn, 1993).

Citing Keefe & Languis (1983), Bennett (1995) defined learning style as that consistent pattern of behavior and performance by which an individual approaches educational experiences. It is the composite of characteristic cognitive, affective, and physiological behaviors that serve as relatively stable indicators of how a learner perceives, interacts with, and responds to the learning environment (p. 164).

Knowledge about learning styles is significant because it provides insight into how students’ cultural style and family child-rearing practices affect the way students respond to the school curriculum.

**Culture and Learning Styles**

Many aspects of culture or ways of life of students of color, especially of African Americans, are incompatible with the Eurocentric, middle-class cultural values, beliefs and norms of the school (Ogbu, 1988). These cultural differences oftentimes result in cultural discontinuity between the school and the student (Hale, 1986; Kunjufu, 2002).

Bennett (1995) identified five cultural factors that seem to influence how students learn: (1) childhood
socialization, (2) socio-cultural tightness, (3) ecological adaptation, (4) biological effects, and (5) language.

*Childhood socialization* refers particularly to the child-rearing practices employed by a particular culture. For example, Chimezie (1988) theorized that the highly-developed motor skills of African American children may be attributed to the fact that Black mothers have more physical contact with their infants than do White mothers. The concept of *socio-cultural tightness* can be best described in terms of high- and low-context cultures. Field-dependent learning styles are typical for individuals in high-context culture, whereas field-independent learners are thought to be in low-context cultures. Low-context cultures are thought to operate with knowledge gained through analytical reasoning, whereas high-context cultures are thought to operate with knowledge gained through intuition and contemplation (Hall, 1976, 1989). *Ecological adaptation* affects learning styles. It refers to the fact that knowledge of one’s environment is crucial to one’s survival. It also provides individuals with highly developed perceptual skills. The factor of biological effects affirms that the lack of physical development and nutrition in children is one contributor to field-dependent learning. Finally, *language* as an important variable of
learning style suggests that there are differences from mainstream language usage—not only in pronunciation, vocabulary, inflection, and rhythm—but also, for example, in the way African-American students defer, interrupt, and ask questions.

**Field Dependence vs. Field Independence**

Field dependence and field independence refer to the psychological construction of how humans respond cognitively to unfamiliar or novel information, or situations. Field-dependent behaviors include reliance on the social environment. Individuals who are field-dependent prefer to work with people rather than in isolation. Field-independent individuals, conversely, are more conceptual and analytical in nature. They prefer to work alone and tend to be goal-oriented. However, neither of these styles is mutually exclusive. Individuals may, at any time, exhibit both field-dependent and field-dependent behaviors (Ramirez & Casteneda, 1974)

Additionally, Cohen (1969) identified two styles of learning: analytical style and relational style. These two styles refer to differences in the methods of selecting and classifying information. She suggested that some students are “splitters” and others are “lumpers.” Citing Kagan, Moss and Siegal (1963), Cohen (1969) posited that “lumpers”
are individuals who think that attributes of a stimulus have significance in themselves, while “splitters” think they have significance only in reference to some context. She argued that schools require one specific approach to cognitive organization: analytic. Thus, students who do not develop these analytical skills and those who function with a different cognitive style will not only be poor achievers, but will also become worse as they move to higher grade levels (Cohen, 1969).

Hilliard’s (1992) research, which contrasted African and African-American cultures with European and European American cultures asserted that there are many individual differences within each group but also contended that “a given individual in many ways may be very much like most of the members of his or her historical group of reference.” (p. 371). To that end, African American students within the school setting tend to embody the same learning style preference— one that is relational while European and European Americans tend to embody an analytical style of learning.

Contrary to previous research on learning styles, there exists a body of research that shows that when students received instruction specifically tailored to their preferred learning styles, they performed poorly on
tests of that subject (Mayer & Massa, 2003; Kavale & Forness, 1987). Additionally, Salomon (1984) found that the level of effort that the students devoted to their task was the critical factor that affected their performance. When students received instruction in their preferred learning style, they demonstrated overconfidence in their ability to learn the information, and thus, invested less effort in learning the content of the material. This lower level of effort resulted in lower levels of learning. In contrast, when the students were confronted with instruction in a style different than that which they preferred, they perceived the task to be more difficult, exhibited greater effort to learn, and learned more as a result.

Learning-style research is plagued by methodological, conceptual, and pedagogical problems. Yet, there are many aspects of the literature that have significant prospects for improving the achievement of culturally diverse students (Irvine & York, 1995). Inherent in the literature on learning styles is the assumption that students of diverse ethnic/racial backgrounds can learn only if they use their preferred style. Irvine & York (1995) argued that all children, irrespective of race, would benefit from more active and stimulating teaching approaches; but given the limitations of the learning-styles research, it would be
hasty to conclude that any one method of teaching would be suitable for all students.

The literature shows that African American male students are highly relational, kinesthetic, and take with them lots of enthusiasm to school (Hale, 1986). Despite the aforementioned studies (Mayer & Massa, 2003; Kavale & Forness, 1987; Salomon, 1984), African American students have had to contend with many challenges (eg. stereotype threat, prejudice, and low teacher expectations). Therefore, addressing the relational style cognitive preference of Black students can foster self-confidence and provide an environment that is culturally compatible to their behavioral, linguistic, and learning style preference (Gay, 1991). At the same time it is important that Black students invest high levels of effort in their education.

Bennett (1995) reminded us that when teachers misunderstand the cultural, behavioral, and learning styles of their students, they may underestimate their intellectual potential and unintentionally mislabel and ill-treat them. Teachers may also undervalue their students’ cognitive abilities, academic achievement, and linguistic preference. Additionally, Irvine & York (1995) contended that despite the limitations of learning-style research, three core principles remain salient: 1) learning
style research emphasizes cultural context of teaching and learning, 2) it documents the importance of affect in teaching culturally diverse students, and 3) learning-style research places the responsibility for students learning with teachers, instead of ascribing blame to their students.

Intelligence

Although concepts of intelligence are pervasive in our daily lives, there exist implicit definitions of what intelligence is and we use these definitions to evaluate our intelligence and the intelligence of others (Sternberg, 1981). Traditional views of intelligence favor those who are strong in analytical abilities (Carroll, 1993; Cattell, 1971), and they disfavor most others.

What follows is an investigation into the meaning of intelligence, its proxy I.Q., and the use of the two. In addition, I will present a brief discussion about the nature-versus-nurture notion of intelligence in school and in society, Piaget’s and Vygotsky’s examination of intelligence and an alternative view of a non-traditional model of intelligence by Howard Gardner.

The Meaning of Intelligence

What is intelligence and how it can be measured? These questions have fueled a continuing debate about whether
intelligence is inherited, acquired through environment, or is a combination of these and other factors. The concept of intelligence means a lot of things to a lot of different people and there are many definitions of it. In The Dictionary of Psychology, Corsini (1999) cited several definitions of intelligence by many of the leading scholars on the subject. For example, Lewis M. Terman’s definition of intelligence was “an ability for carrying on abstract thinking,” (p.494) while for Sir Francis Galton, it was “the speed at which a person can respond to various physiological cues” (p. 494). S.S. Colvin’s definition included the notion that intelligence is “an ability to adjust oneself to the environment” (p. 494).

A more contemporary definition of intelligence was supported by Howard Gardner. In Intelligence Reframed, Gardner (1999) defined intelligence as “a bio-psychological potential to process information that can be activated in a cultural setting to solve problems or create products that are of value in a culture” (pp. 33-34). He claimed that there exist a multitude of intelligences that are quite independent of each other. Gardner is careful to emphasize that what is regarded as ‘intelligent’ may vary drastically from culture to culture. Abilities such as catching fish, memorizing notes for a test, and making money will be
valued differently by different cultures; thus, the
definition of what makes 'intelligent' behavior changes
from culture to culture (Gardner, 1993).

Sternberg's Triarchic Theory of Human Intelligence
associates the workings of the mind with a series of
components, which he labeled as: a) analytical
(componential), which focused on the relationship between
intelligence and the individual's internal world; b)
creative (experiential), which emphasized intelligence and
the individual's immediate experience with task and
situations; and c) practical (contextual), which involved
the ability to grasp, understand and deal with everyday
Sternberg (1998) argued that traditional educational
systems value "analytical" intelligence most highly, and
that tests are constructed largely to assess this type of
intelligence—composed primarily of linguistic and logical-
mathematical abilities. Two other kinds of intelligence,
"contextual" (the source of creative insight) and
"experiential" (the "street smarts" of intelligence) are of
enormous value to society, yet not reinforced nor given
much opportunity to develop in many traditional classrooms.
Measurement of Intelligence: IQ Tests

Alfred Binet developed the first IQ tests to identify children who would not benefit from public school instruction. His concept involved the idea that certain mental tasks were appropriate to certain ages, such as the ability to recite the names of the months; while expected of a ten year old, such ability would be rare in a three year old. Binet quantified intelligence as the Intelligence Quotient (IQ): the ratio of mental age to chronological age, multiplied by 100. Reasoning that low intelligence stemmed from improper development, Binet envisioned the test as a first step in treatment: a diagnostic instrument used to detect children with inadequate intelligence in order to treat them using “mental orthopedics.” Binet argued forcefully against the idea that intelligence is fixed or innate (Locurto, 1991). However, those who translated his test into English tended to disagree, arguing that the test measured an innate and immutable, genetically inherited characteristic. After Binet’s death in 1911, the Galtonian eugenicist, Henry H. Goddard, assumed control of the argument and research about intelligence, shifting the focus firmly toward genetic explanations by insisting that differences in intelligence
between social classes and races were due to inherent genetic differences.

Over time, the tests were standardized to correspond to a priori conceptions of intelligence by including items that correlated well with school performance. Test items that differentiated between genders were removed; items that differentiated between social classes were left in (Lewontin, Rose & Kamin, 1984).

The publication of Jensen’s (1969) argument fueled major on-going debates in the academic community. It purported that American Blacks were, on average, less intelligent than whites and that this difference was largely genetic in origin. It was this argument that Jensen used to explain what he perceived to be the failure of compensatory education programs such as Head Start. He suggested that these programs were ignoring inherent intellectual deficits and thus, were failing.

The arguments that the differences in intelligence are inherited and that the races, classes and ethnic groups differ in their average levels of intelligence are not new. Sir Francis Galton, in 1869, made the first attempt to document “scientifically” the belief that intelligence was inherited and was related to race and class (Galton, 1952). His purpose was to demonstrate that genius was innate and
rejected the idea that “babies are born pretty much alike” (p. 12).

In *Hereditary Genius*, Galton attempted to prove his argument by showing that eminent men had eminent kinship. He argued that an eminent reputation was a reflection of natural abilities. He maintained that social advantages could not keep those with “moderate ability” (p. 36) in the eminent category, nor could social obstacles foil the eventual success of the truly eminent. The eminent men according to Galton were identified as judges, statesmen, literary men, scientists, and others. This, he argued, demonstrated the qualities needed for achieving eminence were hereditary (Galton, 1952).

The idea that the races are genetically endowed with different levels of intelligence is unsupported by scientific evidence (Gould, 1981). Indeed, recent research confirms that only an approximate 11-23% of human characteristics are accounted for by race (Sternberg, 2005). Yet, proponents of this position managed to gain passage of the Immigration Restriction Act of 1924, which limited immigration of those from allegedly less intelligent races and countries (Kamin, 1974; Gould, 1981). Gould contended that Jensen’s 1969 article was wrong on many levels. According to Gould, Jensen assumed that IQ
scores measure intelligence. Yet while IQ scores correlate with school success, Gould argued that IQ scores could be measuring how middle-class a child is. For him, it may be this factor along with others, not intelligence, which contribute to school success. Gould contended that the genetic argument persists for political, not scientific, reasons. In the face of continuing poverty and inequality, it is politically convenient to blame the victims for their genetic deficiencies rather than to blame the system (Gould, 1979).

**Intelligence and Schooling**

Individuals differ from each other in their ability to comprehend complex ideas, to adapt to their environment, and to learn from experiences. Although these individual differences can be large, they are never entirely constant. What children learn in school depends largely not only on their individual abilities, but also on the quantity and/or quality of teaching they receive. How well students perform in school also depends largely on the teaching practices of their teachers as well as their individual abilities. While many (Jensen, 1973; Herrnstein & Murray, 1994; Galton, 1952; Eysenck, 1975) argued that it was the children’s innate ability that determined their success in school, others (Delvin, Feinberg, Resnick, & Roeder, 1997; Fraser,
1995; Gould, 1981; Blau, 1981) contended that the environment may be the ultimate contributing factor to their school success, let alone their success in society. Datcher (1995) argued that “characterizing how a social environment impacts on individual achievement is a difficult and complex process” (p. 19).

Children who do well are likely to be encouraged by their teachers, parents, and their counselors. More often, they are placed (tracked) in college preparatory classes, where they are even further encouraged. In general, they are more likely to find the process of education rewarding in a way that the many low-scoring, more often Black children, do not (Rehberg & Rosenthal, 1978). For those who do not score well, Kincheloe and Steinberg (1996) argued that “[they] are relegated to the Siberia of schooling, tracked into vocational programs that too often prepare them for dead end jobs” (p. 11). Many personal and social characteristics other than psychometric intelligence determine academic success and interest (Datcher, 1995).

According to Boykin (1994), on the one hand, there exists a fundamental conflict between certain aspects of African American culture and, on the other, the unspoken cultural obligations of most American schools. He argued that the successful education of African American
children in our schools would require an approach that was less concerned with the sorting of talents, and more with its development (Boykin, 1994). One of the reasons why African American students do poorly in school stems from the fact that:

When children are ordered to do their own work, arrive at their own individual answers, work only with their own materials, they are being sent cultural messages. When children come to believe that getting up and moving about the classroom is inappropriate, they are being sent powerful cultural messages, when children come to confine their ‘learning’ to consistently bracketed time periods, when they are consistently prompted to tell what they know and not how they felt, when they are led to believe that they are completely responsible for their own success and failure, when they are required to put consistently out considerable effort for effort’s sake on tedious and personally irrelevant tasks...then they are pervasively having cultural lessons imposed on them (Boykin, 1994, p. 125).

In Boykin’s view, the schools’ demands of their students conflict with certain themes in the ‘deep structure’ of African American culture. The result of this cultural conflict is that many Black children become alienated from both the process and the products of the education to which they are exposed (Boykin, 1994).

Bowles and Gintis (1977) disputed one of the basic assumptions of the IQ debate, namely that IQ is crucial to economic success. Through statistical analysis, they demonstrated that economic success was more dependent on
one’s level of schooling and social class background than IQ. They argued further, that while economic success is correlated with level of schooling attained, differences in cognitive abilities between students explain very little of this correlation. They argued that IQ tests, based on school learning, serve as an ideological or political function by legitimizing the inequalities found in society, schools and the workplace (Bowels & Gintis, 1977).

Blau (1981) argued that her study of racial differences in intellectual competence provides “strong evidence that the sources of these differences are social, not genetic, in origin” (p. xv). Based upon data collected among 579 Black and 523 White mothers and their fifth- and sixth-grade children, she identified the social structural and socialization variables (parents’ educational attainment, occupational status, social milieu, and SES origin) that account for racial differences in intellectual competences. Like Datcher (2000), Blau looked at other contributing variables such as the mother’s socioeconomic origins, religious affiliation, “marital status, number of children, duration of employment, and organizational membership” (p. 57) to determine their effect on children’s IQ and achievement tests performance.
Response to the Bell Curve

Jensen (1969), who conceived the hypothesis that part of the reason why black Americans do not fare well in school, may be because there are genetic differences in intelligence between the races, set the stage for others to follow his quest to prove his hypothesis true.

The roots of Herrnstein and Murray’s argument in The Bell Curve, like the arguments in Jensen’s 1969 article, can also be traced back to Francis Galton in Heredity Genius, its Laws and Consequences (Feinberg & Resnick, 1997; Belke, 1997). The Bell Curve, published in 1994, was written by Richard Herrnstein and Charles Murray as a work designed to explain, using empirical statistical analysis, the variations in intelligence in American society. This book raised many warnings regarding the consequences of the intelligence gap between Blacks and Whites, and proposed national social policy with the goal of mitigating the worst of consequences attributed to this intelligence gap.

Biesheuvel (1975) argued that Jensen’s hypothesis was based upon the false premise that genetic racial differences in IQ are scientifically verifiable and that IQ tests accurately measure intelligence in people of color. In fact, they were difficult to verify because 1) behavior was the result of a genetic/environment interaction, 2) one
could not really control “all the relevant environmental variables” (p. 61), 3) “the measuring devices were themselves culture bound” (p. 61), and 4) we do not fully understand “the genetic basis of behavior” (p. 61).

Biesheuvel (1975) showed that Jensen did not adequately consider the mechanisms by which social and nutritional environments can affect intellectual development.

*The Bell Curve* presented a disturbing and highly pessimistic view of trends in American society. The United States, according to the authors, was rapidly becoming a caste society stratified by IQ, with an underclass stalled at the bottom, an elite firmly established at the top, and only a limited scope for public policy to boost the disadvantaged. But the bulk of the attention and controversy that swirled around the book focused not on its sweeping vision of what was happening to U.S. society, but on the authors’ application of their theories about IQ to the question of race (Dickens et al., 1995). It was an effort to describe the role of intelligence in American society, or in particular, the role of the famous g factor originally postulated by Spearman (Delvin et al., 1997). Early on in their book, Herrnstein & Murray made several assertions about g that they believed were “by now beyond significant technical dispute” (Herrnstein & Murray, 1994,
p. 22), including the position that “[t]here is such a thing as a general factor of cognitive ability on which human beings differ” (p. 22).

Dickens, Kane, & Thomas (1995) argued that if IQ was as important a determinant of social and economic success as the Bell Curve suggested, then investments that increase IQ would have substantial payoffs. They contended that although Herrnstein & Murray (1994) used the National Longitudinal Survey of Youth—a comprehensive set of data from a sample of people aged 27-34 in 1992—to investigate the effect of scores on the Armed Forces Qualification Test on a wide range of social outcomes, such as crime, and marital status, nowhere did the authors use the information in the data set about wages, annual earnings, and incomes to analyze the extent to which the AFQT test scores could have explained variations in the key economic outcomes—earnings and income (Dickens, Kane, & Thomas, 1995).

Many of the assertions put forth and conclusions reached by the authors have been very controversial, ranging from the relationships between low measured intelligence and anti-social behavior, to the observed relationship between low African-American test scores (compared with Whites and Asians) and genetic factors in intelligence abilities (Belke, 1997).
**Piaget and Vygotsky on Intelligence**

Developmentally based conceptions of intelligence stand in contrast to the arguments outlined above. Piaget’s work is central to this line of thinking. His theory is based on the idea that the developing child builds cognitive structures—in other words, mental “maps,” schemes, or networked concepts for understanding and responding to physical experiences within his or her environment. Piaget further attested that a child’s cognitive structure increases in sophistication with development. Unlike much of the discussion surrounding intelligence, Piaget had little interest in individual differences. For him, intelligence developed in all children through the continually shifting balance between the assimilation of new information into existing cognitive structures and the accommodation of those structures themselves to the new information (Piaget, 1972, 1983).

The Russian psychologist Lev Vygotsky argued that all intellectual abilities were societal in origin. The social cognition learning model asserts that culture is the prime determinant of individual development. Humans are the only species to have created culture, and every human child develops in the context of a culture.
Therefore, a child’s learning development is affected in ways large and small by the culture—including the culture of family environment—in which he or she is enmeshed (Vygotsky, 1978). Traditional intelligence tests ignore what Vygotsky called the “zone of proximal development. According to the Dictionary of Psychology, the zone of proximal development is referred to as “[the] conceptual space between what a child is capable of doing independently and with assistance” (Corsini, 1999).

**Intelligence and Culture**

The definition of culture has been the subject of unlimited debate (Cole, 1996; Berry, Poortinga, Segal, & Dasen, 1992). Serpell (2000), however, defines it as “a set of practices of recurrent activities that are informed by a system of meanings and maintained by a set of institutions over time” (p. 549).

The relationship between culture and intelligence has been considered from three different perspectives and can be reiterated under the metaphors of “culture as a language”, “cultures as a womb”, and “culture as a forum” (Serpell, 1974a). According to culture as a language, each human culture constitutes a distinctive system of meaning for representing the mind, within
which intelligence is defined. According to culture as a
womb, different human cultures generate different kinds
of nurturing environments that stimulate the development
of the individual’s intelligence. The forum metaphor
describes the community’s shared culture that gives rise
to the organization of education and the placement of a
value on intelligence (Serpell, 2000).

Based on his research in Zambia, Serpell (1974b)
argued that all standardized tests that were currently
available in Zambia appeared to be biased toward Western
culture in using the English language or the Western
standard of pictorial and symbolic representation. He
contended (citing Biesheuvel, 1971) that Zambian’s use
of such Western symbols “guides into positions of
privilege and responsibility not those endowed with the
greatest ‘adaptability’ and creativity, but those who by
whatever means, have made the fullest adaptation to
certain facets of Western culture” (p. 2).

Considerable differences were noticed when the
performance of people of different cultures was compared
on a single, isolated, intelligence test. An
interpretation of this is that some cultures have
greater potential than others to cultivate intelligence.
An alternative view is that the test might be less
appropriate for the assessment of one culture than in another (Serpell, 1994).

In Japan, the Buraku were a caste of people discriminated against in education, housing, and employment. Their children typically scored ten to fifteen points below other Japanese children on IQ tests—about the average Black-White difference in the United States. Yet when the Buraku immigrated to the United States, the IQ gap between them and other Japanese vanished (Shimahara, 1991).

**An Alternative View of Intelligence**

The limited views of the eugenics-based theorists have been adequately debunked by modern understandings of race and of the influence of culture, and environment. The views that take social ecology into account tend to recognize the diverse manifestations of intelligence. The theorist who has framed this perspective most broadly is Howard Gardner.

**Multiple Intelligences**

Gardner’s (1983) Theory of Human Intelligence suggests there are at least seven ways that people have of perceiving and understanding the world. Gardner labels each of these ways a distinct “intelligence”—in other words, a set of skills allowing individuals to
find and resolve genuine problems they face (Gardner, 1983).

In *Beyond IQ: Education and Human Development*, Gardner (1988) contended that the traditional view of intelligence—that there is a single, unitary intelligence—is inadequate. His research with special populations demonstrates that people have “jagged cognitive profiles—profiles that are extremely difficult to explain in terms of a unitary view of intelligence” (p. 5). As an alternative, Gardner (1983) suggested that there are multiple intelligences which individuals possess in varying degrees. He believes that traditional schooling focuses primarily on the Linguistic and Logical-Mathematical intelligences (Gardner, 1988; Neisser et al., 1996).

In his book, *Frames of Mind* (1983), Gardner first identified seven distinct intelligences to which he subsequently added an eighth (Gardner 1999). He advocates that there are at least eight intelligences that need to be considered (Nelson, 1998):
TABLE 2.1 Gardner’s Multiple Intelligences

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Intelligence Area</th>
<th>Is strong in:</th>
<th>Likes to:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Verbal-Linguistic</td>
<td>reading, writing, telling stories, memorizing dates, thinking in words.</td>
<td>read, write, talk, memorize, work at puzzles.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mathematical-Logical</td>
<td>math, reasoning, logic, problem-solving, patterns.</td>
<td>solve problems, question, work with numbers, experiment.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Visual-Spatial</td>
<td>reading, maps, charts, drawing, mazes, puzzles, imaging things, visualization.</td>
<td>design, draw, build, create, daydream, look at pictures.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bodily-Kinesthetic</td>
<td>athletics, dancing, acting, crafts, using tools.</td>
<td>move around, touch and talk, body language.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Musical</td>
<td>singing, picking up sounds, remembering melodies, rhythms.</td>
<td>sing, hum, play an instrument, listen to music.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interpersonal</td>
<td>understanding people, leading, organizing, communicating, resolving conflicts, selling.</td>
<td>have friends, talk to people, join groups.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Intrapersonal</td>
<td>understanding self, recognizing strengths and weaknesses, setting goals.</td>
<td>work alone, reflect, pursue interests.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Naturalist</td>
<td>understanding nature, making distinctions, identifying flora and fauna.</td>
<td>be involved with nature, make distinctions.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

There is much popular support for the concept of multiple intelligences in the field of education.

Armstrong (2003), nonetheless, argued that the concept of multiple intelligences serves as impetus of reform in
schools, "leading to a reevaluation of those subjects typically taught in school, with increased emphasis placed on the arts, nature, physical culture, and other topics traditionally limited to the periphery of the curriculum" (p.4).

I endeavor to show that a re-evaluation of the traditional view of intelligence, as suggested by Armstrong (2003), and despite the challenges that young Black male students face in school and society, a non-traditional view of intelligence can help to improve the educational outcome of all students, more specifically, Black males.

Research has confirmed that teachers are indeed cognizant of and responsive to students' diverse intelligences. Teachers tend to respond more favorably to those students whose style of learning falls within the traditional view of intelligence, that of being analytical and verbal. Guskin, Peng, & Simon (1992) examined how teachers' judgments, expectations, and decisions were influenced by hypothetical students' patterns of giftedness and found that teachers placed more weight on demographic characteristics when predicting success. The teachers in this study were more positive about students with strong verbal, analytical
skills than those with strong creative or motor skills. This study by Guskin, Peng, & Simon (1992) highlights an important aspect of my study.

**Criticisms of the Multiple Intelligence Theory**

Gardner’s work is not without criticism. The fundamental criticism of Multiple Intelligence theory is the belief that each of the eight multiple intelligences is, in fact, a cognitive style rather than a stand-alone construct (Morgan, 1996). While his work is useful in that it adopts a different approach to the mapping of human abilities, it ignores the g-factor; the notion of a general underlying intelligence. Morgan, (1996) referred to Gardner's approach of describing the nature of each intelligence with terms such as abilities and skills as proof of the fact that the "theory" is actually a matter of semantics rather than new thinking on multiple constructs of intelligence. Morgan (1996) further argued that Gardner’s MI theory resembled earlier works by L.L. Thurstone who argued that a single factor (g) cannot explain the complexity of human intellectual activity. Other criticisms incorporate the belief that MI theory is not empirical, is incompatible with g, heritability, and environmental influences, and
broadens the construct of intelligence so widely as to render it meaningless.

In response to the many criticisms, Gardner (1995) resolutely defended the empirical nature of the theory and referred to the numerous laboratory and field data that contributed to the development and the ongoing re-conceptualization of his theory based on new scientific data. He contends that “literally hundreds of empirical studies were reviewed in that book [Frames of Mind], and the actual intelligences were identified and delineated on the basis of empirical findings” (p. 203).

Regarding the claim that Multiple Intelligences theory cannot accommodate $g$, Gardner argued that $g$ has a scientific place in intelligence theory but that he is interested in understanding intellectual processes that are not explained by $g$. In response to the criticism that MI theory is incompatible with genetic or environmental accounts of the nature of intelligence, Gardner (1995) opined that MI theory questions not the existence, but the province and explanatory power of $g$. By the same token, MI theory is neutral on the question of heritability of specific intelligences, instead underscoring the centrality of genetic/environmental interactions (p. 203).
Moreover, MI theory is most concerned with the interaction between genetics and the environment in understanding intelligence.

Finally, the notion that MI theory has expanded the definition of intelligence beyond utility produced a strong reaction from Gardner. He argued passionately that the narrow definition of intelligence “constricts our view, treating a certain form of scholastic performance as if it encompassed the range of human capacities and leading to disdain for those who happen not to be psychometrically bright” (p. 203). In his view, MI theory is about the intellectual and cognitive aspects of the human mind (Gardner, 1995).

**Summary of Intelligence and Black Male Identity**

During the past century, the pendulum has swung back and forth between arguments regarding nature (genetics) and nurture (environment). This century’s swing of the pendulum seems to be coming to rest at a point between nature and nurture. According to Plomin & Petrill (1997), it is important that some geneticists be reminded that a large part of the variance of IQ scores is not genetic in origin. However, it is also important that the theories and research on cognitive development and education integrate the fact that children differ in
their ability to comprehend, in part, for genetic reasons (Plomin & Petrill, 1997). These genetic reasons are tied to individual hereditability, and are not tied to racial grouping.

Wechsler (1971) pointed out that despite varying definitions of intelligence, there are common underlying abilities that IQ tests identify; such as abstract reasoning and problem-solving. He argues that tests of intelligence are considered valid measures of these abilities if they “correlate with variously esteemed and otherwise desirable capacities commonly accepted as indicators of intelligence” (p. 53). According to Wechsler, opposition to the test is probably a result of a misunderstanding. The tests are simply indicators of relative brightness or ability. He believes that a low IQ should not be seen as an ‘inadequacy’ of test, but rather as an indicator of ‘social causes’ that may have helped to create a particular score (Wechsler, 1971).

On the other hand, Asa Hilliard’s view of intelligence points out that intelligence is poorly defined and is a scientifically inadequate concept. His primary criticism of IQ tests is that they do not advance teaching or student learning. In his analysis, he argued that the only tangible outcome from using IQ
test is the sorting of students for an unequal and unspecified educational treatment. Thus, IQ tests have no valid educational purpose (Hilliard, 1987). Helms (2003, 2004) has extended this point to suggest that their identity be taken into account as a factor in Black students’ on standardized tests.

In this contentious debate on IQ and intelligence, many aspects regarding the issue are still unknown. Such unknowns are documented in a report established by the Board of Scientific Affairs of the American Psychological Association (Neisser et al. 1996) as a response to Herrnstein & Murray’s (1994) Bell Curve. The report concluded that there are still some major unknowns that are crucial to our understanding of the concept of intelligence.

Despite the numerous theories regarding intelligence and IQ, many criticisms of the use of IQ tests as a measure of intelligence still exist. IQ tests limit our definition of intelligence and are simply powerful predictors only in the field (i.e., academics) in which they are of central importance.

In light of Howard Gardner’s Multiple Intelligence theory, the traditional view of intelligence can no longer be used to devalue the rich cultural heritage that Black
male students bring into the classroom. This traditional view—one that emphasizes only analytical and verbal astuteness in academics—stifles Black children’s creativity and, which in turn, renders their perception of themselves as unintelligent within the classroom. This traditional view, along with the racial stereotype they receive, affects Black students’ academic achievement. As discussed earlier, the environment of the school (e.g., Eurocentric curriculum, tracking) also contributes to their underachievement. Because the curriculum is so exclusive, they see themselves as less intelligent than their White peers, and resist the very education that has helped many others to their upward mobility and academic success. They internalize the harmful and negative messages they receive in school and blame themselves for their academic failure (Brantlinger, 1990).

It is the intent of this study not only to shatter the myth of Black male underachievement, but to highlight the impact of how a non-traditional view of intelligence can help young Black males to succeed academically, thus leaving them with high self-esteem and positive self-images. Black males can come to see schooling as a vehicle that can maximize their chances of upward social mobility in the United States.
CHAPTER 3

METHOD

Qualitative research methods are effective in addressing issues related to human perspectives. These methods are mainly suitable for uncovering the meaning people assign to their experiences. They are “naturalistic to the extent that the research takes place in real world settings and the researcher does not attempt to manipulate the phenomenon of interest” (Patton 2002, p. 39).

Key Concepts in Qualitative Research

According to Strauss & Corbin (1998), qualitative research means “any type of research that produces findings not arrived at by statistical procedures or other means of quantification” (p.10-11). It begins with the intention to explore a particular area, collects data, and generates ideas and hypotheses from the data largely through what is known as inductive reasoning. Rossman & Rallis (1998) posit that qualitative research has two unique features: 1) the researcher is the means through which the study is conducted, and 2) the purpose of the research is to learn about some facet of society. Rossman & Rallis (1998) further contend that these two characteristics are central to a view of learning that “sees the learner as a constructor of knowledge rather than a receiver of it” (p.
6). Because this study examined the perceptions that eleventh grade high school Black males and their respective teachers held in regard to Gardner’s model of intelligence, qualitative research methods were used to gain a novel understanding of the students’ and teachers’ feelings, and perspectives as outlined in the research questions.

**Grounded Theory**

Grounded theory is one approach to qualitative inquiry. The intent of grounded theory is to generate a theory from naturalistic data (Creswell, 1994). According to Strauss & Corbin (1990), this theory is “derived from data, systematically gathered and analyzed through the research process” (p. 12). In this method of qualitative inquiry, data collection, analysis and the eventual theory are in close relationship to one another. The researcher does not begin with a preconceived theory in mind, but begins with specific questions concerning an area of study and allows the theory to emerge from the collected data. Since these theories are derived from data, they resemble the “reality” of the phenomenon under study (Strauss & Corbin, 1998; Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Because no a priori theory could possibly account for the myriad realities that are likely to be encountered in this study, and because it has not yet been studied (i.e., Black males perceptions of
intelligence), I chose to use grounded theory as an approach to understand the phenomenon. While Yin (1989) advocates working from a \textit{a priori} theory, others (Miles & Huberman, 1984) are of the opinion that a \textit{a priori} theory is a limitation to qualitative research. Without a pre-established theory and pre-established expectations of the phenomenon, the researcher is able to explore any and all aspects of the phenomenon that become evident during data collection. Qualitative research cannot provide quantitatively calculated outcomes that are necessary in many scientific studies. However, qualitative research inquiry can provide background information necessary at the beginning of any research endeavor and can be used for establishing theory. It helps the researcher understand the details (how, why, etc.) surrounding the occurrence of a phenomenon.

Since Multiple Intelligence theory has not been directly linked to a racial group (e.g., Blacks), this study’s goal was to generate a theoretical understanding of how Multiple Intelligence (MI) theory applies to Black males. In other words, how these Black males viewed their intelligence and how/why their teachers viewed it? This will give a theoretical understanding of the construction of intelligence among these students.
Substantive theory means that a theory is valid within the context where the data were collected or in other contexts where the data resembles what is seen in the environment. Formal theories are “grand theories” that are applicable to wider contexts. The goal of this research study of Black males’ perceptions of intelligence is to develop substantive theory that should be subjected to further testing to confirm its eligibility for a formal theory (Glaser & Strauss, 1967).

The limitations of this study do not allow me to claim a theory. I will view the findings as leading to specific implications for theory, and will point to how future study could move toward theory development.

Techniques for Establishing Credibility in Qualitative Inquiry

Qualitative research provides people with a means of attempting to understand aspects of the world that cannot be understood in terms of numbers and objectivity. Thus, the need to establish the credibility of qualitative inquiry is met by emphasizing procedures that minimize researcher bias.

There are many debates regarding what the stance of the researcher should be vis-à-vis the people being studied. Critics of qualitative inquiry have asserted that
qualitative methods are too subjective because the researcher is the instrument of both data collection and data analysis/interpretation. Hence, subjectivity in qualitative research methods is the antithesis of objectivity of quantitative scientific inquiry (Patton 2002). Conducting blind experiments has been one of the primary methods of obtaining objectivity in quantitative research methods. The question now is how can qualitative methods mirror the objectivity of quantitative inquiry to be seen as a credible method of investigation?

Patton (2002) argued that the term subjectivity has a negative connotation and undermines the credibility of the researcher in the public’s mind. To counter this, Patton (2002) contends that “both qualitative/naturalistic and quantitative/empirical inquiry seek honest, meaningful, credible, and empirically supported findings [however], qualitative research in recent years has moved toward preferring such language as trustworthiness and authenticity” (p.51). For qualitative methods of inquiry, the researcher needs to adopt a stance of ‘empathic neutrality’ in connection with the phenomenon under study. Patton (2002) outlines his argument in favor of qualitative research credibility and trustworthiness, stating that the researcher
enters the search arena with no axe to grind, no theory to prove, and no predetermined results to support. Rather, the investigator’s commitment is to understand the world as it unfolds, be true to complexities and multiple perspectives as they emerge, and be balanced in reporting both confirmatory and disconfirming evidence with regard to any conclusions offered. Neutrality is not an easily attainable stance, so all credible research strategies include techniques for helping the investigator become aware of and deal with selective perception, personal biases, and theoretical predispositions. Qualitative inquiry, because the human being is the instrument of data collection, requires that the investigator carefully reflect on, deal with, report potential sources of bias and error (p. 51).

Lincoln & Guba (1985) have also delineated the many ways in which credibility and trustworthiness can be achieved in qualitative research inquiry. They suggest seven major activities whereby the criteria for such credibility and trustworthiness can be operationalized:

1) **Prolonged engagement** requires the investment of sufficient time in the field by learning the “culture” of the participants. Lincoln & Guba (1985) suggest that “it is not possible to understand any phenomenon without reference to the context in which it is embedded” (p. 302). They further contend that prolonged engagement requires that the researcher spend enough time in the field to be able to detect and take into account any distortions in the data. Prolonged engagement also
requires that the researcher build trust with the participants. In the case of this study, being immersed in the setting for two months on a weekly basis provided me ample opportunity to gain and build trust among the participants. The 9-week planned research period to collect data for this study allowed for the building of trust among the participants; both students and teachers. However, more recursive methods such as repeated interviewing and participant observation would have enhanced this process further.

2) Persistent observation serves to identify the characteristics and essential elements of a situation that are most relevant to a problem. Eisner (1975), as cited in Lincoln & Guba (1985) suggests that the researcher must come to terms with the “pervasive qualities that are involved – those things that really count” (p. 304), which includes the ability to sort out irrelevancies. To satisfy this criterion of persistent observation Lincoln & Guba (1985) argue that the researcher must be able to “describe in detail just how this process of tentative identification and detailed exploration was carried out” (p. 304). Despite,
meticulous review and constant reflection of the interview, the absence of direct observation is one of the limitations of this study.

3) **Triangulation** is based on the premise that no single method ever adequately solves a problem. Because each method reveals different aspects of a study, the use of different or multiple sources, methods, researchers, and theories offers strong support of credibility. In order to construct the most accurate and integrated understanding of the participants’ perceptions of intelligence, Lincoln & Guba (1985) suggest that different forms of aggregating the data should be employed. This study was done relying mainly on semi-structured, open-ended interviews of students, and their teachers. Information for building their profile was collected; items such as whether they had received passing scores on FCAT and/or ACT/SAT, race/ethnic identity, age, language spoken, and free/reduced lunch. Follow-up phone interviews contributed to the triangulation of this study.

4) **Peer debriefing** is an activity that requires the researcher to expose his/her research to a disinterested peer. It is a method of checks-and-
balances (between researcher and debriefer) that provides opportunity for the maintenance of objectivity since non-objectivity can be a serious threat to trustworthiness. The assistance of a University of Miami classmate who has been trained in qualitative research and who was at the dissertation level of the doctoral program was sought. The assistant served as my debriefer. This classmate did not know the student participants nor the teachers involved in this study. Peer debriefing is a process of subjecting one’s work to the scrutiny of others who are experts in the field. The basic role of the peer debriefer in this study was to make sure that I meet the standards of investigation within the discipline or area of study. Peer debriefing increases the probability that weaknesses in the study will be identified, and with advice and encouragement, fixed. The process of peer debriefing was critical to establishing a reliable body of research.

5) Negative case analysis holds as its aim “to refine a hypothesis until it accounts for all known cases without exception” (Lincoln & Guba, 1985, p. 309). Since I am using interviews as a means of data
collection, each time a new hypothesis had emerged, I checked it against previously recorded interviews until the hypothesis represents all the relevant information and its nuances.

6) **Referential adequacy** was first conceptualized by Eisner (1975) “as a means for establishing the adequacy of critiques written for evaluation purposes” (Lincoln & Guba, 1985, p. 313). He suggested that videotape recording of observations and interviews be done because it captures ‘episodes’ of classroom life that could be examined and critiqued at a later time. However, it should be noted that referential adequacy is not limited to the use of videotapes and electronic devices. The maintenance of good records through the completion of the study ensured that the “skeptics not associated with the inquiry can use such materials to satisfy themselves...by testing them directly and personally against the archived and still raw data” (p. 313). Thorough maintenance and collection of all data and findings, for legal and ethical reasons, was kept strictly confidential.

7) **Member checks** are conversations with the participants, which give them an opportunity to
assess the intentionality of their statements and to possibly volunteer additional information (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). As I conducted data analysis, I reviewed the emerging themes. Since semi-structured interviews were used to collect data, I followed up with telephone interviews of the participants in order to “correct errors of fact and challenge what [were] perceived to be wrong interpretations” (p. 314) or to confirm individual data.

**Research Questions**

The overall research questions concerned how Black male eleventh graders viewed their intelligence and how this compared to their teachers’ estimates. In addressing this question, I used the following seven research questions.

**Students**

1. How do Black male 11th graders define intelligence?
2. Do Black male 11th graders include the concept of Multiple Intelligences in their definition?
3. How do Black male 11th graders describe their own intelligence?
4. What do students perceive to be the factors that contributed to their definition of intelligence, generally and their own intelligence specifically?
Teachers

5. How do the teachers of these students define intelligence?

6. Do these teachers include the concept of Multiple Intelligence in their definition?

7. How do these teachers describe these Black males’ intelligence?

Setting

Patton (2002) asserted that “describing a setting begins with [a description of] the physical environment within which the program takes place” (p.280). He further suggested that the physical environment of a setting can be significant to what happens in that environment. It is with this notion that I endeavor to describe the setting in which the participants are located.

This study took place in a Miami-Dade County Public High School in Florida. Miami-Dade County Public Schools (M-DCPS) is a public school district serving Miami-Dade County, Florida. It is the largest school district in Florida and the fourth largest in the United States, with a student enrollment of 362,070 (as of February 15, 2007). The district is also the second largest minority public school system in the country, with 60% of its students being of Hispanic origin, 28% African American, 10% White,
and less than 3% non-white of other minorities. M-DCPS is also one of a few public school districts in the United States to offer optional International Studies Programs and bilingual education.

**Participants**

In this qualitative research study, both random and purposeful sampling were used. Purposeful sampling selects participants on the basis of their expertise or intimate knowledge of an event or happening. The researcher can investigate not only outcomes, but also how and why the outcomes occurred (Strauss & Corbin, 1998; Patton, 2002).

The participants in this study were students and teachers. Selected participants were Black males in the junior year (11<sup>th</sup> grade) of their schooling, along with two teachers of each student. The students selected were students at a school other than the one in which I teach.

Eleventh graders were selected for the study because 1) they have been in the school system long enough to be able to give detailed accounts of their schooling, 2) they will not be graduating during the year of this study, and, 3) in case the study is prolonged into the next school year, these eleventh graders could be easily tracked.

Seven students, each having as his strength one of the seven multiple intelligences as outlined in Howard
Gardner’s *Frames of Mind* (1983) were selected. Using an online multiple intelligence assessment instrument (see Assessment: Find Your Strength!) as the criterion for selecting the students needed for the study, a funnel approach was used to obtain the sampling goal.

Simple random sampling is a basic sampling technique for selecting a group of students for study from a larger population. In random sampling, each item or element of a population has an equal chance of being chosen at each draw. A sample is random if the method for obtaining the sample meets the criterion of randomness (i.e., each member of the population is equally likely to be chosen at any stage in the sampling process.

A list of all 11th grade Black male students (total of 97) was generated by the counselor. Sampling was done in two phases. First, all the names of the eleventh-grade black male students was placed in a bag. Fifty names were pulled from the bag. Then an assessment instrument package with consent and assent forms was given to the selected fifty students. Twenty-six packages were returned approved. Second, the twenty-six students’ surveys were sorted according to Gardner’s eight categories of Multiple Intelligence. The result of this assessment survey yielded the following: 2 logical-mathematical, no verbal-
linguistic, 10 bodily-kinesthetic, 1 visual-spatial, 4 musical, 3 interpersonal, 5 intra-personal, and 1 naturalistic. From this group, seven eleventh-grade Black male students (one from each category) were selected and interviewed for this study. Parental consent was sought and given, and assent from the particular students was given for the interviews. Verbal-Linguistic intelligence was the only category that was not found among the students.

The online multiple intelligence assessment instrument was used to inform me of the students’ areas of strength in terms of Gardner’s Multiple Intelligence.

I then selected two teachers for each of the seven students. The teachers selected for the study were one Core teacher (Language Arts/Reading, Mathematics, Science, and Social Studies) and another teacher of the students’ choosing who they thought knew them best. Some teachers selected by the students were both Core teachers. By putting their names in a bag to ensure that each name had an equal chance of being pulled, the Core teacher of each student was randomly selected. Ten teachers consented to be interviewed for the study.

Patton (2002) argued that qualitative inquiry typically focuses on small samples and “the logic and power of purposeful sampling derive from the emphasis on in-depth
understanding” (p. 46). Thus, it leads to selecting information-rich cases from which a great deal about the issues that are of central importance to the purpose of this study. Since the main purpose of this study was to understand the perceptions Black male students and their respective teachers hold regarding Gardner’s model of intelligence, the size of the sample of seven selected students with their respective teachers afforded an in-depth understanding of the phenomenon.

**Data Collection**

Results from the survey indicated seven of Gardner’s Multiple Intelligences represented by the group of students. The interview process focused on the seven selected students and their teachers. Several attempts were made to interview two teachers of each student, however only ten of a possible 14 teachers consented to be interviewed.

Data were collected through semi-structured interviews of students and their respective teachers. This process lasted approximately four weeks.

Qualitative interviewing starts with the assumption that what is on the mind of respondents is significant and able to be made clear. It is done “to find out from them those things we cannot directly observe” (Patton 2002, p.
Many researchers have contributed to how the process of interviewing should take place (Lofland & Lofland, 1995; Spradley, 1979; and Kvale, 1996). However, Legard, Keegan, & Ward, (2003) have emphasized important characteristics that the interviewer must possess. They offer three salient characteristics the interviewer must have in order to carry out an in-depth interview: 1) the ability to listen, digest and comprehend the interviewee’s responses so as to decide how to probe further, 2) a clear logical mind that is able to think quickly so as to filter out irrelevancies and, 3) a good memory in order to pinpoint moments during the interview process to which the interviewer may want to return at a later time. I believe that I was able to meet these criteria.

While Legard, Keegan, & Ward, (2003) focused on the interviewer, Rubin & Rubin (2005) focused on the type of interview needed for qualitative research inquiry. They argue for the term responsive interviewing as an in-depth approach. This is the approach I used in the interviews. In their view, the responsive interviewing model “relies heavily on the interpretive constructionist philosophy, mixed with a bit of critical theory and then shaped by the practical needs of doing interviews” (p.30). To a constructionist researcher, how a person views an object or
event and the meaning that is attributed to the object or event is important.

This constructionist view is reminiscent of Herbert Blumer’s (1969) *Symbolic Interactionism* in which the constructionist researcher attempts to bring out the interviewee’s view of how he/she sees the world, and the events or happenings that have shaped his/her experience. Symbolic Interactionism is based on the subjective understanding that individuals’ perceptions of self and society is constructed through interaction between humans and the meanings assigned to symbols within a given society.

This responsive interviewing approach afforded the interviewees in this study the opportunity to respond in their own words and to express their own personal perspective on the nature of intelligence and on Gardner’s model of intelligence.

**Data Analysis**

The data analysis was based on transcription of the semi-structured, in-depth interviews of each participant. The interviews were formatted and entered into ATLAS.ti. The purpose of using ATLAS.ti was to conduct a systematic analysis of the complex phenomena embedded in the text transcription. The software program provided tools that
helped me to locate, code, and annotate findings in primary data material, to weigh and evaluate its importance, and to visualize complex relations between them. ATLAS.ti software consolidated the large volumes of documents and kept track of all notes, annotations, codes and memos in all fields that required close study and analysis of primary material consisting of text, images, audio, or video data. In addition, it provided analytical and visualization tools designed to open new interpretative views on the material (http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Atlas.ti). I used ATLAS.ti only for the open coding stage.

The process of conceptual organization of data (i.e., building theory) began with the coding of information. This coding process involved three stages: Open coding, axial coding, and thematic coding.

There were several ways of doing the open coding. One way was line-by-line analysis. Microanalysis is a detailed line-by-line analysis of a study to generate initial categories and to suggest relationships among categories (Strauss & Corbin, 1998). The first stage of coding was using open codes. Line-by-line analysis of the open codes was performed to the transcription of the interviews which resulted in a total of 58 open codes. I chose to use line-by-line coding because it will “enable the analyst to
generate categories quickly and to develop those categories through further sampling along dimensions of a category’s general properties” (p.119).

Axial coding, which puts data “back together in new ways by making connections between a category and its subcategories,” (p. 97) then followed. In this process, the 58 open codes were grouped into 16 conceptual categories/axial coding. In other words, axial coding looked at how categories crosscut and link to each other. The term category stands for a phenomenon, that is, a problem, an idea or an event that is defined as being important to the respondent. According to Strauss & Corbin (1998), a category has the ability to explain what is going on in a particular study. A subcategory, on the other hand, answers questions about the phenomenon itself, such as when, where, and why.

Last, thematic coding was developed. This was very complex in nature. Due to the main themes developed, I had to cross-reference themes that had similar concepts. This process, nonetheless, enabled me to choose those avenues of coding that could “bring about the greatest theoretical return” (p. 202). This thematic coding process was cumulative. It suggested that each event or phenomenon sampled builds from and adds to data previously collected.
and analyzed. It was in seeking the interrelationships between themes that I was able to build the theory for this study (Harry, Sturges, & Klingner, 2005). The sixteen conceptual categories/axial coding were then organized into seven themes matching the seven research questions. After the interviews were transcribed and coded, a member check interview was performed with each participant interviewee regarding analyses and findings.
CHAPTER 4

FINDINGS

The purpose of this study was to investigate Black males’ perceptions of the concept of intelligence, and more specifically, their own intelligence. With this in mind, their teachers’ estimate of their intelligence was also sought.

In this chapter, I will present the findings categorized by the research questions for both the Black male students and their teachers. I will begin by describing the school profile and the backgrounds of the seven students who were selected and interviewed for this study. This will put into context the academic environment in which these Black males attended and studied. In order to maintain confidentiality and anonymity of students and teachers, the name of the school was changed to Progressive Elite Academy Center for Excellence (PEACE) High School. Also, the names of the teachers and the Black male students were changed.

Exhaustive attempts were made to conduct this study in a predominantly black population inner-city school. However, administrative approval was not granted at the three inner-city schools from which I had requested approval to conduct the study.
PEACE High School Profile

PEACE High School is a secondary school located in unincorporated north Miami-Dade County Florida. At the time of the study, PEACE had a student population of 3,779 with 162 classroom teachers. The grade span was grades 9-12. PEACE High School was a magnet school with an 11th grade student population of 951. Twenty-one percent of the total student population was eligible for free lunch, while only 4.7% were eligible for reduced-price lunch. Based upon this, PEACE High school did not seem to be of a low socio-economic status. PEACE High School’s neighborhood was located in a census-designated place (CDP), where the median income for a household was $40,717, and the median income for a family was $43,370. The per capita income for the CDP was $19,118. About 7.0% of families and 8.6% of the population were below the poverty line, including 8.4% of those under age 18 and 8.8% of those age 65 or over (http://www.wikipedia.org). The demographics of PEACE High School suggest that Black Males in this study did not represent the stereotypical Black males of a predominantly black population school in the inner-city (Thompson & Hickey, 2005).

The following charts highlight some of the salient enrollment characteristics of PEACE High School:
Table 4.1 - Enrollment by Race/Ethnicity

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Race/Ethnicity</th>
<th>Number of students</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Hispanic</td>
<td>1,539 (40.7%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>White</td>
<td>1,111 (29.4%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Black</td>
<td>1,045 (27.6%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asian</td>
<td>78 (2.1%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>American Indian/Alaskan</td>
<td>6 (0.16%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 4.2 - Enrollment by Gender

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>Number of students</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>1,855 (49.1%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>1,924 (50.9%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 4.3 - Enrollment by Grade

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade Level</th>
<th>Number of Students</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>9th Grade</td>
<td>1,103</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10th Grade</td>
<td>954</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11th Grade</td>
<td>951</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12th Grade</td>
<td>771</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Black Male Students’ Profile

Parental consent and student assent forms were given to the initial fifty Black male students for the online survey assessment. Twenty-six parental consent and student assent forms were returned approved and two parental
consent and student assent forms were returned as denied. The twenty-six students were given the online assessment instrument. The result of this assessment yielded the following: 2 logical-mathematical, no verbal-linguistic, 10 bodily-kinesthetic, 1 visual-spatial, 4 musical, 3 interpersonal, 5 intra-personal, and 1 naturalistic. From this group, seven eleventh-grade Black male students were selected and interviewed for this study. Parental consent was sought and given, and assent from the particular students was given for the interviews. It was of particular interest to note that of Howard Gardner’s eight Multiple Intelligences, only seven students were identified from the Multiple Intelligence assessment survey, since no student embodying the Verbal-Linguistic intelligence was found. While I was not able to focus on this issue during the process of the study, I will reflect on it in the discussion section.

Jason

Jason, who was seventeen years old at the time of the interview, was born in the United States and categorized his race/ethnicity as Black African-American. His native language was English. Jason was ranked as embodying Musical Intelligence on Howard Gardner’s Multiple Intelligence Theory Scale. Jason did not receive free or reduced lunch.
At the time of the interview he maintained a cumulative 2.2 grade point average and had passed the mathematics portion of the FCAT (Florida Comprehensive Assessment Test).

Steve

Steve, who was also seventeen years old at the time of the interview, was born in Jamaica and categorized his race/ethnicity as Black. His native language was English. Steve was ranked as embodying Interpersonal Intelligence on Howard Gardner’s Multiple Intelligence Theory Scale. Steve did not receive free or reduced lunch. At the time of the interview he maintained a cumulative 2.7 grade point average and had passed both the Mathematics and Reading portions of the FCAT (Florida Comprehensive Assessment Test).

Tyrone

Tyrone, who was eighteen years old at the time of the interview, was born in the United States and categorized his race/ethnicity as Black. His native languages were English and Haitian Creole. Tyrone was ranked as embodying Intrapersonal Intelligence on Howard Gardner’s Multiple Intelligence Theory Scale. Tyrone did receive reduced lunch. At the time of the interview he maintained a cumulative 2.8 grade point average and had passed the
Mathematics portion of the FCAT (Florida Comprehensive Assessment Test). Tyrone had also earned a 1250 on the SAT.

**Junior**

Junior, who was seventeen years old at the time of the interview, was born in the United States and categorized his race/ethnicity as Black Haitian-American. His native language was Haitian Creole. Junior was also fluent in English. Junior was ranked as embodying *Visual-Spatial Intelligence* on Howard Gardner’s Multiple Intelligence Theory Scale. Junior did receive reduced lunch. At the time of the interview he maintained a cumulative 2.4 grade point average and had passed both the Mathematics and Reading portions of the FCAT (Florida Comprehensive Assessment Test).

**Roy**

Roy, who was seventeen years old at the time of the interview, was born in the Philippines and categorized his race/ethnicity as Black. His native language was English. Roy was ranked as embodying *Mathematical-Logical Intelligence* on Howard Gardner’s Multiple Intelligence Theory Scale. Roy did receive reduced lunch. At the time of the interview he maintained a cumulative 3.0 grade point average and had passed the Mathematics portion of the FCAT (Florida Comprehensive Assessment Test).
Ali

Ali, who was sixteen years old at the time of the interview was born in the United States and categorized his race/ethnicity as African-American, Native-American and Asian. His native language was English. Ali was ranked as embodying Bodily-Kinesthetic Intelligence on Howard Gardner’s Multiple Intelligence Theory Scale. Ali did not receive free or reduced lunch. At the time of the interview he maintained a cumulative 2.9 grade point average and had passed both the Mathematics and Reading portions of the FCAT (Florida Comprehensive Assessment Test).

Carter

Carter, who was seventeen years old at the time of the interview, was born in Dominica and categorized his race/ethnicity as Black. His native language was English. Carter was ranked as embodying Naturalistic Intelligence on Howard Gardner’s Multiple Intelligence Theory Scale. Carter did not receive free or reduced lunch. At the time of the interview he maintained a cumulative 2.0 grade point average and had passed both the Mathematics and Reading portions of the FCAT (Florida Comprehensive Assessment Test).
Themes from Students’ Interviews

For the Black male students, findings from the study yielded four themes. These themes served as answers to the research questions (see Data Analysis Map). They were as follows: 1) all people have intelligence but it may be affected by or expressed through self-discipline, thorough knowledge of a subject, aptitude, 2) intelligence is multifaceted and is more than just schooling, 3) yes, I am intelligent and this is linked to my self-esteem, and 4) intelligence is linked to nature/nurture or both.

Research Question 1

Definitions of Intelligence

How do Black male 11th graders define intelligence? The Black males in this study defined intelligence in many different ways. All of the Black males believed that everyone was intelligent in some capacity, Jason’s words reflected this common theme. He believed that “all people are intelligent. They’ve just got to find their way to be intelligent. They’ve just got to learn and study, and you know, people might have disabilities, but you could all be intelligent.” Junior had an interesting response to whether everyone was considered intelligent or not. He stated:

I believe all people have the capacity to be intelligent, but I think for different reasons they are not. Some choose not to be. I don't think
intelligence is that important that everyone needs it, but I don't think that everyone is intelligent.

The Black male students defined intelligence in terms of the ability to express self-discipline, thorough knowledge of a subject, and aptitude. Here was what Jason had to say about intelligence:

To me, intelligence is defined as a person who works hard at what they do, when they believe they can do something and that they put their mind to it. They don’t lollygag or be lazy about it. They really want to do something. So intelligence is really, pretty much, that you’re in your books 24/7. You do your work. You go to school. You be somebody, go somewhere, and you have nothing to worry about.

Similarly, Steve defined intelligence as:

Intelligence as it comes to school, a person that, like, doesn’t want to skip school, that doesn’t skip school. Or somebody that’s always in their books, always ready for a test, always prepared for class. And that’s how a person in school should be. And somebody that does want to graduate and make something of their life.

Roy focused more on the academic nature of intelligence. He defined intelligence as “it's not just one person's mentality on the subject but also how he keeps up with the mentality within the subject.” Other similar definitions of intelligence offered by the other Black males were from “is like a core understanding that you have” and “the capacity to understand systems” to “just basically one’s mental—one’s mentality on any subject and “how you do on tests.” Roy expanded his academic focus to
include a sense of different individual aptitudes to include himself by stating:

it depends on one person's aspects of what they're good at. For example, like myself, I may not-- I don't-- I lack in English, but however, I have a strong-- I'm really strong at math and logic, anything logical.

He also mentioned that “to measure someone’s intelligence, it’s mostly how - school-wise- it’s how their grades are.”

**Jobs and intelligence.** In order to capture a deeper understanding of these Black male students definitions of intelligence, questions related to jobs were asked to see if their definitions of intelligence were tied to any particular job.

In response to questions regarding jobs and intelligence, Carter responded that “every job requires somebody to be intelligent. You have to know something of that type of job.” All of the Black male students believed that white collar jobs, such as lawyer, doctor, and engineer all required a vast amount of intelligence.

Regarding doctors and engineers, Jason remarked that

Also, a doctor. Yeah, because you have to know all the bones inside a person, where their heart is and you have to know certain places when you’re doing surgery. Yeah, also, an engineer, because there’s different kind of engineer. You have a computer engineer. You have a mechanical engineer. You need to know parts of the car or parts of the engine. Or, also, you have an aviator engineer, where you have to
know parts of the airplane and different switches and things.

However, some blue collar jobs, such as that of being a secretary did not get good remarks. A response from Junior regarding secretaries was “I don’t think to be a good secretary you need intelligence.” Jason added by stating that:

Basically, a secretary’s job is to take calls for whoever their boss or manager is and make sure files and documents are sent out or distributed. Secretary, you really don’t need intelligence. It’s just, like, basic common sense. Like, whatever they ask you to do, you know, you just help out with what you’re doing.

Although being a secretary did not score good reviews by the Black male students as being a job that required intelligence, being a mechanic seemed to fare better with these Black males. Jason and Carter both believed that being a mechanic required some intelligence. Jason commented that “intelligence does play an important role sometimes...because you just have to know where you put stuff or take off something.” In regards to teachers, one of the Black male students said that “yes, they [teachers] have to know what they are teaching.” Ali added that “of course, teachers have to have knowledge of the subject that they’re teaching.” Construction workers and artists received better comments than secretaries as jobs that
required intelligence. Despite the varying degree of intelligence needed by each specific job, Ali summed it up with his statement: “Every job, to some extent, you need intelligence.”

**Research Question 2**

**Knowledge of Concept of Multiple Intelligence**

Do Black male 11th graders include the concept of Multiple Intelligences in their definition? As explained in Chapter 2, Gardner (1983) suggested that there are multiple intelligences which individuals possess in varying degrees. He posited that there are at least seven ways in which people perceive and understand the world and he believed that traditional schooling focused primarily on the Linguistic and Logical-Mathematical intelligences (Gardner, 1988).

In order to see if the Black male students in this study had the concept of Multiple Intelligence in their definitions, I analyzed their definitions and any statements made that reflected the notion of Multiple Intelligence. Also I wanted to see if they included in their responses a broader definition of intelligence; one that encompassed more than IQ and doing well on academic tests. The Black male students were asked questions related to schooling, success and intelligence, and if schools
cater to different ways of learning. Overall, various comments of the students revealed that they had a broader concept of intelligence. All indicated a sense of their own strengths, but several also saw their intelligence as ranging across Howard Garner’s categories of multiple intelligence.

Determination, dedication, sophistication, and honor were words used by Roy to define the characteristics of an intelligent person. Steve added his view stating that, for him, a characteristic of an intelligent person was “people who get stuff done.” He continued to discuss this referring to a story I had told him about me:

Most people, like, you know how they say, “Don’t judge a book by its cover?” So that’s what society, they always judge somebody. They never know deep down what the person is about. So, basically, to me, intelligence is if you’re smart, you go to school, you study, you do what you have to do to stay on top. And, you know, you can make it, and you can be successful in life. But most people think you have to be rich and wealthy and highly educated. In other words, like, go to a rich school, like Yale or Harvard, and you’ve got to be somebody. Also, that’s not true. As long as you stay and you study and you do what you have to do. You go to college, you complete it. You know, you’ll be somebody, like, get a high paying job. And to me, that’s you’re a very intelligent person.

When asked to give examples of intelligent people, Carter mentioned Bill Gates. He suggested Bill Gates as an intelligent person because:
look what he’s done for himself. He has the Internet. He’s making all this money. He’s doing all these things, charity groups and all that. He has to have some type of smarts to know to accomplish those things.

When talking about students, Carter stated that intelligent students were those who were “making something out of themselves, that are graduating, going up a different grade, not people that are like failing, and not doing what they’re supposed to be doing, not going to classes and stuff like that.” Tyrone echoed his thoughts regarding students and said that “I would say a person is intelligent by their response to certain answers or by the way they present themselves, I guess, in an interesting manner or different.”

Roy believed that there were different ways of learning and perceiving the world. He described intelligence in a broad view when he stated that “it depends on one person’s aspects of what they’re good at. For example, like myself, I may not-- I don’t-- I lack in English, but however, I have a strong-- I’m really strong at math and logic, anything logical.” This statement echoed Roy’s self rating on Gardner’s assessment survey. Referring to the different kinds of intelligence, he added, “There are probably –I’m not sure how many –but there are some.”
Steve made comments regarding the multifaceted nature of intelligence. Alluding to the concept of Multiple Intelligence, he stated:

Some people musically intelligent. Technology, like with computers and what not. They'll be intelligent in that form. Some people are good at playing video games. You know? So it all depends on what you define an intelligence as personally.

Steve considered himself intelligent. He believed that working by himself fixing his computers, making music, and at times, working in groups in acting class were signs of intelligent behavior. He affirmed this with his response:

because I like to do things by myself. Like when I'm home-- inner thoughts, you know, it's all about my inner thoughts. Like I could you know break my computer apart by myself and build it together, or I could make music by myself. You know? Like, make my own musical beats and what not. But I do everything by myself. But then again when I'm acting, I like to act with other people. So it's true in a way.

Jason also added his remarks. Referring to knowledge of the concept of multiple intelligences, he described himself in terms of a multifaceted person. He affirmed:

I love poetry and English and body movement, also, like, with athletics. And visual, bodily kinesthetic. I have different intelligence in different areas. So most, basically, I’m, like, an all around person. So I’m willing to learn anything or try anything new.

Ali’s comments on being in a magnet program signaled his knowledge of the concept of multiple intelligences. He
stated that “I am intelligent in art, because I’m in magnet art. I’ve been doing that since middle school.”

The Black male students relayed through the interviews their notions of the kinds of intelligence that the school promoted. All agreed that the school in which they studied promoted the kinds of traditional intelligence as stated by Howard Gardner: Verbal/Linguistic and Mathematical/Logical. The Black male students did not mention traditional intelligence in terms of Verbal/Linguistic and Mathematical/logical, they used a less technical terminology to describe what they had experienced. They mentioned that their school promoted certain courses over others. For example, they mentioned science, math, English, Algebra, and Geometry. One student even mentioned memorization. After probing for a more complete answer to capture his educational experience, Junior explained it like this:

Schools value memorization, obedience, conformity. Yeah, schools have a funny way of-- they like to call themselves liberal. Like good schools feel that to be a good school is to make kids think outside the box. But the problem is, the problem I feel is that they tell you to think outside the box, think outside the box, think outside the box. But when you make that decision to not think outside the box, all of a sudden you're stupid, or that now, it's like the problem with the school, the school believes that the problem with the world is that everyone is conformed and that to be smart you have to, you know, you have to understand that you're being conformed and to stay away from it.
But when you choose to not-- but in a way that's conformity itself. What the school is trying to do by telling you not be, forcing you to not be conformed to society is a form of conformity itself. They're breeding a group of unconformists. But when you chose to be a conformist, when you chose to conform to society knowing, you know, about the pros and cons, you get in trouble with the school. They like to call themselves-- the schools want to be liberal, but when you chose to be conservative you get in trouble.

Of the seven selected Black male students, Junior was the one student who always had a lot to say on any of the questions I asked him. During the interview he was quite willing and ready to respond. I can remember after interviewing him, he wanted to talk more about my research, the concepts of intelligence, black males in the inner-city, and about any other subjects or concerns that came across his mind. In a lengthy discussion, he talked about six classes and how by doing well in certain ones, one could be considered intelligent. Here is an excerpt of what he said:

I say English, science, math because you can have six subjects. You can fail-- you have an F in three of them but - you can have F's in three of them and A's in three of them. But if those three classes that you have an A are English, science and math, you're intelligent. They consider you intelligent, like there's no problem. There's no calling your house, there's none of that. There's simply that, you know, you're a smart kid. He's just not applying himself in the other classes. Basically they believe, it's a belief that, and I share it to a degree, that if you can do good in English, science and math then you can basically do good in any other subject. And if you're
not doing good in any other subject, it's just because you're not trying hard enough.

Roy talked about an American History class as being difficult. He also mentioned that playing the piano was also a difficult task, but stating that by practicing one could become proficient at the piano and thus be considered as intelligent by others. Here is his statement.

Well, you could say-- well, for me, I say anything that goes like American History-- because American History is kind of like very difficult. So if you know what happens from past and now, then you probably are considered intelligent. Also, playing an instrument. Playing an instrument is like one of the toughest things to do. But if you keep practicing it and manage to do, play pieces from any composer from years ago, then you're probably considered intelligent.

**School and intelligence.** Regarding whether intelligence played a role in school success, the Black male students had various responses. When asked if someone could be successful in school and not be intelligent, Jason responded:

Yeah, you don’t always have to be intelligent, as long as you study, you know, your books and stuff. You still can make it. You’re always going to be scientific. Intelligence is just another way to help you out and get you by easier, just your basic knowledge.

Jason believed that a person did not have to be intelligent to be successful in school, but after rethinking his comments, he added:
Not really. As long as you’re a person that pays attention, a person that does what he has to do, he really doesn’t have to be intelligent. But intelligence do play a major role, though. I’m not saying they’ll be dumb or nothing. But if you’re intelligent, it helps you further in class and stuff. But if you’re a person that struggles, you know, there’s always help to be done. But you still could be successful.

Contrary to Jason’s comments, Tyrone believed that a person needed to be intelligent to be successful in school. He responded by stating “Well, yes, you would need to [be] intelligent to be successful in school because you need the grade requirements to pass the class because they expect each student to pass at an equal grade average per semester or per year.”

Roy believed that it was more determination than intelligence that made a person successful in school and that this could be expressed in a variety of skills other than academics. His comments highlighted that notion:

it's not intelligence that makes you successful. It's your determination. Everything else-- then intelligence-- so like I seen-- like, who else? Who do I know? Like Jim Carrey for example, he wasn't that intelligent. He does a lot of dumb in his past life, but however, he's a successful comedian and actor from what he's good at.

In his lengthy discussion, Junior considered that making good grades did not necessarily make for success in school. He related his opinion as he told me about his mathematics class he was taking. He posited that:
You can have straight A's and not know anything about anything really. You, it's just rote memorization. That's all it is. It's just memorization. And it's not even memorization to the point where you have to be able to hold it for a long amount of time. Like, there's always that-- at school they're always telling you once you learn how to ride a bike, you'll never forget. But it's not the same. For instance, we're learning about radical exponents. I know, as a student, that I'm going to learn about it from Monday through Wednesday and on Friday I have a test. After I finish it, once I've memorized the steps to do it, Friday I do my test, I get an A. I don't, I know I'm not going to see that anymore until the last week of school so I can go, my brain can be wiped clean. The government can wipe my brain clean as long as they, you know, they take me back to school within, you know, three weeks of the final exam I can relearn all of that and pass my exam and finish the school year with an A. There is intelligence in school but you don't need it to be a highly successful student.

On the notion of academic grades and intelligence, Steve explained to me that not making straight A’s in school did not necessarily mean that a person was not intelligent. He believed that the school saw intelligence as highly associated with academic grades. During the interview, he looked at me and said, “That’s what they [the school] look at it as.” In his own words, he declared that “If you make straight As of course you feel intelligent, right? You're going to feel that way. But it doesn't necessarily mean that you're not intelligent if you don't make straight As.” He continued by stating:

I know many intelligent people that make Fs and Ds. You know? But sometimes people who make bad grades because they just don’t want to put up with you know
the system, the school system, whatever, so. Not necessarily just because you have good grades mean you're not intelligent. You know?

Jason concurred with his fellow schoolmates and said:

High GPA’s is just, basically, a person that has been getting good grades in your classes and have a real high GPA. Intelligence does play a major role. But even though I might not be intelligent, I still could be passing my classes with a high grade. It depends on the academic performance in class. So, basically, intelligent, you could either be hard work or not. Either way, you could still have a high GPA or not.

Ali also agreed and stated that “school[s] put a lot of emphasis on grades and tests.”

Jason, whose strongest intelligence was reflected in Howard Gardner’s Musical Intelligence, believed that if his teachers were to teach him employing a musical approach to learning, it would “make me adapt more to the class. Because since I love music so much, I will understand the class more easier. Understand what I’m saying? So yeah, music plays an important role in my life.”

Whether or not schools cater to the many ways in which students learn, Steve believed that it depended upon the teacher and that some teachers cared enough to implement a multiple intelligence style of teaching in their classrooms. Looking at this from a much wider perspective he added, “If you pay teacher[s] more, if this government actually paid the teachers more, they would probably take
more time to, you know, and care more about their jobs...”
Here, Steve was alluding to idea that if teachers were to
get more money, they would cater to his “intelligence” in
the classroom.

Research Question 3

Perceptions and Feelings of Own Intelligence

How do Black male 11th graders describe their own
intelligence? Without a doubt, the seven Black male
students at PEACE High School who participated in this
study described themselves as intelligent. Here are a few
examples of their statements. Not wanting to sound too
egotistical, Junior stated the following with regard to his
own intelligence.

I don't know if it's that I'm right and they're wrong
or that they're right and I'm wrong. But I know I'm
intelligent and I feel like a lot of kids tell me I'm
intelligent and the first thing that pops into my mind
is like wow, how do you know.

Like Junior, Steve did not want to be seen as arrogant
when talking about his own intelligence. Although he
believed that he was very intelligent, he stated his
comment like this:

I wouldn't say, "I'm intelligent, don't tell me this.
I'm intelligent." I'd rather you be like "Well, you
seem pretty intelligent to me you know?" I would be
like, "Thank you." That's just how I am. I'm not
really cocky.
Roy concurred with an emphatic “Yes, I feel pretty good. I am intelligent” about his own intelligence. Ali agreed and also stated that he believed himself to be intelligent. Carter added his comments by stating that “I learn enough for me to be intelligent or have some type of intelligence.”

In explaining how he defined his own intelligence, Roy described it like this:

Well, I just basically like-- like when I read a book, right?-- and I just don't know what kinds of-- what definitions are in it-- I just-- well, the word I don't know I just write. I just write down the word and find its definition. And also I write a summary for any kind of book, just like one short summary about what the book does-- about the book is about. But math, on the other hand, I do-- what I do is that I just-- if I'm not sure what I'm doing, I just look back through my textbook and just like find it clearly how it's done. So like I did this one mathematical problem, and it's not like the one that's in the text book; but however, I read it through carefully and just find out, like missing pieces of-- from the example into the problem.

Steve was more perplexed about the description of his own intelligence. A bit unsure, yet confident, on a scale of one to ten, he mentioned “I could be a nine. I could be a ten. I could be a[n] eight depending on the subject.”

**Self-esteem.** Self-esteem played a great part in the lives of these Black male students. From their perspectives, how they perceived themselves intellectually affected their self-esteem – the way they view themselves
and feel about themselves. All the Black male students saw themselves as having high self-esteem and tied this to intelligence. Steve related to me a story about his father, Alex. He talked about how being seen by others as intelligent can affect one’s self-esteem:

Intelligence can really affect your self esteem. For example my father, when he was young people used to tell him he was dumb and this and that. And now he went to college, he went and passed with straight As and all that, just out of nowhere. You know? And everybody is like, "Wow, Alex is smart." You know? And then, it's just like it makes him feel better about himself. Well people label you smart or intelligent it always makes you feel better about yourself. But it's all in your head. It could be anybody. I think everybody can be intelligent.

Talking about his own intelligence, Jason described it as:

I always put forth the effort in class. I always study and try to do hard work. Even though it’s a hard assignment, I always ask for help. And I’m always somebody who’s trying to be on top, never trying to slack off. So yeah, I consider myself intelligent.

And in talking about his self-esteem, he put it like this:

My self-esteem. I have a very high self-esteem. I don’t let petty stuff bring me down or nothing. It’s just that certain things, like <inaudible> probably my self-esteem might go down. But other than that I always keep my head up high and <inaudible>. Yeah, to me, if you put yourself down or you think bad about yourself, got low self-esteem, you think you’re not going to be nobody in life, then, that’s what you’re going to perceive yourself as. But if you, like, learn and you’re a good person. You want to study. You want to graduate. You want to get from high school and go to college and stuff, if you think of yourself highly
you are going to be somebody, you always will be intelligent.

Carter also believed that having high self-esteem played a significant role in how other people perceived an individual. In an interview, he said that "I think it affects me a lot, because if I think I’m stupid, then ultimately, that’s what I’m going to be. If I think I’m smart, then after, I’d better keep on pursuing that and I will be smart.” Junior described that how having high self-esteem and being popular in different fields helped him through his course work in school. He believed that intelligence contributed to having high self-esteem. He discussed this by saying that:

I think intelligence has a huge role in self-esteem because, let me see, to be-- like one of the things that I think are key to like success in school, and I don't mean, you know, academic wise, but you know the other things about school, like you know socially. I think it's talent. You know, there's looks, there's, you know, popularity. I think that popularity plays a huge role in like life at school. And I think that, you know, some kids are popular because they can dance. Some kids are popular because they have money. You know, there's many things, there's many reasons why kids are popular. But when someone comes to me and I don't have any of those things, my self-esteem isn't low because I think, I consider myself intelligent. And that belief is fueled by other people telling me that I'm intelligent to the point where it doesn't matter what they say. I think that intelligence means that I'll find a way to conquer, you know, that obstacle they throw at me. So if they say I can't dance, I'm like, you know, whatever. I'm intelligent and I'll find a way to, you know, either dance or do something better than dance.
In an interview with Tyrone, he talked about intelligence and self-esteem as “because the way you describe yourself is how other people would see you as, so if you think that you present yourself as an intelligent individual, then you would obviously in life be looked at as an intelligent individual.” Ali made a comment and said “I’m positive about myself.”

Regarding their feelings about participating in this study, Roy gave a response and said that “Well, what--being like one of the few who is doing this study is like—it makes you feel like you could be part of the future of all the black people in this whole society.” Steve mentioned that he looked forward to participating in the study and added that:

Well just the fact that you're you, you know, studying black males in general, you know. That always, <snaps fingers> that always you know, impacts me more. Because you know, we're stereotyped a lot, right? So it's just-- I'd like to, you know-- it'd be cool for you to...

At first, Jason was not sure of his participation and remarked about the idea of participating in a study that dealt with Black males and intelligence attracted him to want to participate. His comments reflected this:

My reaction was, I wasn’t sure about it, because I really didn’t know. Ms. [counselor’s name] didn’t really explain to it. But after you came, and you spoke, I, kind of, understood it. So I was real, real
happy to be a part of it with the interview and stuff. So I was really expected [ph?] and looking forward to it.

Regarding what part of my talk prompted him to want to participate, he said “the part when you were speaking about, like, showing that, you know, black males are intelligent and that they could be somebody. So I just wanted to make a difference, and that’s how it attracted me.” Other than being a great opportunity, for Ali, participating in this study meant another added feature to his resume. He stated that “I feel like it was a great opportunity. And I was, like, “Hey, I’ve got to do it.” Something I can write down that I participated in on my high school resume.”

During my initial talk to the Black male students, I had talked about Howard Gardner’s Multiple Intelligences. Ali, upon hearing this, wanted “just to see how I would come out in each category, and see what category I would be portrayed in the most.”

**Ebonics and intelligence.** Questions regarding Ebonics, Standard English language use, accents in speech were asked of the Black male students in the study. All but one of the Black male students thought that speaking Ebonics was not an indication of whether an individual was intelligent or
not. Steve’s response to this notion was reflected in the ardent answer he gave. He stated:

That's not true! No. You know, I hear a lot of Spanish people say, "Yeah, I might talk with an accent, but I don't think with an accent." You understand? So, no, just because you talk a certain way or speak a different language doesn't mean you're more intelligent than somebody else to me. Just because you speak a certain way doesn't mean you're more intelligent than somebody else. You know? Probably, like just because you read in an English book how to speak doesn't mean you're more-- just because-- how you speak doesn't determine how intelligent you are to me at least. It's all in your brain. Like if you're-- it all depends on how your brain functions. If your brain-- you understand what I'm trying to say?

Jason’s response concurred with that of Steve. His response was:

If they speak Ebonics, it doesn’t mean they’re intelligent or not. It’s just that they learned a different way or they speak a different way or something. So intelligence doesn’t always play a role as in if you learn something new or old. It’s definitely not about your language or how you speak or your accent. I mean I know a lot of ignorant black people so to speak, you know, here who talk a certain way.

During a probe in the interview, Ali was asked whether the use of Ebonics contributed to an individual being considered as unintelligent and whether speaking Standard English was considered as an indication of someone being intelligent. To both questions Ali responded, “I don’t think so. I think this is more a sign of their upbringing.”
Contrary to all the other Black male students' responses, was that of Carter who believed that the way an individual spoke reflected his or her intelligence. He declared, “The way they speak, yes. It reflects on their intelligence, because if you speak a certain way, it could be the way that you are. That’s the perception that you’re giving.”

**Societal Views of Black Males.** As an outcome of the interview, the question of societal views of Black males was aroused. This question, although not initially part of my proposal, would add a salient feature to the study of Black males and their self-perception of intelligence. The Black male students in this study were asked their views on the perception of Black males by society. How do you think society views the Black male, in general, and in terms of intelligence?

Their responses to these two questions were varied, yet of one accord. This was what Roy had to say:

Because like years ago, like when there used to be all this segregation— they find like, they don't-- they don't know much— like they don't have high intelligence. They're like average or below. And sometimes society today— there are some-- there're not like a lot of black males that have like high intelligence, but like I see most like they're like gangsters or something. They're like probably in the, like lower or in the average.
In a direct response to question 2, Roy simply stated that “I think they find them either average or low,” and added a personal touch, “it kind of makes us feel very angry on the inside.”

Jason believed that society saw the Black male as aggressive, lazy and sometimes “irresponsible creatures that must be controlled or eliminated.” Steve thought that Black males were seen by society as nervous, apprehensive, non-trusting, violent, arrogant and selfish. Tyrone felt that, in society’s eyes, that Black male had “a negative vibe [about them]...who is not going to accomplish anything.” Junior believed that society saw the Black male as unaccomplished and disrespectful, while Roy and Ali believed that Black males were viewed as full of rage and that most were criminals and delinquent. Carter’s belief in how society saw Black males was more positive, and with mixed feelings, than did his peers. He stated that “some sees Black males as inspiration...someone to emulate, some sees Black males as lazy, inept and not taking care of priorities.”

The responses the Black male students gave reflected their views of how society saw them. Being Black males themselves, they were very aware of the negative perceptions and stereotypes that society, in general, held
about them. Jason believed that society saw the Black male’s intelligence as “inferior to that of Caucasians.” Most of the other Black male students’ responses had the notion of comparing Black males’ intelligence to that of their white counterparts, and even to Hispanics. Jason stated that Black males were viewed as “not as skilled as whites or Hispanics.” Tyrone echoed similar sentiments and said, “[Black males] not being as smart as whites because they are not in high ranking positions and most are imprisoned or jailed.” Junior exclaimed that “whites don’t give Black males a chance to show how intelligent they are.” Ali believed that the view society held against Black males was “as undermined, they are genetically inferior, they have potential, but not as great as whites. Given the same opportunity, they are inferior to Anglos.” Nothing different came from Carter and Ali. They deemed society’s perceptions of Black males to be negative as well. They believed that society viewed Black males as having enough potential to be a major threat with more education and intelligence and that’s was the reason why whites tried to get them down. Carter’s perception of how society viewed him as a Black male was as “stupid and ignorant. Not fully applying their capabilities. Easily influenced and not innovative and not having a mind of their own.”
Research Question 4

Nature versus Nurture Dimensions of Intelligence

What do students perceive to be the factors that contributed to their definition of intelligence, generally, and their own intelligence specifically? This section led to a strong theme of nature and nurture. The students expressed both sides of this debate. When asked about the factors that contributed to their (definition of) intelligence, Carter, the Black male student who was identified as having Naturalistic Intelligence responded that the source of his intelligence came from his surroundings and the people around him. He added, “and the lifestyle I keep, and the things that I do, like reading or doing extra things without having somebody to tell me to do it.” Steve responded first by saying that it was a tough question to answer, but speculated that intelligence is developed through learning from the environment. He elaborated:

Life, you live and you learn. You know. My cousin, computers I look up to him with the computers. I always learned how to use a computer from him. I look up to him, watch him, and then I learn. You know? It's just like the primitive times when people used to watch the animals eat, and they learned what to eat from them. Well, that's what I was told.

For Steve, his cousin’s knowledge of computers was the source of his (definition of) intelligence.
Tyrone believed that the source of his intelligence came from his own individuality. Whereas Ali echoed that his source was “from all the building blocks that were made for me when I was younger.”

In addressing research question 4 of this study as it relates to the Black male students’ perception of the contributing factors of their intelligence, the notion of whether an individual’s intelligence was innate (nature), developed from experience (nurture) or a combination of both was explored. Their responses were mixed and, at times, changing as they pondered this concept. Here was what they had to say.

Junior assured me that, to him, intelligence was something that one was born with. He explained it like this:

I developed my theory on intelligence because I didn't think that intelligence was something that, you know, that everyone could be given so my theory on intelligence is based on the fact that I once believed, and I kind of do believe that intelligence is something that you're born with. But I think that experience plays like a key role in it too. I'm just not sure, you know, to what degree, you know.

He elaborated further and stated that “I don't believe that nurture will give you intelligence, but I believe that you know, nurture has the capacity to like, you know, take your intelligence away.”
Carter and Jason disagreed with Junior’s stance that intelligence was due to nature. They believed that intelligence was due to nurture; through experiencing life. Carter proclaimed that individuals could not be born intelligent. Jason summed up his belief about intelligence and explained that:

To me, it’s something that you learn on the way. You can’t be born with intelligence, because you could, probably, be speaking your ABC’s by the time you turn one. You understand what I’m saying? But it’s something you learn over time, going to school, and learning from your parents and from teachers and adapting to the new words. By time and time alone you’re learning. But that’s how I think intelligence is, also your parents start teaching you, or you just start learning on yourself, or start reading. You know, by the time you hit the age of four or five, you start learning how to do specific things. So intelligence comes a long way.

To further clarify his statement, he added, “I’m, actually, saying that it’s something that you learn.”

Jason, Tyrone, and Ali all agreed that intelligence was a bit of both nature and nurture. Jason stated that it could be both and expressed it by saying “basically, to me, I think, it’s just something that you just learn from when you start up to going to school and things.” Tyrone added his view and stated “Well, for that question, like that question right there I would say would have to be a 50/50, but just me, overall, I would say it would have to be something that you were gradually like learning over time.”
Ali, at first, did not ascribe to the notion that intelligence was both, he began his response as if he were going to say that intelligence was through nature but changed his mind midstream and said, “I think there are some people who are born— you know, what? No. You’re made to be intelligent.” But after further probing, he restated his thoughts with a simple answer as “I think it’s both. I think it’s both.”

**Teachers’ Profiles**

The following teachers were selected and interviewed for this study. Consent from fourteen teachers were sought, but only 10 teachers gave consent to participate. Table 4.4 represents the ten teachers by name, gender, subject taught, and race/ethnicity. The teachers’ names were changed to maintain their confidentiality.

**Table 4.4 – Teachers’ Profile Chart**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Teacher</th>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>Subject</th>
<th>Race/Ethnicity</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ms. Blue</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>English/Language Arts</td>
<td>Black/Hispanic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ms. Orange</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>Social Studies</td>
<td>African-American</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ms. Yellow</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>English/Language Arts</td>
<td>White</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ms. Green</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>Elective – Spanish</td>
<td>White</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ms. Black</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>Elective – Drama</td>
<td>White</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ms. Brown</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>Science</td>
<td>Hispanic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mr. Gray</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>Mathematics</td>
<td>White</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mr. Pink</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>Elective – Art</td>
<td>Hispanic</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Themes from Teachers’ Interviews

For the teachers of the Black male students, findings from the study yielded three themes. These themes served as answers to the research questions. They were as follows: 1) all have intelligence but it may be affected by or expressed through self-discipline, thorough knowledge of a subject, and aptitude, 2) intelligence is multifaceted and is more than just schooling, and 3) all of the Black male students exhibit intelligence in various forms.

Research Question 5

Teachers’ Definitions of Intelligence

How do the teachers of these students define intelligence? Similar to the students, the teachers also included the Multiple Intelligence concept, but even more so than the students. The teachers’ responses were very explicit. The concept of Multiple Intelligence Theory was present throughout the definitions of the teachers. In a couple of cases, their answers were directly linked to Gardner’s MI Theory. Overall, the teachers’ definitions were more varied than the students’.
In addressing research question 5, teachers were asked if they believe everyone was intelligent. The responses of the teachers centered on the idea that everyone was intelligent to some degree and in different ways. When asked if she believed that everyone was intelligent, Ms. Blue replied, “Yes. I think everyone is intelligent. It’s just a matter as to what sphere of life they’re dealing with to show their intelligence.” Ms. Green’s contradictory statements indicated the difficulty in defining intelligence. She stated that “I would say that we all have different degrees of intelligence; I don’t think we all have the same amount but I believe that everybody is given the same amount of intelligence.” A clearer response came from Mr. Tan. He believed that all human beings bring something to the table when it comes to intelligence. He stated:

Yes I think human- human beings have-- they all bring something. For some reason in some people it’s a bit more hidden and you kind of have to find it, and that it’s very complex. I mean I think there might be things that happened to them in childhood, there might be some physical things that limit them, then you can get-- you can--from, like, an extreme of somebody who is in a coma, still consider him [intelligent], but then cannot do anything except for just breathe in, breathe out. And then you can go for somebody who can-- has an IQ of 200 or something, if it’s within that range it’s-- I- I personally value more just meeting people for what they are and then just trying to see what they bring to the table. And everybody does bring something, whether it is just somebody who
can smile, genuinely, or somebody who can paint, or somebody who can actually just solve a math problem. It doesn’t matter. Personally that’s what I’m looking for. That’s-- and then yes, they have some type of intelligence.

Mr. Brown concurred and added that “I think everyone has a form of intelligence, yes. I think that not everyone is the book intelligence, but somehow in their own way they have something that is unique to them and intelligent for them showing their own abilities.” Mr. White posited that Everybody is intelligent. It's just in what way they are intelligent. I mean, I'm intelligent in mathematics. I'm not the best reading teacher. I'm not the best writing teacher, but I'm intelligent in mathematics, you see. I mean, intelligent is not something that's just on one main thing. It's just like in a certain area you may be intelligent in something. I really don't put down on anybody being intelligent because anybody can be intelligent, no matter who it is. I mean, me, you, yourself. We're all intelligent in some type of way.

But all the teachers were not in accord. Some teachers questioned whether the term intelligence was sufficiently and clearly explanatory. Ms. Yellow’s remark proposed contradiction to the concept. Stating that it was a difficult question to answer, she believed that the term intelligence was a confusing one and proclaimed “that's a very tough question. I'm sure everyone has-- I don't know if they're all intelligent because we haven't really defined it. It's a kind of ambiguous term, but can people learn? Can children learn? Absolutely!” Whereas Ms.
Yellow’s response showed some doubt that everyone was intelligent, Mr. Pink’s answer reflected an emphatic negation to the idea that everyone was considered intelligent. He remarked:

No, I don’t. It depends. No, I don’t. I’ve seen cases in my years of teaching where a student— and I know some that, to use the notion of opportunity, you know, a young child who has had parents with financial success who have been able to give their kids-- I mean, it’s obvious they’ve been able to give their kids all these opportunities to learn and expand on their knowledge and become intelligent or be intelligent, or knowledgeable about things, yet are no better off than any other kid in the classroom or at best, average. You know, versus a child who may not have had the same opportunity as that other one, yet because of their innate desire to succeed, or because they’re just innately curious about stuff, you know, be better than most in class, or perform better than most in class. So you know, and comprehension is something that I think has to do a lot with intelligence. You know, which to me just lets me know when I see two kids with similar upbringing, similar background, similar everything and you put out a problem, and Kid A comprehends the solution fairly quickly; yet Kid B takes him twice or three times as long to comprehend that. I can only come to one conclusion that you know, it is lack of intelligence, which is innate, which is beyond their control.

This statement by Mr. Pink reflected a view that resonated with several teachers. Central to the definition of intelligence for these teachers, was the notion that intelligence had to do with problem-solving. Having book smarts, common sense, and the ability to think quickly were also some of the many responses these teachers gave for defining intelligence. Like the Black male students’
definition of intelligence, their teachers’ definitions encompassed a wide-range of ideas and responses.

Ms. Blue stated that she would define intelligence as:

the mind’s structure of the individual, what complexities that they are able to deal with, what abstract thoughts you’re able to acquire and understand and comprehend. It could be just on a normal, everyday basis or worldwide. Those factors that are above and beyond the natural, average person.

Mr. Pink gave an interesting definition of intelligence. In his definition, he made the distinction of the term ‘knowlegeable’ versus intelligence and said the following:

As far as I’m concerned intelligence, I think, is closely related to problem solving. I think there is--I differentiate somebody who’s knowledgeable versus somebody who’s intelligent. Somebody who’s knowledgeable may be someone who has had an upbringing where they have had access to material, whether it be reading, or workshops, or special programs, or whatever the case may be that has given them a good broad base, sort of a vessel of knowledge, you can say. Versus somebody, whether or not they’ve had the same opportunities, can formulate solutions regarding any specific problem, at any specific moment that can primarily come from something innately part of their genealogical structure, whatever you want to call it.

For Mr. White, intelligence was defined as “[e]xpanding their knowledge, not only to simple stuff and like rudimentary stuff, but something that's going to broaden their horizon rather than staying focused on one main point, you know. That's what I would figure intelligence is.” He added what he thought intelligence was not and stated:
Intelligence? I would say it's like a learning--someone learning to the highest capacity, you know! I mean, intelligent is not something that's just on one main thing. It's just like in a certain area you may be intelligent in something.

Some of the teachers defined intelligence in terms of the broad array of intelligence across the Multiple Intelligence theory. For example, Ms. Yellow talked about her sister and mentioned that:

really intelligent people like my sister, they're good at everything. She's good at everything, at math and science and English and music. That, I guess, that's really, really intelligent. Intelligence as I defined in the beginning is the ability to problem solve. You know, and problem solving takes its--kind of like a computer. How quickly can your computer formulate a solution, given the circumstances?

The concept of IQ came up in many of the teachers’ interviews. Both Ms. Blue and Ms. Black’s definition of intelligence, respectively, included the concept of IQ. Ms. Blue’s definition alluded to and included the use of Standard English and stated that “in America today, to be intelligent, you have to have a certain IQ. You have to be properly tested by whatever psychologist is out there. And you have to speak according to the proper people, proper English.” Ms. Black echoed similar feelings, and mentioned the concerns she had about tests. She described it in this way:

Well, I think that it's important for an educator to know an IQ level or have some form of measurement
about an individual student so that we have the tools to guide them to the best of their ability. But I have a problem with tests that—such as the FCAT that measure a school's success or failure for politicians' gains, because I think that, again, intelligence is something individualized, that's why there's something like an IQ test. And as an educator our job is to take a student from one starting point and bring them further along, and that has to be something measured on a one to one basis because not everyone is coming from the same IQ level or the same starting point but they're intelligent. And the way to measure that is by saying, "We started at point A, but we got to point C." So, again, I think that it's all in the way that results are used, that make them worthwhile for me as an educator.

The teachers' definitions of intelligence were not arrived at solely by asking them to define it. To further explain their views of the definitions of intelligence, they also mentioned, during the interviews, how they knew that a person was intelligent. In other words, what behaviors or actions of an individual could be identified as that individual being intelligent? I probed further to capture their answers. Ms. Yellow stated that:

This is my opinion from the people I know, a lot of people. To me, like, when I was dating, the man had to be intelligent. I know people— you know, I've tried to start a book club where I live. They said, "We don't read your kind of books." You know, "I don't read, or I may read a mystery." And not being aware of what's going on and language and reading to me is not intelligent. There are lots of people who are very wealthy and very happy not having that. I would feel like a deprived person. So I try to, you know, sometimes I can talk more with the students than with some adults. And I think there's a real debasement in language and, your word, intelligence, or knowing what's going around, you know.
Ms. Black believed that a person’s intelligence was not always measured by their college degrees, but “more so by their financial success, because they think if you’ve got money, you must be important or intelligent.” Mr. White gave an example of his definition. He stated:

I really don't care for your IQ. It's how you can show me what you can do. I mean, there's some people they have the lowest IQ, but if you can just look at them and monitor them. Like for instance, I can give you an example. I have a student. He has a seizure, but his seizures is where he just stares out of space. Now let me remind you, that his-- he has low scores, but the reason he has low scores is because he's not able to finish his test. Now, I can teach this student everything in ten minutes. He will learn it. He will understand it. And I have trouble teaching my Algebra two my Algebra one the same stuff that he learns in ten minutes. And it's amazing to see him understand the work, "Yeah, yeah I got it." And then he will try to prove you wrong. And it’s the stuff that I like because he will challenge you. And that's the thing. His IQ may be low, but he understands and can do the material. It's just the simple fact that he can't finish his test on time. And that's the pain that like-- you really want to see him make it but being that he can't finish his test on time that it draws him by as a set back, you know.

The thoughts of the teachers on how society defined intelligence arose during the interview. While some believed that society’s definition of intelligence included monetary and financial success, others believed it was in how fast an individual could process information that led one to be considered intelligent. When asked, Mr. Pink mentioned that:
Oh, I think society defines intelligence through success, through whether it be monetary success, I think has a lot to do with that. Uhm... people who are successful are generally considered to be intelligent, and people who are not successful are generally considered to be-- or financially successful-- let me rephrase that.

He further added to his response to demonstrate where he thought society’s definition of intelligence and his definition coincided. He stated:

So you know, I think there’s a lot related to that. At the same time, I think society does reward the academician, which are those individuals who I think are the best in-- or most balanced in terms of uh.. intelligence and success. You know, I think when we hear studies made on culture and science and such, the ones that we usually go to are those individuals who are in academia who have been-- who are there because of their intelligence, and who are only successful because of their positions in society. But I think that’s probably the smallest gap. You know, the place where I can see what I would consider intelligence and societies definition of intelligence sort of meet.

Ms. Black thought that society’s view and definition of intelligence was different from her view and definition. She believed that many people in society were judgmental in that appearance played a role in an individual being considered as intelligent. Her statement reflected this. She stated that “unfortunately I don't think that they would share my same view. I think that many people in society are very judgmental, and they look at a person, and they perceive what their intelligence is by their physical
or outward appearance.” Mr. Tan added he comments regarding society’s view and definition of intelligence and stated:

That’s a big question because I think everybody may have a different view on it. I think of-- a perceived notion would be that it’s somebody who is quick witted or can have some type of fast mental processing, which might tie it up with knowledge. For me they’re not the same, but when somebody says oh that person’s very smart, very intelligent, there’s usually certain traits of verbal and intellectual, mathematical skills that they might have that distinguishes them from people who cannot do that.

Mr. White also agreed with his colleagues and gave example of his explanation in terms of mathematics. He summed up his response and said:

One thing I noticed about society. If you just say what your degree in. They'll automatically say "Oh, wow." So I remember when I came to a job interview that I was on. I was just applying for any job, it was after I graduated. And I said, "Okay." And they said, "You got your degree?" I said, "Yes, in mathematics." "Oh, wow. Oh, wow." And it's like, they -- "Oh, mathematics. Oh, wow, you're great." But I guess it goes the same stereotype. Math is hard, math is not hard. It came to realize to me that in my freshman year in college that math is just repeating itself. And the higher you go it's repeating, but its adding a little more to it. It's actually saying, okay, now. You learned one plus one is two. Now do you know why one plus one is two? That's all its doing. In other words, the additive identities that happens there. That's what you expanding on. And people tend to draw back from it because they think oh, calculus and all of this other stuff. But it's really...

He continued:

No. I mean, everybody's different, and how people grow-up and people environment and how they think; their thinking process is totally different. It's until they actually realize and understand the true
nature of how a thinking mind goes, that they'll really know how—how can I say it. Like they'll be able to think the same way. You know what I'm saying? Because I mean, everybody may think something different; not everybody thinks the same way.

**Research Question 6**

**Teachers’ Knowledge of Multiple Intelligence**

Do these teachers include the concept of Multiple Intelligence in their definition? In order to answer this research question, I analyzed the many responses and comments the teachers gave to see if any of their statements included the concept of Multiple Intelligence. There was overwhelming evidence of teachers’ knowledge of the concept of Multiple Intelligence in their statements. Here are some examples of what I found.

In talking with Ms. Orange, she included in her definition of intelligence the various creative ways that students had demonstrated their intelligence. She stated:

A lot of people define intelligence on book smarts, but I take it past that. I think that these kids' intelligence goes into how creative they are outside of the book, such as visually, artistically, auditorially—how they participate in class. It's just not a book thing.

During the interview, Ms. Orange made statements that also included her knowledge of the concept of Multiple Intelligence. In addressing the question of whether everyone was intelligent, she said that “some people might
be better at doing the artistic side of things; some people have that book smart; some people have that street smart. Just because they're intelligent by society doesn't mean that they're not intelligent in their own way."

According to Ms. Yellow, intelligence came in different packages. In explaining her thoughts about intelligence, she included the concept of Multiple Intelligence when she talked about her English Language classroom. She said the following:

In an English classroom, it's when people understand the nuances of language, can relate the ideas in these works to other works or other parts of their life. You know, AP language is about understanding the importance of words and what they mean, so intelligent people, to me, can see this, articulate it, they can write about it. When you take a gifted class, you learn that intelligence comes in different packages, musical intelligence, artistic intelligence, mathematical propensities, but to me, it's a whole picture. Bright kids catch on, they just catch on.

Mr. White's response included the concept of Multiple Intelligence and opined that:

Yeah, and but then you get some people that's intelligent in many ways. I mean, I'm not saying just because they work in that field that's the only thing they're intelligent in. No, there's other people. Some people just chose a career because of money, and they could be well intelligent in something else, you know. So I mean it's not only in the specific area, but every career someone is intelligent inside of it.

Not surprisingly, Mr. Tan did mention Multiple Intelligence by name. He also mentioned Howard Gardner in his response.
His definition of intelligence clearly demonstrated his knowledge of the concept of the Multiple Intelligence theory. This is what he had to say:

think intelligence-- you see I kind of tend- tend to agree with a separation of that term, kind of like Howard Gardner talks about the multiple intelligences. And I don’t know if I’m going to scribe [ph?] to his own definitions, but there’s definitely students who have, or people who have, gifts that have much larger talent in one area than another.

Yet, another teacher, Ms. Brown included the idea that book smarts was not the only way to show that one was intelligent. Being artistic was also a sign of being intelligent. In defining intelligence, she explained it like this:

My definition would be a little bit different. I think everyone has intelligence in different way. I think intelligence can be seen not only in book smarts, but there are a lot of people that are street smarts. There are a lot of people that have intelligence in artistic means while other people are intelligent in the book means.

I asked the teachers directly whether or not they were familiar with Howard Gardner's Multiple Intelligence Theory. Ms. Brown claimed that:

Yes. I did it, actually, with my students. I had them take the bodily-kinesthetic test, and then after breaking them into four main groups, and then I gave them the story of the Three Little Pigs and they had to act it out in whatever way they felt more comfortable. Yes. I try to get them because the thing is with our school here we have a lot of magnet students in the arts, and since I teach science not a lot of them are in love with science, so I try to
bring in a lot of different things that might get them more involved in the science classes.

She also expressed the need for other teachers to apply the theory of Multiple Intelligence in their classroom teaching and believed if implemented, students could be successful in their academic career. She summed it up by stating:

I think that--I actually believe that everyone should try to apply it in their class, especially because the way that our society has changed and the way that we offer kids more and more electronics every day and things like that. If we don't start gearing them towards--gearing what we do towards them we're never going to teach. And if we can't teach then we're not doing the job we're supposed to be. And think there's still a lot of, I guess, close minded teachers. Not so much close minded, but older fashioned teachers that don't bring that into their class because they're so used to a certain way. And unfortunately, a lot of our students don't like those classes or don't want to go to those classes. And if we draw them away from going to those classes then we're never going to help them succeed and graduate, which is what our main goal should be.

Mr. White believed that there existed different kinds of intelligence. Although he vacillated in his explanation, he proclaimed that:

Yeah, there's different types. I mean, like I said before. Some people could be intelligent just towards-- I mean it's just, I don't know how to say it. But it's like there's different intelligence. It just can't be just one. It's just different, you know. Some people could be book intelligent; some people can know everything in the book. Some people can do something physically. I mean, they can-- like the mechanic. You know what I'm saying? There's different intelligence that's how I see it as. There's not just one perspective of it.
Making the claim that she was not artistically inclined, Ms. Orange gave her response and said that:

Some people are artistic. Like my niece can draw; that's her outlet. That's what she does; that's how she feels like she expresses herself. That's talent, that's an intelligence that I do not have. There are people who are musically inclined. That's an intelligence that some people don't have. There are those who just are visual learners, who just do better by looking at stuff-- and that's just how they learn. There are several different types. You can't limit it to just a few. Everybody's different.

**Research Question 7**

**Teachers’ Perceptions of Black Males**

How do these teachers describe Black males’ intelligence? Central to understanding these teachers’ perceptions of Black males’ intelligence was how they defined intelligence and whether they had any knowledge of the concept of Multiple Intelligence. Adding to that, this research question aimed to capture how the teachers of these Black male students perceived them in terms of intelligence. A look at the themes that arose out of the teacher interviews shed light on their perceptions.

**Intelligence and Appearance**

The teachers remarked about whether or not appearance had anything to do with intelligence. Responses from the teachers were mixed. All but one of the teachers said that appearance had nothing to do with intelligence Ms. Green
believed that one’s intelligence could be seen through one’s appearance. She explained:

Yes, I would say, based on how people speak and they conduct themselves and if they are successful in life, that’s basically what it is; it’s not so much where you came from or whatever but are you successful in what you do, and how successful.

Mr. White believed that looks could be deceiving and commented using me as an example:

No, you can't really say they're intelligent by looks. Because looks can be very deceiving, you know. I mean, it's just saying--I mean, how can I say it? For an example, you. When I looked at you, you have your dreads and everything. I said "Okay." And then when one of my students said you spoke seven languages. I said, "My, that's incredible to speak seven languages. That takes time and, you know, some understanding." So that means you have some intellectual stuff in understanding words and understanding different languages. You're smart in that. I mean, that's-- I wouldn't even do that. You see what I'm saying? So I mean, just by looks you can't judge somebody on their looks, and especially if they have long hair, or especially if they're a different race. You can't judge somebody off their looks, you know. Because you really don't know what type of mind setting that person had. And you don't know what type of impact that person could put on a student to do good. You know.

Yet again, another teacher used me as an example to explain her rationale of looks and intelligence. Ms. Orange stated that:

That is something that society does. I can use you as a prime example. When you walk into a room, I'm pretty sure a lot of people think that you're a hoodlum-- not even looking at the fact that you've attained five or six masters and doctoral degrees. Intelligence cannot be defined by looking at someone.
Adding to Ms. Green comments, and yet again, citing my appearance as an example, Ms. Yellow said:

I have no idea. But I'm sure you've come up with people, they judge, they look at you a certain way and they make judgments, and then you find out about them. We all do that. You can't help it. We all do. We look at someone, we make our judgments, right? Richard Cory [ph?] effect. Right? Yeah. And the kids are always shocked when he goes home and puts a bullet through his head, because I always say, you never know what someone is thinking or feeling.

Ms. Brown and Mr. Tan agreed. Ms. Brown’s response was that:

I don't think that. I really believe that whole so you can't judge a book by its cover. A lot of people just want to believe that because someone looks a certain way, or a particular way, they are not intelligent. But there's a lot of people that will surprise you. So I don't believe that by looking at someone you can tell their intelligence.

While Mr. Tan gave a resounding “No, that’s impossible. You can’t- you can’t just tell by- by appearance.”

**Intelligence and the Use of Ebonics**

The Black male students, as seen from their interviews, used Standard English and Ebonics when answering questions. As I talked with them, I observed their ‘code-switching’ between the two languages. Since Ebonics is used exclusively by many African-Americans in their dealings and everyday conversations, I wanted to capture the teachers’ perceptions of the use of Standard
English and Ebonics in relation to an individual being considered intelligent.

The teachers of the Black male students all believed that the use of Ebonics over Standard English was not a characteristic of unintelligence. Their varied answers depicted their feelings and beliefs.

Ms. Blue began by stating that the use of Standard English was not necessarily a sign of intelligence. She explained her position:

The use of Standard English is not necessarily a sign of intelligence, because you come from different places, different communities. What exactly is standard English? Where are you coming from? If I’m in England, standard English is a whole different background. If I’m coming out of the West Indies, once again, you’re dealing with a different form of standard English. So Standard English does not equate someone’s intelligence.

In describing Carter’s use of Ebonics, she believed that he had a good command of the English Language, but mentioned that he did not use Ebonics to a great extent. She explained:

[Carter] has a fairly good command of standard English. He does not use Ebonics to a great extent. He tries to communicate with you in a formal, standard English way. I’ve seen him use Ebonics around some of his peers. But with me, the teachers, and what we ask for it’s standard English. He has a very high vocabulary. You see that with him and you understand it. Automatically, you want to put him in a different category. You know that there’s a training that he’s gotten from somewhere. According to society’s
expectations, he will be placed in a gifted or honors or AP class.

Although Ms. Orange believed that there was a right time and a wrong time to use either Standard English or Ebonics, she expected the students in her Social Studies class to turn in their papers in Standard English. She explained:

I think there is a right time and a wrong time to use this form of speech. The way that I teach my classroom is very informal, so they're speaking in Ebonics to me. I get that. But when I expect them to turn in their written work, it is supposed to be written in pure out clean Webster English.

Ms. Yellow, a Language Arts/English teacher, explained that she taught her class in a very informal way but insisted on the use of Standard English. She highlighted her explanation with an example of a Black girl in her English class:

I don't think intelligent is the word. I think you're talking about societal expectations, culture, jobs and acceptance. I have a girl, she's a black girl, she's very bright, and her English is terrible. And I said, you know, to me, it's not paralleling her intelligence. And for her to be successful, however you're defining this, she needs to upgrade her speech. Is it okay in certain areas? Yeah. But not-- you know, society has standards, which are lower all the time, because the New York Times just had the front page, "The governor shouldn't have ran," instead of shouldn't have run. Oh, my God. That's in the New York Times. So we're debasing the front page! I said to somebody, "Look! Should have ran! That's terrible." You know, kids can say it. You don't say it in the New York Times on the front page.
Mr. Pink believed that one had nothing to do with the other and said:

I don’t think one thing has to do with the other. I think Ebonics is nothing more than a way to arrive at an identity, a uniqueness that they so cherish. And I think it’s very common in every other culture. You know, you speak Spanish in many different Latin countries, yet everybody speaks it in their own way, which helps them give, you know, as a Nicaraguan Spanish, or Mexican Spanish, or Cuban Spanish. And I think for the black male, it is nothing more than a way to preserve something unique within themselves, other than their skin color. So it’s a way to stand out, I guess. I don’t relate that with intelligence whatsoever.

Mr. Tan opined that the use of Ebonics did not symbolize that the Black males were not intelligent. He considered the code-switching between the two languages to be a sign of intelligence. He stated:

I think that the- the very intelligent--a very intelligent black person could turn Ebonics- Ebonics on and off depending on the- the surroundings. They could code-switch. If they say-- if- if it’s something that they’re attached to, that they completely cannot go any other-- with any other style of speech, but they’ve taught- they’ve been taught Ebonics and that’s what they know, well if they’re being taught because of their surroundings then-- because if they’ve been taught that because of their surroundings then they’re not so much at fault for knowing that, that being the only language they have. So just because they speak that doesn’t mean that they’re not smart. But if a student has-- or a black person has learned that on the street but also understands that there’s other ways, then that’s a bit more intelligent in my opinion.
Ms. Black embraced the thought that speaking Ebonics was like speaking a foreign language and opined that mainstream society did not share her beliefs. She said:

I love language so to me when a person uses Ebonics or slang I find it like a foreign language, and I respect it. It's like if I'm in the street somewhere in the city and somebody talks to me in their native tongue I am capable sometimes of responding in the same language. I don't think that it makes a person more intelligent or less intelligent it's just we all know how to speak when we're in certain situations. However, mainstream society may not always share that sensitivity.

Ms. Brown concurred with her colleagues and believed that while there was a correct place and time to speak Ebonics and cautioned her students with its use, it did not measure someone’s intelligence. She commented:

I can tell you that in the world that we live in the Ebonics is considered very poor, but I don't think it measures a person on who they are and their intelligence. I know a lot of people that they know how to separate their environments. And just because in one way you're speaking a certain manner to your friends that doesn't mean that that's the same way you're going to express yourself somewhere else. And what I tell my students all the time is, "With me you guys can speak anyway, anyway that you feel comfortable, that's fine with me," but I always try to teach them there's always a correct place where you can speak Ebonics and you can carry on and do whatever you want with your friends, but in the real world because there are guidelines out there you kind of have to be able to follow it. And actually I think that makes them more intelligent that they can switch off between the areas that they're in.

Mr. White, a Haitian-American male, believed that the Black male students used Ebonics in their everyday speech “they
still ha[d] a chance of being intelligent. It's just the matter of fact that you’re challenging them in that area to be intelligent.” He continued to talk about his use of Ebonics. He stated:

Like for instance, myself. I'm still stuck in a little slang. But I'm always trying to catch myself before I say it. But sometimes, you know, I'm just going off the top of my head. It just comes out. So I mean, I—you can still try to be intelligent even with your Ebonics, but you have to try it yourself to control it. I mean, it's within you to control how you talk, how you speak, how you do everything.

**Society’s View of Black Males’ Intelligence through the teachers’ perspective**

Regarding society’s views of Black males’ intelligence, I wanted to capture this phenomenon from these teachers’ perspective. As I probed the teachers for various answers from my interview-guided questions, I found out from a few of the teachers their perspective of how society viewed Black males. The following teachers spoke extensively about their perceptions. Mr. Pink opined:

I think that’s consequential. That’s not physiological. I think, you know, I think when we look at the evolution and the history of our country and the black male in society in most countries, it is a misrepresentation due to a thousand different reasons having to do with the way the country perceives their citizens, or use their citizens to benefit their society. In other words, because the black man for so many years has been discriminated upon, and being looked down upon, I think we still have the remnants of that perception. And I think it goes both ways. I think sometimes the black man himself, in my opinion,
promotes without even noticing that same lack of intell-- that same misinterpretation, the same stereotype. And I think, you know, at the same time, I congratulate those who have been able to sort of move beyond that stereotype and I tell every one of my black male students, and I’ve told them before, you’re representing whether you know it or not, a generation. You’re representing-- whether you know this or not, whether you want to or not, you are speaking on behalf of a certain group of people. Much the same, me, as a Latino, whether I know this or not, my successes or my failures are gonna add in a positive or negative light, those of my culture or my race, however the heck you want to define that. Primarily, especially in the--because we do not--America’s not defined by the Latino or by the black. We’re not part of that definition. We’re sort of included in the definition but we’re not defined by that definition. So either we promote to the good or to the bad of that.

Mr. Tan suggested that he believed society had low expectations for Black males. However, he mentioned that society was also opened to the belief that Black males could be smart too. He stated:

Yeah, I think society has low expectations towards black males, not because they don’t think that a black person can be extremely intelligent, it’s about numbers. It’s a-- it’s a-- maybe a pre-conceived ideas, like a first impression, but then can change. I think society is very open to say oh, well no, this person might be black but is very smart. But the first-- the the impulse would be to-- to think the other way. And then in terms of the numbers, the amount of-- of people, they will probably say oh, I’m sure there’s-- if there’s 100 black people there’s gonna be one or two that are smarter. If there’s 100 white people there’s gonna be more that are smart. But they’ll-- they’ll-- I don’t think they’ll associate that just with the color of the skin. And the thing is that they really value--they-- they put it in terms of school success many times. And there’s a lot of young black students who are very, very, very gifted yet they don’t have the work ethics, they don’t have the
school mentality or the academics that might’ve come from maybe a family that just did not have that or they don’t offer that to them. And then they come in school and they’re not successfully— successful academically but they are very gifted.

Ms. Orange commented that:

personal experience has taught me that black males are looked upon as the lowest of the branch in our educational society. And may it be the way they dress that they portray them like that, may it be the way they speak—all these things factor into other people looking at them and thinking that there’s just nothing there, that person is just automatically going to be a hustler or a street person.

Teachers’ Perceptions of Participating Black Male Students’ Intelligence

A central concern of this study was the perceptions that these teachers held for their Black male students. The teachers thought that their Black male students were all intelligent and gave clear comments regarding how they themselves perceived these Black males. Further, teachers’ descriptions of their students matched with the Black male students’ self-rating on Howard Gardner’s Survey assessment instrument. I was able to capture their feeling through the use of interviews. Here was what I found:

Ms. Blue on Carter (Naturalistic Intelligence)

Ms. Blue thought that all her students were intelligent and believed that there was something unique about each one. She remarked:
In my case, I think all of my students are intelligent. There’s something about each and every one of them that shows you that they’re intelligent. I’m an English teacher. All of my classes revolve around literature or grammar or some aspects of it. Yet, I have a young man in my classroom who looks at life a whole lot differently, one who may say, “I want to focus on religion,” yet it’s an English class. That’s where his intelligence is. Another one’s focus may be athletics and that’s where their intelligence is. Whether it’s innate or not, you begin to see all these different areas come up from them. You can look at that and applaud their intelligence.

Ms. Blue thought that Carter was intelligent and loved the way he demonstrated his intelligence through self-analysis. She believed that he was a peace-keeper gave her perception of his intelligence.

He is absolutely wonderful. A very sweet, very endearing young man. He carries a lot of the qualities that we’ve kind of discarded. But in regards to intelligence, it’s a matter of I see the light that goes on when we’re studying literature and the way that he turns around and analyzes the material. Whereas, most of the other kids will just sit back and have you spoon feed them the information. He doesn’t want that. That, to me, I look at that as part of his intelligence. This goes a little bit deeper. Let’s get into this. Why aren’t we going into it deeper? That’s one of the things that I love about him, his ability to self-analyze. Overall, just-- and this may have nothing to do with intelligence, but the fact that he’s caring and compassionate. That, to me, also as a part of being a young person or being a part of the human race equates with your intelligence, seeing above and beyond, to be a peacemaker or peacekeeper.

Ms. Orange on Carter (Naturalistic Intelligence)

Ms. Orange remarked about Carter’s feelings of confinement in the classroom. She commented that he was
naturalistic (one of Howard Gardner’s Multiple Intelligences). She summed up his intelligence like this:

Let's see, he is book smart, but I feel like he feels confined in a classroom. He's outgoing; he's very talkative, very persuasive-- we call him the "ladies' man." He's naturalistic; he's just someone who does not benefit from sitting in a classroom all day. He's someone who benefits from going out and experiencing. And that doesn't make him any less smart than someone who reads a book all day.

Mr. Pink on Junior (Visual-Spatial Intelligence)

Addressing intelligence was not the only think Mr. Pink remarked about Junior. He talked about his self-esteem. He believed that Junior was very intelligent and had lots of potential. He declared:

He’s very intelligent. He has a lot of potential, because intelligence without-- intelligence is also something you help grow or nurture. You have the potential, like I said, you’re a great problem-solver, but problem solving and knowledge go hand-in-hand as you grow and as you develop your own intelligence, you become more knowledgeable, which then makes it easier to problem solve because of that foundation.

He added:

I think he feels very good about himself, but like I said, without-- I don’t know another way to say this other than he has a lot of potential, but also has-- puts out a lot of lip service that doesn’t always back his potential up. So regardless of how intelligent you are, it is how you use that intelligence that inevitably matters. And he’s not using it as effectively as he could use it. And that’s where I was arriving at when I said, possibly-- don’t quote me on this-- but it could possibly have a lot to do with his normal environment.
In sum, Mr. Pink included additional comments on Junior’s personality, intelligence and use of Ebonics. He stated:

I think he would disagree sometimes. [Junior] is an interesting individual. This student is a very interesting individual. In fact, if it’s still around, there’s a CD-- he had his final today. This student, to me, is a classic case of intelligent, yet without a good support mechanism. He is very bright. When all those stereotypes you brought out about the black male, I think [Junior] defeats all of them in the sense that he doesn’t use Ebonics, he’s not your typical black male in that sense. You know, and all the other stereotypes. He doesn’t dress to the thing, yet, I know his environment is that he’s surrounded by-- his community’s like that. Yet, whether he wants to or not, that innate desire to be curious and intelligent has been misguided by circumstance. Some beyond my-- that I don’t even know about. You know? That’s very environmental.

Mr. Gray on Roy (Mathematical-Logical Intelligence)

Interviewing these teachers was much of a challenge. I had to convince them with educational gifts in order to get them to spare some time for the interviews. Of all the teachers, Mr. Gray was adamantly reluctant to be taped, much less to be interviewed at all. But after much deliberation, he conceded to an interview with me writing as he spoke.

Mr. Gray told me during the interview his perceptions of Roy. He believed that Roy was very hard on himself and had the ability to “think on his feet.” He expressed to me that Roy, at times, felt that he had to get everything he does right all the time. He stated that Roy was intelligent
in what he knew in mathematics. Answering the questions I had prepared, Mr. Gray’s attitude was very pleasing in responding and talking about Roy. He also mentioned that he believed Roy to be very analytical and was “able to connect A with B with C.” Mr. Gray’s perception of Roy’s intelligence was positive. He saw Roy as a student who remembered what he had learned, made connections, and saw beyond the obvious.

**Ms. Green on Roy (Mathematical-Logical Intelligence)**

Ms. Green believed that Roy was highly intelligent and motivated because he did so well in foreign language and mathematics. She stated:

I think he’s very intelligent. He’s <inaudible> in math in particular class with foreign language, math and foreign language to hand in hand. It’s the same side of the brain working, I believe, because from my own experience as a math teacher and he is highly intelligent, there is no question about it. I believe somebody that does well in math is intelligent. If they have the ability to do math on the higher plane, I definitely think they are intelligent. Well, he listens and he grasps it immediately. Whenever any new skills that I am teaching in a year, he takes it and puts it together, he processes it in his head and he just shoots out the answers. He is bright and he is very, how would you say, his attitude as well is what helps him out. He is motivated.

**Mr. Tan on Steve (Interpersonal Intelligence)**

Mr. Tan thought that Steve was very talented as an actor and a sociable student. However, as his science teacher, Mr. Tan believed that Steve could improve his
science grade from a B to an A if he were to commit himself more to science. About Steve, he said:

He’s very, very, very talented. I mean he’s an actor. He’s a performer. He’s extremely sociable, nice. So he can remember dialogues, monologues, write them down, create them, create songs. I’ve seen-- I’ve seen-- his gifts are very evident. In science class he- he’s a B student who could, I think, probably could rise up to the A level if he were to commit himself more to that, but I think his energy’s somewhere else. And I completely respect that ‘cause I know he’s not going to be a chemist or a scientist, okay. And I value that and I’m going to support him. And as long as he responds to my class and gets through the requirements that the- the curriculum has asked him to do then I actually like to cherish more of his gifts and try to bring him up in and associate it with a curriculum. And I- and I think he’s- he’s done a great job this year with that.

Ms. Black on Steve (Interpersonal Intelligence)

Ms. Black believed that Steve was super intelligent and creative. She thought that he was also an exceptional student when it came to working in groups with others. He gave her comments about him and stated:

That student is outstanding at working in groups. Always sensitive to not just his own needs, but the needs of the others in the group, a real nice balance, very open minded, doesn't look at ethnicity or anything about a person's background, just works with the person artistically. But at the same time comes prepared to group situations so that it's not just about what are we going to do, but he always has something to offer the group, his contribution. [He is] super intelligent, creative, great at problem solving, very-- works well independently, works well in groups, sensitive, kind and to me all those things combined make a person intelligent.
Ms. Brown on Tyrone (Intrapersonal Intelligence)

Ms. Brown commented about Tyrone’s intelligence stating that he was a very amiable and smart individual. She mentioned that he did not study much, but was good at computers. She explained this further and said that...

He is a very astute individual. He, from what I see, doesn't study much, so he tends to be a little bit more on the slack side, but as far as computers and things like that, which is like one of his big draws, he's so into it and he knows so much about it that it's like, wow! Well, he has-- he's very intelligent and his intelligent gears to the computers. And he's very intelligent, like smart with everything else, but you could just see where his love's at. He's kind of the worker that he gets to what he has to do, and he finishes, and he doesn't try to dilly-dally. It's not that he's not friendly. He's actually a very friendly student, very amiable, always trying to help people, but he knows what he has to do, so he gets down to work, does what he has to do and then he'll go out and mingle and things.

Ms. Brown on Ali (Bodily-Kinesthetic Intelligence)

Ms. Brown had the belief that Ali was intelligent, but said that it was difficult to say because he was so good at anything he pursued. She thought that he was very investigative and tried to get other students to join his business. He remarked about Ali in this way:

His intelligence? He's-- it's, like, hard to say 'cause he's just so well-rounded in so many things. Book-smart, I have no problem. He works hard in my class, and, you know, I throw a lot of chemistry stuff to them; he keeps on top of it. And then I do the whole teaching, “Okay. Well, I just taught you this. We’re gonna do it completely different. Explain it to me in a completely different manner.” And one of the
things I had them do was, in a group, they had to do a periodic table any way they wanted, and they constructed this whole thing out of blocks to make a periodic tables for me.

She added that:

He’s very much into the whole martial arts, and that’s one of his big points of his life. He loves it. And any time he has a chance to talk about it, he does. I also think he has a lot more-- he’s very book-smart, very intelligent, like, he has a very good balance of things. He’s always reading. You always see him reading, and you always see him-- he loves his martial arts, and I make fun of him-- well, not make fun of him, but we joke around. I tell him he’s the pink-- the brain of Pinky and the Brain ‘cause he always seems like he wants to dominate the world. I tell him he’s one of those that he’s most likely to rule the world ‘cause he’s always thinking of the next big thing, but he doesn’t wanna quick out of it. He works on making his own business, and he wants people to join, and he’s always investigating things. So he’s just a really well-rounded person.

Mr. White on Ali (Bodily-Kinesthetic Intelligence)

Mr. White believed that Ali was a laid-back student and slacked off in class at times. However, when it came to class, Mr. White opined that Ali was very intelligent. Here is an excerpt from the interview:

Let see. He's-- how can I say. In class, he's more-- I mean-- how can I say it. He's more of a laid-back student. But he doesn't lay back to where he slacks off. He lays back and he sits and he's watching. He doesn't ask questions. And that's the thing. If you don't ask questions it makes me wonder, but then when you get the work done, let me know something that you're doing this on your own. Even though you're not asking questions, you're reading the books and stuff. So he's more of a-- when it comes to class, he's very intelligent. And how he acts is like, he wants to learn, you know. He wants to learn, he wants to
improve his knowledge and the understanding of the material and the concepts. What was the other question you had asked?

**On Jason (Musical Intelligence)**

Unfortunately, Ms. Yellow was not available for an interview focusing on Jason because of time constraints on her. The interviews were conducted towards the end of the school year. Teachers were preparing exams. Thus, Ms. Yellow was not able to give me her perceptions of intelligence about Jason. The second teacher for Jason did not return my email regarding interviewing for the study.

**Conclusion**

Both teachers and students expressed their views that all people are intelligent, intelligence is multifaceted, and that these seven students are all intelligent in various ways. Students attributed their intelligence to both nature and nurture. In addition, the teachers view of the students’ intelligence matched the students’ strengths as identified by the Multiple Intelligence survey.
CHAPTER 5

DISCUSSION

Lincoln & Guba (1985) and Harry, Sturges, and Klingner (2005) discussed the intent of naturalistic inquiry as developing a “pattern theory” where the researcher looks for categories that form a pattern that becomes the culminating feature of the full study. In grounded theory, Strauss & Corbin (1990), suggested that the development of a theory is the culminating aspect of a study that represents a visual representation of relationships among concepts. As mentioned in Chapter 3, these data have led to some promising theoretical implications that can contribute to a substantive theory of Black males’ perception of intelligence as related to Howard Gardner’s Multiple Intelligence Theory.

In Chapter 2, I cited an account by Tatum, in which she recounts part of the life of Malcolm X from his autobiography. Tatum explained how Malcolm X was an A student, despite living in a foster home. In discussing his career with his English teacher, Malcolm X decided that he wanted to become a lawyer. His teacher responded that his goal of becoming a lawyer was not a realistic one for a ‘nigger’. In yet another example, where a substitute teacher was covering a class in a school where the majority
of students attend college after graduation, one young black male was told by the substitute that he should consider going to a community college instead. The substitute teacher had recommended four-year colleges to all the other students (Tatum, 2003).

These scenarios are typical of the ‘lived’ experiences of many black male students; where the message is very clear – that they are not intelligent enough, as are their white counterparts, to choose either the profession of their liking or to attend the college of their choosing, simply because of the color of their skin and the negative perceptions, hold by many, of Black males.

Researcher’s Reflection

As an educated professional Black male in the field of foreign language education who has experienced many of the negative stereotypes expressed in the aforementioned scenarios, the findings in this study highlight and reflect my own struggle to be seen as both educated and intelligent, not only in society, but also within the field of education. Being a Black male proved a useful tool in the process of doing field work for this study. It allowed a seamless entry into the world of these young black males and their teachers. This study has opened my eyes to the many psychological underpinnings that Black male students
experience in terms of being seen as intelligent beings. Through this study, I have been awakened to the realities of what racial discrimination, the history of slavery, and legal segregation have done to cause the negative perceptions of Black males as less intelligent. I have also been stimulated by these resilient Black males’ positive and energetic self-perceptions of intelligence amid such psychologically institutionalized negative stereotypes of black manhood. I wanted my research to shed light on these Black males’ situation; their struggle to be seen as viable intelligent Black males worthy of respect and recognition. To that end, I conducted this study.

**Interpreting and Reflecting upon the Findings**

In discussing the findings, I will begin by reflecting on some of the key strands of the literature I read on Black male identity and achievement, and will then focus on the two theories that provided the conceptual framework for the study: Spencer’s PVEST and Brönfenbrenner’s Ecological Systems Theory.

These theories are helpful in my attempt to answer the broad question: How does what I have learned contribute to Black male students’ intelligence and the possibility of Multiple Intelligence Theory to enhance Black male students’ academic achievement?
My data echoed many of the theories reported in my review of the literature, while others were either not evident or not explicitly expressed. In some cases, my reflections prompted me to wonder whether further study might have revealed stronger connections. Particularly absent from the student data were references to what Fordham & Ogbu (1986) have referred to as “acting white” as a kind of balancing act that Black adolescents feel they must use if they are to be successful, yet also protect themselves from marginalization from their ethnic group. A contrary view to this has been described by O’Connor (1997), whose research found that successful Black adolescents were able to maintain a strong sense of ethnic identity without having to take on the “raceless persona” that Fordham (1988) had described.

In the case of this study, the students did not speak of being faced with these dilemmas. On the other hand, these male students were performing at an adequate, but not high academic level, so they may not be an equivalent group to the students in the aforementioned studies. In addition, the more limited focus on views of intelligence in this study did not allow much room for explicit exploration of issues of ethnic identity and how these related to the
students’ experiences in the broader arenas of family, neighborhood, or community.

As described in Chapter 2, the literature on Black male students’ achievement makes much of the process of “oppositional” or “resistance” strategies that some students use as a defense mechanism against the devaluing of ethnic identities. This approach was not evident in this study, which could be explained by several factors.

In particular, I must note that since all students’ participation was voluntary, it is likely that students who responded would be those who are more comfortable with their school identities and with the idea of doing well. It could also be that their approach to schooling might be related to the socioeconomic level of the neighborhood and families of these students, which while not of high status, seemed to qualify as working/middle class

**Implications of Spencer’s PVEST for these Data**

Turning to Spencer’s PVEST model, I will address how each aspect of the model might apply to the findings of this study.

**Net vulnerability.** Black male students are vulnerable to many risks that can lead to adverse outcomes. Adverse outcomes such as academic underachievement (Ferguson, 2003; Steele, 1992; Garibaldi, 1992; Dunkin & Doenau, 1987) and
negative treatment from teachers (Porter, 1997; Kunjufu, 2002) affect the way Black males see themselves in terms of intelligence within the school (Brönfenbrenner’s microsystem). The data showed that schooling served as a protective factor. The protective factors that the Black males in this study used were centered in their schooling (i.e., teachers’ and students’ awareness of the multifaceted nature of intelligence). They received adequate academic grades and participated in various school functions and activities in order to offset the potential risks. Their teachers also served as protective factors.

Net stress engagement. In view of this study, net stress engagement refers to “the actual experience of situations as perceived by the individual that challenge the individual’s well being” (Spencer, Fegley, Harpalani and Seaton, 2004, p. 232). In addition, Steele’s stereotype threat (Steele & Aronson, 1995) also poses a risk and stress among Black males. The Black males in this study, ‘rose to the occasion’ and were resilient in debunking the stereotype of them being seen as less intelligent that their white counterparts. They achieved this through their teachers’ positive perceptions of them, and an intrinsic motivation to be recognized as intelligent Black men in society. Their teachers’ positive and nurturing attitudes
towards them and the views they hold in regard to multiple intelligence, as reflected in the interviews, served as support. Because the focus was on schooling, I did not focus on family and neighborhood background, which would also contribute to their experience.

Reactive coping. In response to stressors and in conjunction with support, the Black males employed reactive coping methods. They employed strategies that enabled them to be seen as intelligent Black males. As stated earlier, they achieved adequate academic standards, received outstanding commentaries from their teachers, used Standard English, and embodied multiple intelligences, as seen from their online assessment survey. Teachers commented that the Black male students worked hard and were very sociable. As the black male students in this study used these reactive coping mechanisms to counter the stress they perceived and received, they succeeded in developing positive emergent identities.

Emergent identities. According to Spencer et al. (2004), emergent identities “define how individuals view themselves within and between the various contexts of development” (p. 233). The allusion of contexts by Spencer et al. (2004) refers to Bronfenbrenner’s micro- and meso-systems. It is particularly within these two systems that
the Black male’s education and self-awareness, and identity begin to take shape. These Black males see themselves as intelligent and their teachers also see them as intelligent. Moreover, the teachers’ ability to note and appreciate the multifaceted nature of these students’ intelligence supported the emergence of their positive Black male identities.

Coping outcomes. Productive outcomes suggest competencies that include “high academic performance, positive relationships, and high self-esteem” (p. 233). These Black male students embody high self-esteem and think of themselves as intelligent Black males. Yet again, they receive adequate academic grades to counteract the potential for negative self-destructive behaviors.

In summary, the findings from this study support Spencer’s argument that, Spencer’s PVEST framework represents dynamic processes that continue throughout the life span as individuals balance new risks against protective factors, encounter new stressors (potentially offset by supports), establish more expansive coping strategies, and redefine how they view themselves, which also impacts how others view them. Unresolved issues within one life stage influence the character and level of stress experienced and also impact future coping and identity formation processes (Erikson, 1968). PVEST aims not only to capture this developmental process but also to place it within the broader social, cultural, and historical contexts (p. 233).
FIGURE 5.1 Phenomenological variant of ecological systems theory (PVEST; Spencer, 1995, revised in 2004).

Connection to Gardner's Theory of Multiple Intelligences

The seven Black male student participants were identified as having embodied many of the multiple intelligences as expressed by noted psychologist Howard Gardner. As outlined above, Gardner's Multiple Intelligence Theory connects well with the PVEST model by providing protective factors for these Black male students.
Although I could not ascertain exactly how or whether the curriculum reflects MI concepts, however, these perceptions were noted by the Black male students and teachers.

The definitions of intelligence and the knowledge of the concept of Multiple Intelligences by both teachers and Black male students suggest the need for its incorporation into the curriculum in order to help address Black male students’ underachievement.

**Dilemmas and Limitations in the Study**

This study has had a tremendous impact on me. During the course of investigation, I learned much about the process and procedures entailed in doing qualitative grounded theory research. Further, I have come to know, on a more personal level, many of the participants of this study. Attempting to undertake such a daunting and complex study as this, could not be possible without careful attention to information, details, steps and procedures that were needed to add saliency to the study itself. However, I accepted the challenge.

**Limitations**

They were many things that could have been done if time were not an issue. This non-exhaustive list represents
some of the limitations and dilemmas I have encountered in trying to carry out this study.

- Only semi-structured in-depth interviews were done with participants. Observations of Black male students and their teachers would add another dimension to the study.

- Given the limited amount of time available for the completion of this study, true prolonged engagement was not achieved. Nonetheless, the semi-structured interview process did achieve saturation of data with similar themes showing up over and over again.

- ATLAS.ti was only used to identify initial open codes. A more thorough use of the ATLAS.ti software could have proven useful in assisting in the connection of conceptual categories and themes.

- Choosing at least 4 teachers of each student participant would give broader perspective of teachers’ perceptions of intelligence and of the Black male students.

- Interviewing the peers of the Black male students would give a stronger reflection of their lived experience.
The two overarching questions presented in Chapter 1 (p. 4) were the concerns that drove my study. In that sense, they are overarching. This study could not address the overarching questions, so I narrowed it down to the seven research questions.

**Dilemmas**

Two main dilemmas continue to puzzle me as I reflected on these findings. First, why did the Multiple Intelligence survey not provide any students categorized as having a verbal-linguistic orientation? Second, would a lower-income sample of students have offered a different pattern of perspectives on intelligence?

**Verbal-linguistic orientation.** I did not obtain any Black male student with verbal-linguistic area of strength on Howard Gardner’s Multiple Intelligence Scale.

During the initial phase of data collection, the Black male students were given a multiple intelligence assessment survey. This survey indicated the area of strength that each student held in regard to Howard Gardner’s Theory of Multiple Intelligence. During the interviews, the Black male students were very verbally expressive. Yet, none of them were identified as having verbal-linguistic intelligence as his primary area of strength. Moreover, ten of the students in the initial survey were categorized as
bodily-kinesthetic. There is a contradiction here. I believe that the problem lies with the assessment instrument. The specific verbal-linguistic questions on the survey instrument need further investigation. Here are some examples of survey items (Appendix H) that I believed contributed to a no-finding for verbal-linguistic orientation among these Black males:

- Item #1 – I pride myself on having a large vocabulary.
- Item #9 - I enjoy learning new words and do so easily.
- Item #17 – I love to read and do daily.
- Item #41 – I read and enjoy poetry and occasionally write my own.

Items such as these seem likely to suggest school-based verbal-linguistic skills, which the students may not see themselves as having, even though they may have significant verbal-linguistic abilities.

Dunn & Dunn (1993) posited that if students’ main perceptual strengths are not matched with the teaching methods used in the school, then they would have difficulty learning. This has major implications for solving the dropout problem that exists in schools today. Hale-Benson (1986) argued that Black children identify with having a more relational style of learning. They are more bodily-kinesthetic. Bodily-kinesthetic learners are the primary
candidates for school failure (Dunn & Dunn, 1993). Black males, in particular, need to move, to feel, to do, and to touch. In looking back at the results of their online assessment survey, bodily-kinesthetic intelligence was high among the seven Black male students with verbal-linguistic falling a few places behind.

Despite these observations, it seems likely that Black males’ verbal-linguistic abilities are underestimated (Labov, 1973) in the survey results for this group of students. Labov (2004) has argued this cogently:

inner-city children do not necessarily have inferior mothers, language, or experience, but that the language, family style, and ways of living of inner-city children are significantly different from the standard culture of the classroom, and that this difference is not always properly understood by teachers and psychologists. Linguists believe that we must begin to adapt our school system to the language and learning styles of the majority in the inner-city schools. They argue that everyone has the right to learn the standard languages and culture in reading and writing (and speaking, if they are so inclined); but this is the end result, not the beginning of the educational process. They do not believe that the standard language is the only medium in which teaching and learning can take place, or that the first step in education is to convert all first-graders to replicas of white middle-class suburban children (p. 134).

Demographics of the sample. I wanted to conduct the study in schools that were located in inner-city, with a predominantly black population. This was not made possible because I did not receive approval from three predominantly
black inner-city schools’ administrations. Conducting this study in a predominantly black school population in the inner-city would add saliency to the results of the study because it is in those schools that most of the negative stereotypes of Black males lie. This raises the question of whether a sample of Black males from lower-income backgrounds, in a predominantly Black school, might have expressed less positive views.

**Possibility for Future Studies**

Having viewed the limitations of this study, further studies of this question should investigate:

- participant observations (i.e., classroom behaviors)
- a sample based in low-income, inner-city schools
- 9\(^{th}\)-12\(^{th}\) grade Black male students
- a more recursive interview with a focus on finding out how accurate the assessment survey was

**Significance and Implications of the Study**

Although many researchers have documented the achievement gap between Blacks and Whites, and the challenges that Black males face in schools, no one has focused on Black males in terms of Howard Gardner’s model of Multiple Intelligence Theory combined with Brönfenbrenner’s Ecological Systems Theory and Spencer’s PVVEST model. The results of this study will extend what is
known about the applicability of Howard Gardner’s model of Multiple Intelligence Theory, Brönfenbrenner’s Ecological Systems Theory and Spencer’s PVEST model.

Because schooling is the place where the playing field for Black male students can be leveled, incorporating the above-mentioned theories and models will improve our understanding of the factors that contribute to or detract from Black male students’ educational attainment, self-perception of intelligence, and upward social mobility. By catering to their learning preferences, multiple intelligences, and providing for them support, within the context of their ecological systems and academic careers, Black males can come to see schooling as their surest route to academic achievement and upward social mobility.
REFERENCES


Williams, P. A. (2004). Space, identity, and interaction: Why are the black students sitting together in the University Center? Unpublished manuscript.

APPENDIX A

INTERVIEW GUIDE QUESTIONS: BLACK MALE STUDENTS

Introduction: As you know, I’m doing a study of different ideas about intelligence. After I went over all the responses of all the participants, I selected 7 students randomly (meaning I chose each name just by chance—out of a bag). So, in these follow-up interviews, I want to go a bit deeper in understanding what these 7 students think of the meaning of intelligence.

1. How do you think most people define intelligence?

Prompts: (in response to interviewee’s reply):
- Give me an example of people who think that way?
- Do you think most students in this school would define it like that?
- What about people other than students? e.g., members of your family, friends.

Prompts: (If definition is linked to schooling):
- Can people be successful in other areas who are not successful in school?
- Are those people intelligent too?
- Does a person have to be intelligent to be successful in school? Give examples.

2. Do you think all people are intelligent?

If answer is yes, so how do you know when a person is intelligent? What do you base your impressions on?

Prompts: So is it related to the way they talk (use of standard or non-standard English? Their ideas? Their behavior in a social group? Their grades? Their social class?

3. Give me examples of jobs that require someone to be intelligent:
Some possible answers they might give
- Doctors
- Lawyers
- Engineer
- Clerk
4. Do you think intelligence is something people are born with or is it developed out of their experience? Do you think it’s changeable?

5. How would you describe your own intelligence?
   - Give me a couple of examples.
   - Where do you think this comes from?
   - How do you think other people (friends, classmates, teachers, etc.) would describe your intelligence?
   - How do you think your opinion of yourself affects you?

   **Prompts:** How does it make you feel: feel bad?, popular? Feel good? Feel important?

6. The survey you did was based on a list of types of intelligence, described by a researcher named Howard Gardner. Your responses on the survey showed that your strongest intelligence is _____________. (one of Gardner's seven intelligences). In your opinion, is that a fair estimate?

   **Prompts:** Why?
   - If student answers no, then why not? Which of the seven intelligences would be a fair estimate of your perceive intelligence strength based upon Gardner’s MI theory?

7. Let’s go back to what you told me about intelligence. What other types of intelligence do you think you have?

   **Prompt:** Give me an example.

   Do you think these intelligences have been recognized by others?

8. You have given permission to talk with two of your teachers. The next step for me is to get their responses to some of the same questions I just asked you.
APPENDIX B

INTERVIEW GUIDE QUESTIONS: TEACHERS

**Introduction:** As you know, I’m doing a study of different ideas about intelligence. After I went over all the responses of all the student participants, I selected 2 teachers: one being you, randomly (meaning I chose each name just by chance-out of a bag). So, in these follow-up interviews, I want to go a bit deeper in understanding what the teachers of these 7 students think of the meaning of intelligence

1. How would you define intelligence?

2. Do you think that everyone is intelligent?

   If answer is yes, so how do you know when a person is intelligent? What do you base your impressions on?

   **Prompts:** So is it related to the way they talk (use of standard or non-standard English? Their ideas? Their behavior in a social group? Their grades? Their social class?

3. Can you give me examples of jobs that require someone to be intelligent.

   Some possible answers they might give:
   - Doctors
   - Lawyers
   - Engineer
   - Clerks
   - Mechanics
   - Construction Worker, etc.

   Ask why? (for their selection)

4. Do you think intelligence is something people are born with or is it developed out of their experience? Do you think it’s changeable?

5. How would you describe ________________ (student’s name) intelligence in response to your definition of intelligence?

212
6. What other types of intelligence do you think exist?  
Prompt: Can you give me an example?
APPENDIX C

PARENT CONSENT FORM
(Online Survey - Assessment: Find Your Strength)

Title of Study: Exploring Teachers’ and Black Male Students’ Perceptions of Intelligence

We are asking your permission for your son to participate in a study that will help in understanding Black male high school students’ views of their own intelligence. The main purpose of this project is to learn how these students view the concept of intelligence and how this understanding could lead to them achieving academic success.

Your son was randomly selected from all eleventh-grade black male students in his school to participate in this first stage of this study. We will collect information about your child through an online survey that asks students to choose which of various strategies they use as they learn. These strategies will help us see which type of intelligence the students are using. This survey is NOT an intelligence test. It does NOT seek to test your child for any IQ levels. It is merely an assessment that will indicate to the researchers your son’s opinion of his own learning strengths. If you would like to see the online assessment survey, we can make it available to you. The survey will last approximately thirty (30) minutes.

After 50 students have done the survey, the researcher will then select seven students for an additional interview. Your child may or may not be selected as one of the seven to continue in the study. However, if your child is selected to continue, we will send you a second consent form asking permission to interview him individually.

We do not anticipate any risks or direct benefit to your child for taking part in the study. Your child can skip any question he does not wish to answer.

Your child’s participation in this research is completely voluntary. You and your child are free to withdraw from the study at any time. There will not be any consequences and your child’s grades will not be affected from either not participating or stopping participation.
All information with your child’s name will be kept securely in the researchers’ office in a locked cabinet and will be destroyed after the study is completed. The investigators and their assistants will consider your records confidential to the extent permitted by law. The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) may request to review and obtain copies of your records. Your records may also be reviewed for audit purposes by authorized University or other agents who will be bound by the same provisions of confidentiality.

You will receive a summary of the study’s findings with ideas for improving the educational process for your son.

If you have any questions about the study or your participation in the study, please call Dr. Beth Harry, Principal Investigator, at (305) 284-5363 or Patrick A. Williams at (305) 691-1300. If you have any questions about your rights as a research participant, contact the University of Miami Human Subjects Research Office at (305) 243-3195.

You will receive a copy of this consent form for your records.

YES, I want my child to participate in this study.
YES ________

NO, I DO NOT want my child to participate in this study.
NO ________

Name of Parent/Guardian (Please print)
___________________________________________

Signature of Parent/Guardian
_____________________

Date
__________________________

Name of Student (Please print)
**APPENDIX D**

**PARENT CONSENT FORM**

**(Interviews)**

**Title of Study:** Exploring Teachers’ and Black Male Students’ Perceptions of Intelligence

We are asking your permission for your son to participate in the second part of a study that will help in understanding Black male high school students’ views of their own intelligence. The main purpose of this project is to learn how these students view the concept of intelligence and how this understanding could lead to them achieving academic success.

Your previous consent form allowed your son to fill out the on-line survey. His answers to the survey placed him in a group of seven students whom we are inviting to continue in the second part of the study. We will interview your child to collect information about your child’s school experience and how his opinions of intelligence have helped shaped his schooling. The interview questions are available for your review. Interview sessions will last approximately thirty (30) minutes to one hour. Answers given in the interviews by your child will not be shared with his teachers. The interviews will be audio-taped but your child’s name will not be stated on the tape.

We do not anticipate any risks or direct benefit to your child for taking part in the study. Your child can skip any question he does not wish to answer.

Your child’s participation in this research is completely voluntary. You and your child are free to withdraw from the study at any time. There will not be any consequences and your child’s grades will not be affected from either not participating or stopping participation. Also, as a token of our appreciation for your son’s participation, he will receive a gift certificate for $20.

The tapes, and any information with your child’s name, will be kept securely in the researchers’ office in a locked cabinet. We will do everything to make sure this information is kept private to the extent we can under the law. These will be destroyed after the study is completed. The investigators and their assistants will consider your
records confidential to the extent permitted by law. The U.S Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) may request to review and obtain copies of your records. Your records may also be reviewed for audit purposes by authorized University or other agents who will be bound by the same provisions of confidentiality.

You will receive a summary of the study’s findings with ideas for improving the educational process.

If you have any questions about the study or your participation in the study, please call Dr. Beth Harry, Principal Investigator, at (305) 284-5363 or Patrick A. Williams at (305) 691-1300. If you have any questions about your rights as a research participant, contact the University of Miami Human Subjects Research Office at (305) 243-3195.

You will receive a copy of this consent form for your records

YES. I want my child to participate in this study.
YES  __________

NO. I DO NOT want my child to participate in this study.
NO  __________

_______________________________
Name of Parent/Guardian (Please print)

_______________________________
Signature of Parent/Guardian        Date

_______________________________
Name of Student (Please print)
Audio Taping

[   ] Please check here if you do not your child to be audio taped during the interview.

By signing this section you give consent for your child to be audio-taped during the interview.

_______________________________________
Name of Parent/Guardian (Please print)

_______________________________
Signature of Parent/Guardian           Date

________________________________  _____________
Name of Student (Please print)
APPENDIX E

STUDENT ASSENT FORM
(Online Survey – Assessment: Find Your Strength)

Title of Study: Exploring Teachers’ and Black Male Students’ Perceptions of Intelligence

We are asking you to participate in a study that will help in understanding Black male high school students’ views of their own intelligence. The main purpose of this project is to learn how these students view the concept of intelligence and how this understanding could lead to them achieving academic success.

You were randomly selected from all eleventh-grade black male students in your school to participate in this first stage of this study. We will collect information about you through an online survey that asks you to choose which of various strategies you use as you learn. These strategies will help us see which of the seven types of intelligence you are using. This survey is NOT an intelligence test. It does NOT seek to test you for any IQ levels. It is merely an assessment that will indicate to the researchers your opinion of your own learning strengths. If you would like to see the online assessment survey, we can make it available to you. The survey will last approximately thirty (30) minutes.

After 50 students have done the survey, the researcher will then select seven students. You may or may not be selected as one of the seven to continue in the study. However, if you are selected to continue, we will send you a second assent form asking permission to interview you individually.

We do not anticipate any risks or direct benefit to you for taking part in the study. You can skip any question you do not wish to answer.

Your participation in this research is completely voluntary. You are free to withdraw from the study at any time. There will not be any consequences and your grades will not be affected from either not participating or stopping participation. You will receive a summary of the study’s findings with ideas for improving the educational process.
Your responses to the online assessment survey will be printed out and will be kept securely in the researchers’ office in a locked cabinet. When we are finished with this study we will write a report about what was learned. This report will not include your name or that you were in the study.

If you have any questions about the study or your participation in the study, please call Dr. Beth Harry, Principal Investigator, at 305) 284-5363 or Patrick A. Williams at (305) 691-1300.

You may ask questions about the study at any time. Do you have any questions?

If you decide you want to be in this study, please sign your name.

I agree ______ I do not agree ______to participate in this study which I have read or which has been explained to me by Patrick Williams

___________________________________  ________
(Sign your name here)    (Date)

___________________________________  _________
(Signature of Person Obtaining Assent)  (Date)
APPENDIX F

STUDENT ASSENT FORM
(Interviews)

Title of Study: Exploring Teachers’ and Black Male Students’ Perceptions of Intelligence

We are asking you to participate in the second part of a study that will help in understanding Black male high school students’ views of their own intelligence. The main purpose of this project is to learn how these students view the concept of intelligence and how this understanding could lead to them achieving academic success.

Your previous assent form allowed you to fill out the on-line survey. Your responses to the survey placed you in a group of seven students whom we are inviting to continue in the second part of the study. You will be interviewed and asked questions about your school experience and how your perceptions of intelligence have helped shaped your schooling. The interview questions are available for your review. Interview sessions will last approximately thirty (30) minutes to one hour. The interviews will be audio-taped but your name will not be stated on the tape.

We do not anticipate any risks or direct benefit to you for taking part in the study. You can skip any question you do not wish to answer.

Your participation in this research is completely voluntary. You are free to withdraw from the study at any time. There will not be any consequences and your grades will not be affected from either not participating or stopping participation. You will receive a summary of the study’s findings with ideas for improving the educational process. Also, as a token of our appreciation for your participation, you will receive a gift certificate for $20.

The tapes, and any information with your name, will be kept securely in the researchers’ office in a locked cabinet. When we are finished with this study we will write a report about what was learned. This report will not include your name or that you were in the study.

If you have any questions about the study or your participation in the study, please call Dr. Beth Harry,
Principal Investigator, at 305) 284-5363 or Patrick A. Williams at (305) 691-1300.

You may ask questions about the study at any time.

Do you have any questions?

If you decide you want to be in this study, please sign your name.

I agree _____ I do not agree _____ to participate in this study which I have read or which has been explained to me by Patrick Williams.

__________________________________________________________________________
(Sign your name here) (Date)

__________________________________________________________________________
(Signature of Person Obtaining Assent) (Date)
APPENDIX G

TEACHER CONSENT FORM
(Interviews)

Title of Study: Exploring Teachers’ and Black Male Students’ Perceptions of Intelligence

We are asking you to participate in a study that will help in understanding Black male high school students’ views of their own intelligence. The main purpose of this project is to learn how these students view the concept of intelligence and how this understanding could lead to them achieving academic success.

One of your students was randomly selected from a group of eleventh-grade black males in his school to participate in this study. After completing an on-line survey regarding his views of his own intelligence, this student was then selected to be one of seven who will continue to the second phase of the study. We will collect information about your student by interviewing him. We will also interview two of his teachers, one of them being you. Answers given in the interview sessions by your student will not be shared with you. Likewise, your responses to interview questions will not be shared with your student. As part of the selection process, students were asked to select one teacher that knows them best, and another teacher was selected because that teacher is one of the students’ core subject (Mathematics, Language Arts/Reading, Science, or Social Studies) teachers. The interview will help us to understand your student’s school experience and how his perceptions of intelligence have helped shaped his schooling. The interview questions are available for your review. Interview sessions will last approximately thirty (30) minutes. The interviews will be audio-taped but your name will not be stated on the tape.

We do not anticipate any risks or direct benefit to your child for taking part in the study. Your child can skip any question he does not wish to answer.

The tapes, and any information with your name, will be kept securely in the researchers’ office in a locked cabinet. We will do everything to make sure this information is kept private to the extent we can under the law. These will be destroyed after the study is completed. The investigators
and their assistants will consider your records confidential to the extent permitted by law. The U.S Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) may request to review and obtain copies of your records. Your records may also be reviewed for audit purposes by authorized University or other agents who will be bound by the same provisions of confidentiality.

Your participation in this research is completely voluntary. You are free to withdraw from the study at any time. There will not be any consequences from either not participating or stopping participation and your standing at your school will not be affected. You will receive a summary of the study’s findings with ideas for improving the educational process.

If you have any questions about the study or your participation in the study, please call Dr. Beth Harry, Principal Investigator, at the 305) 284-5363 or Patrick A. Williams at (305) 691-1300. If you have any questions about your rights as a research participant, contact the University of Miami Human Subjects Research Office at (305) 243-3195.

You will receive a copy of this consent form for your records

_________________________   ________________
Signature of Participant              Date

__________________________   ________________
Person Obtaining Consent    Date

**AUDIOTAPING**

[   ] Please check here if you do not want the interview audiotaped.

By signing this section you give consent to be audiotaped during the interview.

_________________________     __________
Signature of Participant      Date

__________________________    ______
Signature of person obtaining informed consent  Date
APPENDIX H

ONLINE SURVEY ASSESSMENT: FIND YOUR STRENGTH

This form can help you determine which intelligences are strongest for you. If you're a teacher or tutor, you can also use it to find out which intelligences your learner uses most often. Many thanks to Dr. Terry Armstrong for graciously allowing us to use his questionnaire.

http://literacyworks.org/mi/assessment/findyourstrengths.html

Instructions: Read each statement carefully. Choose one of the five buttons for each statement indicating how well that statement describes you.

1 = Statement does not describe you at all
2 = Statement describes you very little
3 = Statement describes you somewhat
4 = Statement describes you pretty well
5 = Statement describes you exactly

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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. I pride myself on having a large vocabulary.</td>
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<tr>
<td>2. Using numbers and numerical symbols is easy for me.</td>
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<tr>
<td>3. Music is very important to me in daily life.</td>
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<tr>
<td>4. I always know where I am in relation to my home.</td>
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<tr>
<td>5. I consider myself an athlete.</td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

225
6. I feel like people of all ages like me.

7. I often look for weaknesses in myself that I see in others.

8. The world of plants and animals is important to me.

9. I enjoy learning new words and do so easily.

10. I often develop equations to describe relationships and/or to explain my observations.

11. I have wide and varied musical interests including both classical and contemporary.

12. I do not get lost easily and can orient myself with either maps or landmarks.

13. I feel really good about being physically fit.

14. I like to be with all different types of people.

15. I often think about the influence I have on others.

16. I enjoy my pets.

17. I love to read and do so daily.

18. I often see mathematical ratios in the world around me.
19. I have a very good sense of pitch, tempo, and rhythm.

20. Knowing directions is easy for me.

21. I have good balance and eye-hand coordination and enjoy sports which use a ball.

22. I respond to all people enthusiastically, free of bias or prejudice.

23. I believe that I am responsible for my actions and who I am.

24. I like learning about nature.

25. I enjoy hearing challenging lectures.

26. Math has always been one of my favorite classes.

27. My music education began when I was younger and still continues today.

28. I have the ability to represent what I see by drawing or painting.

29. My outstanding coordination and balance let me excel in high-speed activities.

30. I enjoy new or unique social situations.
<table>
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<tr>
<th>Number</th>
<th>Statement</th>
<th>Rating</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>31</td>
<td>I try not to waste my time on trivial pursuits.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>32</td>
<td>I enjoy caring for my house plants.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>33</td>
<td>I like to keep a daily journal of my daily experiences.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>34</td>
<td>I like to think about numerical issues and examine statistics.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>35</td>
<td>I am good at playing an instrument and singing.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>36</td>
<td>My ability to draw is recognized and complimented by others.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>37</td>
<td>I like being outdoors, enjoy the change in seasons, and look forward to different physical activities each season.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>38</td>
<td>I enjoy complimenting others when they have done well.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>39</td>
<td>I often think about the problems in my community, state, and/or world and what I can do to help rectify any of them.</td>
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<tr>
<td>40</td>
<td>I enjoy hunting and fishing.</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>41</td>
<td>I read and enjoy poetry and occasionally write my own.</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>42</td>
<td>I seem to understand things around me through a mathematical sense.</td>
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<tr>
<td>43. I can remember the tune of a song when asked.</td>
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<tr>
<td>44. I can easily duplicate color, form, shading, and texture in my work.</td>
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<tr>
<td>45. I like the excitement of personal and team competition.</td>
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<tr>
<td>46. I am quick to sense in others dishonesty and desire to control me.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>47. I am always totally honest with myself.</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>48. I enjoy hiking in natural places.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>49. I talk a lot and enjoy telling stories.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>50. I enjoy doing puzzles.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>51. I take pride in my musical accomplishments.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>52. Seeing things in three dimensions is easy for me, and I like to make things in three dimensions.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>53. I like to move around a lot.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>54. I feel safe when I am with strangers.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>55. I enjoy being alone and thinking about my life and myself.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
56. I look forward to visiting the zoo.

Find my strength!
## APPENDIX I

### AN EXAMPLE OF RESULTS OF ONLINE SURVEY ASSESSMENT

**Assessment: Find Your Strengths!**

### Your top three intelligences:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Intelligence</th>
<th>Score (5.0 is highest)</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Social</strong></td>
<td>2.86</td>
<td><strong>Social</strong>: You like to develop ideas and learn from other people. You like to talk. You have good social skills. Effective techniques of enhancing your learning using your social intelligence include taking part in group discussions or discussing a topic one-to-one with another person. Find ways to build reading and writing exercises into your group activities, such as:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>- Reading a dialogue or a play with other people</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>- Doing team learning/investigating projects</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>- Setting up interview questions and interviewing your family, and writing down the interview</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>- Writing notes to another instead of talking.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
2.71 Language: You enjoy saying, hearing, and seeing words. You like telling stories. You are motivated by books, records, dramas, opportunities for writing. Effective techniques of enhancing your learning using your language intelligence include reading aloud, especially plays and poetry. Another idea is to write down reflections on what you've read. You may also enjoy exploring and developing your love of words, i.e., meanings of words, origin of words and idioms, names. Use different kinds of dictionaries. Other ideas:

- Keep a journal
- Use a tape recorder to tape stories and write them down
- Read together, i.e., choral reading
- Read a section, then explain what you've read
- Read a piece with different emotional tones or viewpoints — one angry, one happy, etc.
- Trade tall tales, attend story-telling events and workshops
- Research your name
Nature: You are sensitive to nature and environment. You probably know the names of rocks, flowers, birds, and trees. You love to be outdoors. Here are some ways to use your nature intelligence in your learning:

- Work in the garden.
- Read about plants and/or animals.
- Study habits of fish or birds.
- Read nature magazines.
- Go hiking. Take photographs of what you find on your hike. Write a story describing the photographs.

The scores for your other five intelligences:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SELF (Intrapersonal)</th>
<th>SPATIAL</th>
<th>LOGIC/MATH</th>
<th>MUSICAL</th>
<th>BODY MOVEMENT (Kinesthetic)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2.57</td>
<td>2.43</td>
<td>2.29</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Just because these five are not in your top three doesn’t mean you’re not strong in them. If your average score for any intelligence is above three, you’re probably using that intelligence quite often to help you learn. Take a look at the Practice section to see how to engage all your intelligences.
Elizabeth Harry, Ph.D.
University of Miami
Department of Teaching and Learning
Coral Gables Campus, Locator Code: 2040

HSRO STUDY NUMBER: 20070811
STUDY TITLE: Exploring Teachers' and Black Male Students' Perceptions of Intelligence
IRB MEETING DATE: 12/6/2007
STUDY APPROVAL EXPIRES: 12/5/2008

On December 6, 2007, the Social Behavioral IRB approved the following items. This study has been approved for the inclusion of minors pursuant to 45 CFR 46.404.

APPROVAL INCLUDES:

New Research Protocol
Research Materials (English Versions Only)

- Parent Consent Interview
- Parent Consent Assessment
- Interview Assent
- Assessment Assent
- Teacher Consent
- Multiple Intelligence Assessment Instrument
- Interview Guide Questions

NOTE to PI: The teacher interview protocol should not disclose students’ scores on the Howard Gardner Multiple Intelligence Instrument.

A request to continue this study must be submitted to the HSRO at least 45 days before IRB approval expires. If this study does not receive continuing IRB approval prior to
expiration, all research activities must cease, and may officially be suspended or terminated.

All principal investigators must abide by and comply with all policies and procedures for the conduct of human subject research as posted on the HSRO website (http://www.hsro.miami.edu).

Sincerely,

Amanda Coltes-Rojas, MPH, CIP
Associate Director
Regulatory Affairs & Educational Initiatives

/vc

December 10, 2007

cc: IRB File
December 22, 2008

Elizabeth Harry, Ph.D.
University of Miami
Department of Teaching and Learning, Department of
Division of Coral Gables Campus, Locator Code: 2040

HSRO STUDY NUMBER: 20070811

STUDY TITLE: Exploring Teachers' and Black Male Students' Perceptions of Intelligence

IRB ACTION DATE: 12/22/2008

On December 22, 2008, the above referenced protocol was reviewed by an IRB Designee and approved for closure.

You are required to retain all records of this project for five years following completion.

All principal investigators must abide by and comply with all policies and procedures for the conduct of human subject research as posted on the HSRO website (http://www.hsro.miami.edu).

Sincerely,

Amanda Coltes-Rojas, MPH, CIP
Director
Regulatory Affairs & Educational Initiatives

/vc
cc: IRB File
Human Subjects Research Office (M809)
PO Box 016960, Miami, Florida 33101
1500 NW 12 Avenue, Suite 1002, Miami, Florida 33136
Tel: 305-243-3195
Fax: 305-243-3328
APPENDIX L

DATA ANALYSIS MAP: BLACK MALE STUDENTS

Theoretical Implications

Despite the negative stereotypes of Black males, black male students are resilient in debunking the notion that they are not intelligent. Black male students whose culture, racial identity, linguistic preference, and intellectual ability are devalued by a ubiquitous Eurocentric curriculum see schooling as their chance for successful educational achievement and upward social mobility in society. A non-traditional view of intelligence lends itself to these Black male students to see themselves as intelligent and contributes to the improvement of Black students’ underachievement making education the surest route to their academic success and social mobility. Teachers of Black male students should incorporate Howard Gardner’s Multiple Intelligence Theory in their classroom setting.

Thematic Analysis

All people have intelligence but it may be affected by or expressed through self-discipline, thorough knowledge of a subject, and aptitude. Intelligence is multifaceted and is more than just schooling. Yes, I am intelligent and this is linked to my self-esteem. Intelligence is linked to nature/nurture or both.

Research Questions

1). How do Black male 11th graders define intelligence?

2). Do Black male 11th graders include the concept of Multiple Intelligence in their definition?

3). How do Black male 11th graders describe their own intelligence?

4). What do students perceive to be the factors that contributed to their definition of intelligence generally and their own intelligence specifically?

Conceptual Categories (axial coding)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Students’ Definitions of Intelligence</th>
<th>Characteristics of Intelligence</th>
<th>Jobs &amp; Intelligence</th>
<th>Schooling and Intelligence</th>
<th>Language, Ebonics &amp; Intelligence</th>
<th>Perceptions and feelings about intelligence</th>
<th>Societal Perceptions of Black Males</th>
<th>Nature/Nurture of Intelligence</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Personal definitions of intelligence</td>
<td>Examples of intelligent people</td>
<td>Jobs that require intelligence</td>
<td>Grades</td>
<td>Use of Ebonics</td>
<td>Participation in study</td>
<td>Society’s views of Black males’ intelligence</td>
<td>Source of intelligence</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How we measure intelligence</td>
<td>All people are intelligent</td>
<td>Knowledge of Multiple Intelligence</td>
<td>Use of Standard English</td>
<td>Survey match</td>
<td>How society views intelligence</td>
<td>Born with (Nature)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Open Coding</td>
<td>Other students’ definitions of intelligence</td>
<td>Teachers’ use of Multiple Intelligence</td>
<td>Self-esteem</td>
<td>Society’s perceptions of Black males, in general</td>
<td>Through Experience (Nurture)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Definitions of intelligence</td>
<td>Success in other areas but not in school</td>
<td>Description of own intelligence</td>
<td>Culture</td>
<td>Both (Nature &amp; Nurture)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Success in school</td>
<td>Self-perceptions of intelligence</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>School cater to different intelligences</td>
<td>Feelings about own intelligence</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Abilities/intelligences promoted by school</td>
<td>How others perceive students’ intelligence</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
APPENDIX M

DATA ANALYSIS MAP: TEACHERS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Theoretical Implications</th>
<th>Despite the negative stereotypes of Black males, black male students are resilient in debunking the notion that they are not intelligent. Black male students whose culture, racial identity, linguistic preference, and intellectual ability are devalued by a ubiquitous Eurocentric curriculum see schooling as their chance for successful educational achievement and upward social mobility in society. A non-traditional view of intelligence lends itself to these Black male students to see themselves as intelligent and contributes to the improvement of Black students’ underachievement making education the surest route to their academic success and social mobility. Teachers of Black male students should incorporate Howard Gardner’s Multiple Intelligence Theory in their classroom setting.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Thematic Analysis</td>
<td>All people have intelligence but it may be affected by or expressed through self-discipline, thorough knowledge of a subject, and aptitude Intelligence is multifaceted and is more than just schooling All Black male students exhibit intelligences in various forms</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Research Questions</td>
<td>5). How do the teachers of these students define intelligence? 6). Do these teachers include the concept of Multiple Intelligence in their definition? 7). How do these teachers describe these Black males’ intelligence?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conceptual Categories (axial coding)</td>
<td>Teachers’ Definitions of Intelligence Society, Culture &amp; Intelligence Jobs &amp; Intelligence Nature/Nurture Schooling, Intelligence and Success Ebonics Teachers’ Perceptions of Black Male Students’ Societal Perceptions of Black Males</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Open Coding</td>
<td>Everyone is intelligent Culture Born with (nature) Knowledge of Multiple Intelligence Use of Ebonics Description of students’ intelligence Society’s views of Black Males</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Beliefs about IQ</td>
<td>Society Experience (Nurture) Intelligent to be successful in school Use of Standard English Students’ survey match How Black males students see themselves</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Definitions of Intelligence</td>
<td>Society defines intelligence Jobs that require intelligence Both (Nature/Nurture) Abilities/intelligence promoted by school Teachers’ perceptions of students’ intelligence Intelligence and appearance (Image)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>General definitions of intelligence</td>
<td>Other teachers define intelligence Subjects promoted by school</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How do you know when person is intelligent</td>
<td>How school measures intelligence</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Success in life but not in school</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## APPENDIX N

### DEMOGRAPHIC INFORMATION OF BLACK MALE STUDENTS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Multiple Intelligence</th>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Ethnicity</th>
<th>Native Language</th>
<th>Country of Origin</th>
<th>Free/Reduced Lunch</th>
<th>GPA</th>
<th>FCAT</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Jason</td>
<td>Musical</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>Black African American</td>
<td>English</td>
<td>U.S.A.</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>2.2</td>
<td>FCAT Math (passed)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Steve</td>
<td>Interpersonal</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>Black</td>
<td>English</td>
<td>Jamaica</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>2.7</td>
<td>FCAT Both (passed)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tyrone</td>
<td>Intrapersonal</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>Black</td>
<td>English</td>
<td>U.S.A.</td>
<td>Reduced</td>
<td>2.8</td>
<td>FCAT Math (passed) SAT-1250</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Junior</td>
<td>Visual Spatial</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>Haitian American</td>
<td>Haitian Creole</td>
<td>U.S.A.</td>
<td>Reduced</td>
<td>2.4</td>
<td>FCAT Both (passed)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Roy</td>
<td>Logical-Mathematical</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>Black</td>
<td>English</td>
<td>Philippines</td>
<td>Reduced</td>
<td>3.0</td>
<td>FCAT Math (passed)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ali</td>
<td>Bodily-Kinesthetic</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>African-American Native-American Asian</td>
<td>English</td>
<td>U.S.A.</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>2.9</td>
<td>FCAT Both (passed)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Carter</td>
<td>Naturalistic</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>Black</td>
<td>English</td>
<td>Dominica</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>2.0</td>
<td>FCAT Both (passed)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
September 11, 2007

Mr. Patrick A. Williams
d.o. Dr. Elizabeth Hartby
University of Miami
School of Education
Morrick Building, Room 312
P.O. Box 248095
Coral Gables, FL 33124-2040

Dear Mr. Williams:

I am pleased to inform you that the Research Review Committee of the Miami-Dade County Public Schools (MDCPS) has approved your request to conduct the study, "Exploring Teachers' and Black Male Students' Perceptions of Intelligence." This approval is granted with the following conditions:

1. Participation of a school in the study is at the discretion of the principal. A copy of this approval letter must be presented to the principal.

2. Participation of all subjects is voluntary.

3. The anonymity and confidentiality of all subjects must be assured.

4. Parent permission forms must be secured for all participating students prior to the beginning of the study.

5. The study will involve approximately 50 MDCPS students in grade 11.

6. Teacher participation is voluntary.

7. Disruption of the school’s routine by the data collection activities of the study must be kept at a minimum.
It should be emphasized that the approval of the Research Review Committee does not constitute an endorsement of the study. It is simply a permission to request the voluntary cooperation of the study of individuals associated with the MDCPS. It is your responsibility to ensure that appropriate procedures are followed in requesting an individual's cooperation, and that all aspects of the study are conducted in a professional manner. With regard to the latter, make certain that all documents and instruments distributed within the MDCPS as a part of the study are carefully edited.

The approval number for your study is 1385. This number should be used in all communications to clearly identify the study as approved by the Research Review Committee. The approval expires on June 30, 2008. During the approval period, the study must adhere to the design, procedures, and instruments which were submitted to the Research Review Committee. If there are any changes in the study as it relates to the MDCPS, it may be necessary to resubmit your request to the committee. Failure to notify me of such a change may result in the cancellation of the approval.

If you have any questions, please call me at 305-995-7529. Finally, remember to forward an abstract of the study when it is complete. On behalf of the Research Review Committee, I want to wish you every success with your study.

Sincerely,

Joseph R. Ginther, Ph.D.
Chairperson
Research Review Committee

| APPROVAL NUMBER: 1385 | APPROVAL EXPIRES: 6-30-08 |
VITA

Patrick Anthony Williams was born on September 29, 1966 to the parents of Roy Alexander Williams and Patricia M. Rahming in Kingston Jamaica. He received his primary education at Duhaney Park Primary School and matriculated to Calabar High School after having passed the Common Entrance Exam. He migrated to the United States and completed his secondary education at South Dade Senior High School. After graduation from high school, domestic problems left him homeless while attending Florida International University. He slept in the university buildings, in the street or, later, in a car given to him by Dr. Ana Roca. As a result, he started talking about dyslexia, homelessness, suicide, self-esteem, multiple intelligences and learning styles. Now, as a high school teacher, he understands the difficulties of his students and has developed professional practices to address their differing needs without sacrificing achievement.

A Fulbright Memorial Fund Scholar to Japan, a John S. and James L. Knight Student Fellow at the University of Miami Graduate School, and a 1984 Silver Knight Award recipient in Foreign Language, Patrick Williams is also a certified Foreign Language teacher in the state of Florida. He is a motivational speaker, educational consultant and
instructional strategist, who speaks seven languages, plays classical piano, sings arias, and lectures extensively at numerous universities within the United States and around the world.

Williams is a man who not only knows of success, but knows of adversity as well. He is dyslexic due to a fourth grade accident when a nail was driven into his head. He was frequently teased by classmates for being ‘stupid’. So he learned to focus on academics and to study much longer than his classmates. These are habits that are still with him today.

He is a member of Kappa Delta Pi, an International Honor Society in Education, and Pi Lambda Theta. His media appearances include television, print media, and radio. A Who’s Who Among America’s Teachers, Williams served as Visiting Professor of English at Silla University in Busan, South Korea, and as adjunct faculty at Florida Memorial University, Florida Atlantic University and the University of Miami.

“Taz” has had many successes with students. While teaching in a Title 1 school in 2006, 80% of his twenty students (mostly 10th graders) earned passing scores on the 2006 Advanced Placement Spanish Language Exam. In 2007, 100% of his eighteen students earned passing scores on the
2007 AP Spanish Language Exam with 60% earning a score of 5. In 2008, approximately 90% of his students earned passing scores on the AP Spanish Language exam.

In maintaining a life-long commitment to professional development and scholarly pursuits, he earned a Bachelors of Arts in Spanish from Florida International University, a Master of Education in Social & Cultural Foundations of Education and English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) from Florida Atlantic University. He received a Specialist in Education degree (with Academic Merit) in Mathematics from the University of Miami. In 2001, he was admitted to the Doctor of Philosophy program in Teaching & Learning at the University of Miami, where he was granted a Ph.D. degree in May 2009.

The dominant factor in education is the desire to transform lives. Williams’ experiences coupled with his own learning have certainly enriched his work as an educator broadening the world-view he takes into his classroom.

Permanent Address:
PO BOX 472634 ● Miami, FL 33247 ● (305) 691-1300
631 NW 3rd Street ● Florida City, FL 33034