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CONNECTIONS BETWEEN PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT AND THE ACADEMIC
SUCCESS OF SOUTHERN RURAL HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS WITH SPECIAL
ATTENTION GIVEN TO FAMILY COMPOSITION

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A Dissertation

by

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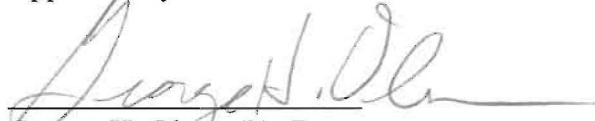
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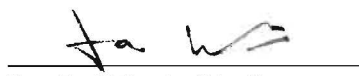
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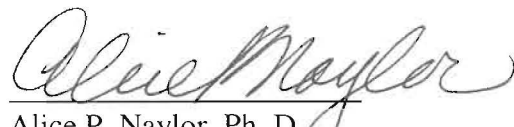
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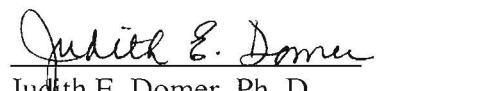
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ABSTRACT

CONNECTIONS BETWEEN PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT AND THE ACADEMIC
SUCCESS OF SOUTHERN RURAL HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS WITH SPECIAL
ATTENTION GIVEN TO FAMILY COMPOSITION (December, 2003)

Peter Edward Yount, B.A. Lenoir Rhyne College

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The purpose of my study was to investigate the hypothesis that there is a strong link between parents', especially fathers', involvement in their children's lives and their children's academic performance in school. The sample consisted of 195 sophomores, juniors, and seniors from two high schools, similar in demographics, in the western piedmont region of North Carolina.

A survey, developed specifically for this project, based on a more detailed survey used in the *National Education Longitudinal Study of 1988*, also known as *NELS 88* (U.S. Department of Education, 2000), was used to assess parental involvement in three areas: (a) engagement (the interaction between parent and child involving direct access in play, or care-taking and nurturing), (b) accessibility (the availability of the parent to the child),

and (c) responsibility (caring for the child in terms of parenting such as planning and maintaining rules). Items such as eating dinner together, attending religious service together, and involvement with the student in activities outside of school served as indicators of parental involvement.

Six variables were constructed from responses to individual items in the survey. Each of the six variables represented a different type of parental involvement: (a) involvement in school activities, (b) involvement in student's social life, (c) involvement in activities outside the school (d) parental maintenance of house rules, (e) parental communication about current plans, and (f) parental plans for post-high school education.

Standard grade point averages as reported to the North Carolina Department of Public Instruction served as the measure of achievement.

Respondents were classified according to their relationship to the child and to the type of family structure. The data were grouped into non-mutually exclusive classifications: *father as respondent*, the *father in the home*, the *mother as respondent*, and the entire sample of *all students*. The classifications for the mothers and fathers were divided further by the *type of family* structure within the home: those who were members of a *traditional* family, and those who were members of a *nontraditional* family.

It was expected that all six variables would yield significant correlations with all the students, and that several of the variables would yield significant correlations relating directly to the father figure in the home. However, the classification father in the home produced significant correlations with only five variables. Maintenance of house rules

did not produce significant values. The father as the respondent produced only one significant correlation with the variable parental communication about current plans. Stepfathers as respondents and in the home produced significant correlations only with the variable parental involvement in student's social life. Of all possible correlations approximately 61% were significant.

Significant correlations implied a connection between parental involvement and academic success. However, the relationship between paternal involvement and academic success was not supported due to the few significant findings when the father/stepfather was the respondent. The discrepancy in the number of significant correlations when the father-as-the-respondent versus the father-in-the-home is one aspect for additional research.