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

A Dissertation

by

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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)

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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),
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.