ABSTRACT OF CAPSTONE

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The Graduate School
Morehead State University
April 25, 2013
A BRIDGE TO SUCCESS FOR HIGH SCHOOL DROPOUTS

Abstract of capstone

A capstone submitted in partial fulfillment of the Requirements for the degree of Doctor of Education in the College of Education At Morehead State University

By
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Wellington, KY

Committee Chair: Dr. Sam J. Wright, Associate Professor

Morehead, KY

April 25, 2013

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This study investigated what a selection of former Job Corps students said about why they dropped out of a traditional high school program and why they were able to earn a general equivalency diploma (GED) or a high school diploma (HSD) while enrolled in the Job Corps program. Seven Job Corps graduates were interviewed to answer the research questions of this study. Data were collected, analyzed, and organized by themes.

The study revealed most of the participants did not like school nor did they value an education. Four of the interviewees skipped school and had poor attendance. In addition to these commonalities, five of the seven students had experienced some type of loss or lacked a support system at home. Furthermore, the discussions with the interviewees indicated they found a strong support system while enrolled as students in the Job Corps program. This support system was critical in helping them to be successful in obtaining a GED or HSD and in earning a trade certification.

KEY WORDS: aloneness, at-risk student, disengagement, dropout, Job Corps
A BRIDGE TO SUCCESS

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Dedication

This capstone is dedicated to my father, Ray Walton, who hoped to one day live to see one of his seven children graduate from high school but who died when I was 9 years old. It is also dedicated to my mother, Bertha Collinsworth Walton Mann Bair Bailey, who outlived four husbands and lived to see me, her sixth child, graduate from high school and later go on to attend Morehead State University to earn a Bachelor of Arts degree in education more than 20 years after high school. I miss both of you but your love has endured with me even though you are gone from this earth. I hope to see you again some sweet day.
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My life on earth began with an obstacle, and there have been many roadblocks in my life since my delivery by caesarean-section. Whenever I have faced those roadblocks, my faith has helped me through. This has been poignantly true with the progression of this capstone project. This is just one of the many small things to which I have turned to God for His help. I must first thank God for leading me and guiding me through all of my educational pursuits and for giving me this topic.

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I must also extend a thank you to Kirk Peck, Assistant Superintendent and District Technology Coordinator for Menifee County Schools, who so clearly understood what I wanted to do with this capstone project. It is my hope that the Menifee County School District as well as other school districts will be able to use my work to encourage students at risk of dropping out to inspire them to stay in school.

My husband, Jerry Winston Fugett, requires a special thank you. Without his support, I could not have completed this program or this project. My husband, as well as Sarah, our daughter, has eaten many sandwiches without complaint.
Throughout this process, Sarah has been my cheerleader and has expressed her confidence in me. Occasionally, Nathaniel, my son, has helped out by feeding the dogs, taking out trash, and deep-frying the Thanksgiving turkey. I love you all and words cannot express how much I appreciate you.

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Finally, I also want to include a special thank you to two wonderful ladies who told me back in 1991 that they thought I would do well in college. Jackie Everman, thank you for believing that I could do it and for getting the forms for me to enroll at Morehead State in January of 1992. Thank you, Louise Ratliff for believing in me and for helping me over many of the obstacles in the road along the way. With your help I made it over them and have reached this place in my journey. Without your encouragement, the journey may not have started.
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CHAPTER 1: A BRIDGE TO SUCCESS FOR HIGH SCHOOL DROPOUTS

Executive Summary

The high school dropout rate in the United States is a significant issue that has plagued our country for several decades. Further, the high school dropout rate has had a personal impact. I am the sixth child of seven children, the first in my family to graduate from high school, and my oldest child dropped out of high school during his senior year.

Being keenly aware of the success of the Job Corps program after my nephew enrolled in the program and obtained a general equivalency diploma, as well as vocational training, a qualitative study was conducted to find out why selected former Job Corps students dropped out of a traditional high school as well as why they were able to earn a high school diploma (HSD) or general equivalency diploma (GED) at Job Corps but not in a traditional school setting. Finding answers to these questions is important as it could influence more students to stay in school or to not resign from the Job Corps program once they are enrolled. The stories of Job Corps completers who dropped out of a traditional school need to be told. They need to be told in order to inspire students, to convince them of the value of an education, and to persuade them to stay in school or stay enrolled in the Job Corps program.

A qualitative study was conducted by interviewing seven individuals who earned a HSD or GED while enrolled in the Job Corps program. Former Job Corps students chosen for the case studies had reached a higher level of success (employment, higher education, or both) than would have been possible without a
HSD or GED. Each interviewee was given a pseudonym for the purpose of being able to protect their anonymity during discussion of the findings.

Face-to-face interviews were conducted with each case study participant. After having each individual sign a confidentiality agreement, the interviews were recorded with a video camera. Each interview was reviewed and transcribed into notes. Responses to the questions were recorded in a spreadsheet and analyzed for common themes, as well as differences in the responses of the individuals.

Each interviewee was asked to give responses to the following questions/statements:

1. Discuss why you quit school.
2. How did you find out about the Job Corps program?
3. Why did you enroll in the Job Corps program?
4. Describe your experience in the Job Corps and explain what if any impact it had on your life.
5. Discuss the most and least helpful things about the Job Corps program.
6. In thinking back about your Job Corps experience, is there anything that you would change?
7. Is there anything else that you would like to share about your Job Corps experience?

An analysis of the data revealed a common theme for dropping out of high school was that these individuals had been disengaged in school. The participants hated or disliked school and did not see the value of an education. In addition, four of
the seven former students reported skipping school. Two of the seven interviewees had been enrolled in alternative school while one of the seven had been homeschooled. Besides these themes, it was found that five of the seven former Job Corps students had experienced aloneness, lack of advocacy, or profound loss.

Most of the seven former students in this study felt that the instructors and other Job Corps staff were there when they had needed them. The staff pushed the students and the students felt they could not fail as long as they made a genuine effort. Additionally, students were given responsibility while enrolled in the Job Corps program. Responsibility was found to be one of the most helpful aspects about the program. Several of the former students discovered the value of an education, as evidenced by their remarks about getting an educational foundation that they had needed in order to be successful.

With the findings of this study, counselors, teachers, instructors, and administrators should be better prepared when students want to quit school or to resign from Job Corps, to discuss the value of completing their high school program or Job Corps program. Staff in these settings should be able to read the stories of these seven Job Corps graduates and understand how important it is to make connections with the students. If traditional school employees and Job Corps staff understand more about where these students came from and what their lives are like in their homes, perhaps it will better equip them to make those connections that are so vital. Often the only place students find someone who cares is in the education arena. Everyone needs to realize that when any student becomes a class clown, skips school,
and hangs with a crowd of other students who do not value an education, the behavior
did not happen in isolation. This study found that themes of aloneness, lack of
advocacy, and profound loss often occurred in students' lives before they dropped out
of school. These case studies should be used to guide the discussion between students
and counselors to whom the students go in order to discuss withdrawing from school.
If more students are persuaded to stay in school, more students will have
employability skills. In addition, this country should see a reduction in the crime
rate, see fewer individuals incarcerated, and see a significant improvement to the
national economy.

This study is limited in that the participants were all graduates from one Job
Corps Center located in Eastern Kentucky. It could have been more comprehensive if
students at Job Corps Centers in other regions of the United States had been included.
The study was conducted by interviewing seven former Job Corps students. Five of
the students earned a high school diploma and two of the students earned a general
equivalency diploma while they were enrolled as students. For future research, a more
diverse group of students at centers in different regions of the United States could be
surveyed and interviewed.

Students who become dropouts are a cause for concern that has intrigued this
researcher for many years. Having three older brothers, two older sisters, and a son
who became high school dropouts has made the issue have a very personal
connection. In addition, I have first-hand knowledge of individuals who have
achieved success because of those students who dropped out of high school, enrolled
in the Job Corps program, earned a high school diploma or general equivalency diploma, and completed vocational training while enrolled in the Job Corps program.

Introduction

The failure of students to earn a high school diploma is an issue that has been recognized for decades. In 1963, President John F. Kennedy began a campaign titled the "Summer Dropout Campaign" for the purpose of identifying and getting potential dropouts to return to school in the fall (Rumberger, 2011). More than 1 million students from the high school class of 2010 failed to graduate, representing one third of the 4.3 million students who were enrolled as freshmen in 2006 (Rumberger, 2011). According to Azzam (2007), approximately one out of three of all students in the United States in high school fails to graduate. Further, Azzam (2007) reported that African Americans and Hispanics fail to graduate from high school at a higher rate with one out of two dropping out of school. Almeida and Steinberg (2008) reported that states had for years over reported graduation rates. They suggested the actual average is nearer to 70% than to the 90% that had regularly been reported by most states.

Currently (spring 2013), the United States is in a recession with high rates of unemployment. The National Job Corps Association (n. d.) noted that the United States currently (spring 2013) ranks 18th among developed nations in graduating students from high school, and there are 11 million young people in this country who do not have the skills necessary to begin middle-class careers. Preparing for a vocation is a much more critical focus of education in countries that have low dropout
rates than it is in the United States. According to Hoffman (2011), Austria, Denmark, Germany, the Netherlands, Norway, and Switzerland view this as an obligation to their youth and want to guarantee that their youth are prepared for the future. The idea is that youth should have the minimum qualifications necessary to enter the labor market because being able to work is a basic human need.

Work attaches citizens to the public world and supports the health and well-being of families and communities. It makes sense to young people to engage in learning how to do real work and to discover their inclinations and talents as a critical step in becoming an adult and entering 'the working life' (Hoffman, 2011, p. 13).

Personnel with the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics (2010) reported an average unemployment rate of 8.2% in 2010; the unemployment rate for individuals with less than a high school diploma (HSD) was 14.9%, which was 6.7% higher than the average rate. Clearly, dropping out of high school has a negative impact on employability in the United States. Individuals who drop out are much more likely than their peers who graduate to not have a job, live in poverty, receive welfare and food stamps, be in prison, be on death row, have poor health, be divorced, and to be single parents whose own children quit high school (Bridgeland, Dilulio, & Morison, 2006). Dropping out of high school is detrimental to the individual, as well as to society. In addition, data from the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics (2010) indicated that individuals with less than a HSD were more likely to be unemployed. For
example, in July of 2009, personnel with the Bureau of Labor Statistics (2010) brought to light that while the unemployment rate for high school graduates was 9.4%, the unemployment rate for high school dropouts was 6% higher at 15.4%.


In the report, Hidden Benefits: The Impact of High School Graduation on Household Wealth, the Alliance for Excellent Education's (2007) personnel reported the high school graduate will on average accumulate 10 times the wealth of a high school dropout. At a time when the nation's economy is in a recession, it could make a significant impact toward improving the economy if more of the students who enrolled in high school earned a HSD.
Wolk (2004) indicated dropping out of school costs the United States hundreds of billions of dollars in unrealized national wealth and diminished productivity for society because those who do not finish school can be expected to earn low wages, to end up in dead-end jobs, and to be on welfare. Rouse (2005) reported the cost to the nation for each high school dropout over an individual's lifetime was $260,000. She estimated the loss to the United States within 10 years after the report was written would total more than $3 trillion. As reported in the American Teacher (2007), the United States could save approximately $45 billion a year if the dropout rate decreased by 50%. Young (2008) added that increasing male graduation rates by only 5% could increase personal income to the graduates and add more than $2 billion to Alabama's state economy.

Why should it be considered such a significant issue? The United States' dropout issue is costly to the individual, to businesses, and to society (Schargel & Smink, 2001). Data from the U. S. Bureau of Labor Statistics (2010) indicate that the median weekly earnings in 2010 for individuals with less than a high school diploma was less than the median weekly earnings for an individual with a HSD. An individual with less than a HSD had median weekly earnings in 2010 of $444.00, while the average median rate for all levels of education was $782 per week.

An additional issue intertwined with the country's economic decline is that individuals who drop out of high school are much more likely to be incarcerated. This, known as the "dropout to prison pipeline," is an enormous cost to the nation's economy. Amos (2008) reported that increasing the graduation rate for male students
by a mere 5% would bring a combined savings and revenue of nearly $8 billion a year to our nation's economy. Individuals who are incarcerated are a huge burden on our national economy, in addition to the burden of expenses related to the crimes these individuals committed. Other expenses may include the victims' medical care expenses, the victims' loss of income, and lower tax revenue because of lost earnings. The research indicates that individuals whose levels of education are low are more likely to commit crimes and to be incarcerated than their peers with higher levels of education (Amos, 2008).

In short, individuals who complete high school will earn more over their lifetime and thereby contribute more to the nation's tax base than those individuals who drop out of high school. "Dropouts represent a tremendous loss of human potential and productivity, and they significantly reduce the nation's ability to compete in an increasingly global economy" (Alliance for Excellent Education, 2009, p. 3).
The National Job Corps Program: A Bridge to Success

A program was designed to train individuals who do not have the skills necessary to secure and maintain a job. This program was created in 1964 as part of President Lyndon B. Johnson's War on Poverty. The program, the National Job Corps, was designed for individuals from poverty as a bridge to success to obtain an education, as well as training and job skills. The program is a bridge to success because it increases participants' success in obtaining a GED or a HSD.

How is success of the program measured? The Job Corps' Outcome Measurement System (OMS) report for program year 2010 indicated that an average of 56.6% of the students attain a HSD or a GED (U.S. Department of Labor, 2013). This program appears to increase the success of participants who obtain a GED or a HSD as well as vocational training. While it could be argued that the National Job Corps program is expensive at an approximate cost of $26,000 per student (National Job Corps Association, n.d.), it could also be argued that the program actually pays for itself. Even though the success rate is not 100%, nearly 57% of the students earn either a GED or a HSD. If 57 out of 100 students are able to go into the workforce and contribute to the country's tax base by actually earning wages, the $26,000 per student cost for individuals to receive training in the Job Corps program will be paid back multiple times. On the other hand, as Rouse's (2005) report indicated, the cost to the nation for each high school dropout over an individual's lifetime is $260,000. Therefore, over a Job Corps graduates' lifetime, the cost of $26,000 per student is
inexpensive compared to the costs to the individual, to society, and to the national economy (National Job Corps Association, n.d.).

Summary

The high school dropout issue has been a major concern in the United States for several decades and is a problem that is relevant to the downward trend of the national economy. Too many students quit school each year, and this is costly not only to the economy but also to the individual.

The National Job Corps program provides a bridge to success for young people ages 16 to 24 to earn a high school diploma or a general equivalency diploma, to learn a trade that is industry certified, and to learn employability skills. When the returns to society in added revenues, lower crime rates, and better health are considered, the cost of approximately $26,000 per trainee is well spent.

Why do students fail to complete high school? Who drops out of school? What strategies have been identified to keep them in school? Chapter 2 provides some insights into these questions.
CHAPTER 2: REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

Why Students Fail to Complete High School and Who Drops Out

Why do students drop out of or fail to complete high school? Tyler and Lofstrom (2009) stated:

Students regularly report, for example, some measure of school disengagement as the primary reason for leaving school. The commonality of these responses ('did not like school' and 'classes were not interesting') is often cited as a reason that schools must become more 'relevant' and that teachers must learn to structure curriculum and pedagogy so that it is more 'interesting' and 'engaging' to students at risk of dropping out (p. 84).

According to MacIver (2011), more than half of the high school dropouts are likely to be male (57%) versus female (43%). Additionally, those who dropped out of school were likely to be special education students (29.3%) compared to 16.7% of all high school students and 11.2% of those who graduated (MacIver, 2011).

Personnel from the Georgia Family Connection Partnership (2001) reported that students from low-income families were more than twice as likely to drop out of school as were children from middle-income families, and they were 10.5 times more likely to drop out of school than children from high-income families. Hodgkinson (1995) found it to be undisputed in educational research that poverty is at the heart of most school failures. According to the Hodgkinson (1995) report, this finding was as true for Caucasian children from Appalachia as it was for African American and
Hispanic children from inner-city slums. Hodgkinson (1995) further stated that most of the children in the United States who live in poverty are Caucasian. Payne (1996) noted, everyone has resources that influence achievement, and money is only one of these resources. Payne (1996) defined poverty as the extent to which an individual lacks these resources and explained that whether an individual lives in a rural or an urban area has more to do with an absence of the resources than just being without money. Jensen (2009) pointed out that children from poverty, poor children, frequently feel alone and unloved. According to Jensen (2009), feeling isolated and unloved often begins a "downward spiral of unhappy life events, including poor academic performance, behavioral problems, dropping out of school, and drug abuse" (p. 9).

Stanley and Plucker (2008) found there was a large body of research that revealed students from certain backgrounds, or with certain characteristics, had a higher probability of dropping out than did others. Specifically, minority students, as well as students from low-income families, were less likely to complete high school than their peers. Poverty was found to be a significant factor, as demonstrated by graduation rates that were lowest in urban and rural areas where high concentrations of poverty existed. During the 2006-2007 school year, while looking at the cumulative graduation rates in Indiana, Stanley and Plucker (2008) found that although Caucasian students had an average graduation rate of 80%, the rate was much lower for other groups. At the same time that the Caucasian students' graduation rate was 80%, the African American students' graduation rate in Indiana
was 57%; the graduation rate was 14% lower for this particular minority group than for the Caucasian students. Concurrently, the graduation rate for Native Americans was 70%, while the graduation rate for Hispanics was 73%. (Stanley & Plucker, 2008).

Balfanz (2011) examined attendance, behavior, and course failure and found that students, beginning in sixth grade and continuing through ninth grade, who lived in low socioeconomic status environments and whose performance was off track in even one of these indicators, typically had a 25% chance at best of graduating from high school. In addition, Stanley and Plucker (2008) noted at least 60% of future dropouts could be determined as soon as sixth grade. Generally, during these years, approximately 80% of the students who failed to finish high school demonstrated warning signs in one or more of these areas (Balfanz, 2011). Balfanz's (2011) study was found to be in agreement with the study by Tyler and Lofstrom (2009). Several common characteristics other than typical demographic data emerged that indicated an increased risk of dropping out of school. Factors included being retained in a grade, poor attendance, failing core content classes (particularly English and/or Math), low grade point average, and low achievement test scores (Balfanz, 2011; MacIver, 2011; Pinkus 2008; Tyler & Lofstrom 2009). If students received poor grades, repeated a grade, or were over-age for their class, they were more likely to not finish high school. Clearly, students who missed school fell behind their peers in the classroom. This, in turn, was found to lead to low self-esteem and to increase the likelihood that at-risk students dropped out of school.
MacIver (2011) discussed several behavioral indicators of disengagement related to attendance, suspensions, and course failure/credit accumulation. The majority of dropouts in MacIver's (2011) study exhibited a pattern of chronic absence in the years prior to dropping out of school. The dropouts were absent an average of more than 20 days in 3 years before making the decision to drop out of school.

- Almost 90% of the students were absent more than 20 days in 2007-2008, and 75% were absent more than 40 days.
- 80% were chronically absent in 2006-2007, and over 50% were absent more than 40 days.
- 70% missed more than 20 days in 2005-2006, and more than 42.8% were absent more than 40 days.
- More than 50% of the dropouts were absent more than 20 days in each of the three years before dropping out, and 25.5% were absent more than 40 days (MacIver, 2011).

Besides examining suspensions as a factor related to dropping out of school, MacIver (2011) reported on suspensions as a behavioral indicator of disengagement. She found that about half of 2007-2008 dropouts were suspended at least once in the 3 years prior to dropping out versus approximately one fourth of graduates, and 44.8% of dropouts were suspended for at least 3 days in at least 1 of the 3 previous years as compared to 19.2% of graduates. Lee, Cornell, Gregory, and Fan (2011)
found that a student's prior history of suspension increased by 78% the likelihood of that student dropping out of school.

As well as reporting on suspensions as a behavioral indicator of disengagement, the relationship between course failure and credit accumulation was reported by MacIver (2011) when she found that none of the 2008-2009 dropouts earned course credit during that school year. Almost 93% of the dropouts for whom there was a 2007-2008 transcript had failed at least one course; 60% of the dropouts had failed four or more classes. Over 85% of the dropouts who had transcript data in 2006-2007 had failed at least one class, and almost half had failed four or more classes (MacIver, 2011). Early in the high school years, females were slightly less likely to dropout than male students were (MacIver, 2011). It is notable that the students who chose to drop out of high school had few course credits. In MacIver's (2011) study, each dropout had earned an average of 5.2 credits over their entire high school career versus an average of 24.6 credits for each high school graduate.

Review of the literature also revealed other warning indicators. MacIver (2011) found that more than half (57.3%) of dropouts in 2008-2009 had last attended either a large, comprehensive high school or a small high school that had been created by dividing a comprehensive school. About one fourth of the dropouts had attended an alternative school, 5.8% had attended a vocational school, and 9.2% of the dropouts had attended an innovation or charter school (MacIver, 2011). Nearly half (47.2%) of those who dropped out of school attended a different high school than the high school in which they enrolled as a freshman. In addition to changing schools,
many of the students who dropped out were over age for the ninth grade when they enrolled in high school. Approximately 66% of 2008-09 dropouts were over age; and, of this 66%, about 25% were over age by 2 or more years. In contrast, according to MacIver (2011), approximately 66% of the 2009 graduates entered ninth grade at the normal age.

When students have difficulty with reading, this often means poor grades, grade repetition, and eventual disengagement from school, all of which tend to precede a student’s decision to drop out. Pinkus (2008) stated the gateway skill students must have mastered if they are to be successful in any course is literacy. MacIver (2011) reported proficiency levels in the middle grades on the Maryland School Assessment (MSA) in reading and mathematics indicated approximately one fourth of dropouts scored at proficient or above in reading compared with 54% of graduates while around 1 in 10 dropouts scored at least proficient compared with 30% of graduates on the mathematics MSA.

While the majority of the literature points to demographic data, such as race and socioeconomic status as indicators of students' probability of dropping out of school, these indicators did not always serve as an accurate predictor (Sparks, Johnson, & Akos, 2010). In a study of Portland, Oregon schools, Hammond (2010) compared the Oregon schools with only 43% of the 47,000 students said to be living in poverty to higher poverty schools, such as Chicago, where 85% of the students come from poverty. In addition, while the majority of the 47,000 Portland students
were Caucasian, only 13% of the students in Philadelphia's comparison schools were 
Caucasian. As expected, Hammond's (2010) study found that Caucasian and 
middle-class teens in Portland's schools were far less likely to drop out of high school 
than were their minority and low-income peers. However, Hammond (2010) found 
there was a shockingly low percentage of Portland’s high school students who 
graduated on time; slightly more than half of them at a rate of just 53%. Portland's 
schools had a dropout rate comparable with rates in Philadelphia, Louisville, and 
El Paso, larger districts with much higher concentrations of poverty. Additionally, 
Hammond (2010) found that the majority of Portland’s dropouts were Caucasian, 
about 50% qualify for subsidized school meals, and 90% are native English speakers. 
Therefore, race, poverty, and native language are not simple or absolute predictors of 
graduation or dropping out of high school; more complex interactions are clearly at 
work.

Hansen and Toso (2007) completed a study of 14 gifted dropouts in order to 
explore why gifted students drop out of school. The participants were 6 females and 
8 males; 10 of the subjects reported their race as White. It was found that most of the 
participants "lacked a sense of belonging at school, positive relationships with 
teachers, challenge, and respect for values held high at school (e.g., popularity, 
conformity, and sports)" (Hansen & Toso, 2007, p. 34). The study found there were 
10 themes that emerged. As early as elementary school, the dropouts who 
participated in Hansen and Toso's (2007) study had sensed they did not belong at 
school. In addition, they had felt "little respect for staff and students and found
curriculum to be unchallenging and/or irrelevant" (p. 36). Most of the participants in the survey were also found to be highly sensitive and used words, such as "reclusive, intuitive, compassionate, and introspective" to describe themselves (p. 37). As well as being highly sensitive, most of the individuals in Hansen and Toso's (2007) study also experienced loss without receiving any type of assistance while they tried to cope with their loss. The majority of the participants declared there was no one who could advocate for them, so they had chosen to use alcohol or drugs. Difficulty with authority and feelings of disrespect were cited by males, while three females gave reasons related to personal friendships and two expressed dissatisfaction with school culture. Finally, conflict with parents about school-related issues was also reported by most of the participants.

Meeker, Edmonson, and Fisher (2008) conducted a study involving 228 current and recent students from Adult Education programs in Texas. Because the researchers wanted to know precisely the circumstances current high school students were facing, they chose to only study responses from the participants who were in their teens or twenties. Of the 228 students, 158 (64 male and 93 female) were chosen because they met the age criteria. The sample of 158 also consisted of 67 Caucasians, 52 Hispanics, 18 African Americans, 2 Asians, and 19 who did not indicate an ethnicity. All of the individuals chosen for the study were high school dropouts. The 158 individuals who participated in the study were given a short survey that asked them to list factors that kept them from finishing high school. The participants indicated 17 separate factors. Pregnancy or parenting a child was given
by 41 of the respondents. A bad attitude and poor choices was stated by 29 of the respondents. The third highest response was dysfunctional school or conflict with teachers, given by 27 of the respondents. A dysfunctional home was cited by 21 of the respondents while “did not fit in” was declared by 19 of the participants. Other responses included working too many hours (15), moved too often to earn credits (13), frequent discipline referrals (9), peer pressure to leave (8), substance abuse (7), family illness or death (6), legal trouble (5), lacking credits (4), completed high school in a foreign country (3), language barrier (1), homeschooled (1), and could not pass exit exam (1) (Meeker, Edmonson, and Fisher, 2008).

Renzulli and Park (2000) completed a study of student dropouts who were not in an academic program leading to a high school diploma, and who had not earned a GED by the spring of 1992. These individuals also completed a dropout questionnaire in a second follow-up. There were 1,285 students who completed the second follow-up questionnaire; 334 of those dropouts were classified as gifted (Renzulli and Park, 2000). The questions were developed to determine why the individuals left school, parental reactions, time gifted dropouts spent using computers exclusive of video/computer games, time spent on hobbies, and time spent on volunteer or community services. The results of the Renzulli and Park study (2000) indicated the issues that gifted males gave for leaving school were mainly job and school related whereas female reasons were personal and school related. The males were failing school, got a job, could not keep up with school work, did not like school, and could not work and go to school. Females reported they left school
because they did not like school, were pregnant, became a parent and were failing, had another problem, and could not keep up with school work. Top responses by both male and females in the Renzulli and Park (2000) study were did not like school and failing in school.

Bridgeland, Dilulio, and Morison, (2006) completed a study, *The Silent Epidemic*, for the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation in which 487 geographically, racially, and economically diverse individuals ages 16 to 24, who had dropped out of school, were polled via face-to-face interviews and focus groups. The top five reasons for leaving school cited by these students were: (a) classes not interesting (47%), (b) missed too many days of school and could not catch up (43%), (c) spent time with people who were not interested in school (42%), (d) had too much freedom and not enough rules in my life (38%), and (e) was failing in school (35%).
What Strategies Have Been Identified to Keep Potential Dropouts in School?

What are some effective strategies that have been identified to build a bridge so more students graduate from high school? One of the factors that demonstrated an increase in graduation rates was having significant adults within the school make connections with and develop relationships with students. Knestling (2008) found that feeling like they were a part of a community at school often changed students' behavior. This sense of belonging increased the likelihood students would accept school rules and policy. As they became important and valued...
members of their school's network of peers and adults, the students took ownership. Secondly, when students had a sense of security within their school's environment, they were more likely to take educational risks.

Rodriguez (2010) identified several strategies schools can try which correspond to Knestling's (2008) findings. To reduce the dropout crisis and to promote engagement, achievement, and graduation rates, especially among low-income youth of color, public schools should forge dialogue about school culture, create forums for students' voices, and zero in on relationships. According to Rodriguez (2010), there needs to be recognition of the problem and a space available to work through the issues; this should not be done with a "sanitized dialogue" (p. 21). He stated that schools should listen to the students and think about what they have to say in order to serve them better. Finally, Rodriguez (2010) concluded that when school leaders are hiring teachers, they should look for teachers who give recognition to their students, who inspire them, and who motivate them.

The bar graph illustrates what Bridgeland et al. (2006) found dropouts said would improve students' chances of staying in school. Opportunities for real-world learning and better teachers who keep classes interesting were the top two responses.

In addition to the need for successful relationship building, students also need assistance with transitioning from middle school to high school. McCallumore and Sparapani’s (2010) report discussed solutions to ease the transition to the ninth grade as a possible way to help students be successful. They suggested helping students to navigate by providing each new ninth grader with a copy of a bell schedule and a map to follow to help students transition between classrooms, scheduling a night to meet
the teacher, assigning student mentors, and having an orientation night that involves not only the students but also the parents prior to the first day of school.

McCallumore and Sparapani's (2010) report discussed a class called High School 101 that was created by a school in Georgia to help ninth-grade students more easily make the transition from middle school to high school. The curriculum for students in High School 101 included essential high school survival skills, such as time management, decision-making skills, study skills, test-taking strategies, social tolerance, computer research skills, and career alignment. Kennelly and Monrad (2007) found that schools with fully operational transition programs had a lower average dropout rate of only 8%. On the other hand, schools without those programs had a 16% higher dropout rate of 24%.

Creating freshmen academies was another solution that has had significant success. In Scott County, Kentucky, after a review of program statistics revealed nearly half (45%) of the incoming freshmen were likely to fail at least one ninth-grade class, a focus was placed on the freshmen students. This was accomplished by giving them their own space and more focused attention (McCallumore & Sparapani, 2010). What happened after these freshmen students were given their own space? The Greenwood High School (2009) Web site indicated the dropout rate from the 1995-1996 school year through the 1999-2000 school year decreased by 7.7% while failure rates were 9% lower after the academies were implemented.
Table 1

*What Resulted from the Implementation of Freshmen Academies in Scott County, Kentucky 1995-96 School Year through the 1999-2000 School Year?*

Results of Implementation of Freshmen Academies in Georgetown (Scott County), Kentucky

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Criteria</th>
<th>Before the Academies</th>
<th>After the Academies</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Dropouts</td>
<td>12.4%</td>
<td>4.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Failure Rates</td>
<td>17%</td>
<td>6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Expulsions</td>
<td>14 (1995-96 school year)</td>
<td>0 (1999-2000 school year)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Discipline Referrals Five-Year Period</td>
<td>2,159</td>
<td>1,015</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Attendance</td>
<td>89%</td>
<td>93%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Freshmen Comprehensive Test of Basic Skills (CTBS)</td>
<td>Increased 5%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The National Job Corps program. Besides Freshmen Academies, there are other intervention programs, such as the National Job Corps that serves approximately 62,000 students annually (Anne Arundel Community College, 2012). A part of President Lyndon B. Johnson's domestic agenda known as the Great Society, the Job Corps program was created by the Economic Opportunity Act of 1964, as part of his War on Poverty. Sargent Shriver, the first Director of the Office of Economic Opportunity, modeled the National Job Corps program on the Depression-era Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC) also known as the Three Cs Camp. Established in the 1930s as an emergency relief program, the CCC provided room, board, and employment to thousands of unemployed young people. Though the CCC was discontinued after World War II, Job Corps built on many of its methods and strategies (Trip Atlas, n.d.).

Job Corps's vision, or purpose, is to help America's at-promise youth obtain the skills necessary to give them the avenue to become productive and successful members of the nation's workforce (U.S. Department of Labor, 2007). The program uses the term at-promise rather than at-risk to emphasize the potential for a positive outcome for Job Corps' enrollees. The Job Corps' mission is to attract eligible at-promise youth, commonly referred to in the literature as at-risk youth, between the ages of 16 and 24 to enroll in the Job Corps program, teach them skills necessary for independence and employability, and place them in meaningful jobs or further education through the provision of comprehensive services which include basic
education, vocational skills training, counseling, and residential support (U.S. Department of Labor, 2013).

Job Corps is administered by the U.S. Department of Labor (Office of Job Corps) and is authorized by Title I-C of the Workforce Investment Act of 1998. Some centers are operated by the U.S. Department of Agriculture-Forest Service, while some are run by contractors (Dynarski et al., 2008). Since its establishment in 1964, more than 2 million disadvantaged youth have been served by the Job Corps program (U.S. Department of Labor, 2007). The typical Job Corps student is an individual who is from a low income status, who has never worked full-time, whose reading level is below eighth grade, and who has not completed high school (U.S. Department of Labor, 2007). To qualify for low income, applicants must have received public assistance such as food stamps (or been eligible to do so) in the 6 months prior to applying for admission; been a foster child; been disabled; been homeless, or must have met the poverty level income designated by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services guidelines.

The National Job Corps Association (n. d.) reported that 75% of the youth ages 16 to 24 who enroll in the Job Corps program do not have a high school diploma or GED certificate. Enrollment is not for a fixed period of time but is instead individualized and self-paced; however, students spend an average of 9 to 10 months in the program (National Job Corps Association, n.d.). For the first 2 to 4 weeks, students complete a career preparation period during which time they receive a mix of vocational and academic instruction. Because many of the Job Corps students enter
the program with poor to no literacy skills and poor numeracy skills, remedial education emphasizing reading and math is provided. Individuals who do not have a high school diploma and who are academically qualified are offered GED preparation classes (Dynarski et al. 2008). Furthermore, Job Corps students between the ages of 16 and 21 also have the option of earning a high school diploma through either an online, virtual high school at some centers, or through an academy within the Job Corps Center.

While enrolled in the Job Corps program, students live at the center in dormitories where they are provided not only room and board and clothing but are also offered counseling, health services, social-skills training, recreational activities, and a biweekly living allowance (Dynarski et al. 2008). These services are a distinctive feature of the Job Corps program.

In studying a group of 11,213 Job Corps students from more than 100 Job Corps centers nationwide, 43% of Job Corps students who entered the program without a high school diploma or GED certificate earned one by the end of the 48-month follow-up period compared with 26% of the students in the control group (What Works Clearinghouse, 2008). At the end of the 48-month follow-up period, 17% more of the Job Corps program students had earned a high school diploma or GED certificate than the control group students.

According to Wilson Quarterly (2009), a study of 15,400 youth eligible for Job Corps was conducted. In this sample, 60% participated in the Job Corps program. After completion of the Job Corps program, the participants earned
approximately 12% more each week than their same-age peers who did not enroll. In addition, it was found that up to 4 years from the beginning of their training job-linked fringe benefits were more likely to be received by those individuals who enrolled in the Job Corps program and completed it (Wilson Quarterly, 2009).

According to the National Job Corps Association (n. d.), for the relatively inexpensive cost of $26,000 per student, Job Corps is able to help the majority of dropouts who enter the program to complete their high school education or to earn a general equivalency diploma and more. Furthermore, the National Job Corps Association reported that 14.5 jobs are directly created and 9.5 local jobs are indirectly created for every million dollars spent by a Job Corps Center. In addition, Job Corps students complete thousands of hours of community service. Students build and repair public structures, and they help victims of natural disasters, such as fires, floods, and tornadoes. In the study, Does Job Corps Work?: Summary of the National Job Corps Study, (Burghardt, Schochet, McConnell, Johnson, Gritz, Glazerman, Homrighausen, & Jackson, 2001), it was found that "Job Corps is a good investment of society's resources: benefits exceed costs" (p. 28). The authors further found that for each dollar spent on the Job Corps program $2 is returned to society.

To complement this study, I examined programs beyond the Job Corps program that have the potential to have a positive impact on the United States' efforts waged toward overcoming the dropout issue in this country. A discussion of some of these programs follows.
AT&T's Aspire program. In 2008, AT&T launched the Aspire program. The purpose of the Aspire program is to face up to the high school dropout crisis in order to help students graduate. Ultimately, the goal is to prepare students for the future challenges of continuing education and the workforce.

In March of 2012, AT&T announced a recommitment to the Aspire program. The company announced a commitment to spend $250 million over a 5 year period. AT&T's Aspire program plans to build on that commitment by utilizing technology to connect with students more effectively. Examples of using technology to accomplish this include:

- Using interactive gamification,
- Web-based content and social media,
- Tapping the innovation engine of the AT&T Foundry to search for new or different means to overcome educational barriers.

The power of personal connections involving many of AT&T's employees will also be promoted through mentoring, internships, and voluntary efforts. The literature about AT&T's Aspire program indicates that it has positively affected more than 1 million U.S. high school students. According to the AT&T Aspire Web Site:

- The high school graduation rate has increased,
- From 2001 to 2009, the high school graduation rate grew by 3.5% nationally,
- The national graduation rate in 2001 was 72%; it rose to 75.5% by 2009,
The number of high schools designated as dropout factories (high schools in which the number of seniors enrolled is 60% or less than the 9th grade enrolled at the time that the seniors enrolled as first year high school students) declined from 2,007 to 1,550 (a 23% decrease) from 2002 to 2010.

Network for Teaching Entrepreneurship (NFTE). Besides the National Job Corps program and AT&T's Aspire program, the Network for Teaching Entrepreneurship (NFTE) is another strategy that has been successful in dropout prevention efforts. It began as a program to prevent students from dropping out of school and to improve the academic performance of students who were at risk of failing or of quitting school. NFTE was established in New York City in 1987 by Steve Mariotti (Network for Teaching and Entrepreneurship, 2012). Mariotti, a former entrepreneur who was teaching Math in a South Bronx school, combined his business background with his passion to teach at-risk students. Mariotti found when youth from low-income communities were given the opportunity to learn about entrepreneurship, their every day common sense approach to life on the streets could readily be developed into being knowledgeable in academic areas and in business acumen. Through learning about entrepreneurship, young people are able to make the connections between what they learn in the classroom and the real world. Authentic learning experiences are provided through Mariotti's methods. According to the NFTE Web site as viewed on April 11, 2012, the organization has worked with
almost 450,000 youth living in low-income communities in programs across the United States and around the world.

**Communities in Schools.** In addition to the aforementioned programs, Communities in Schools is a network of professionals who work in Los Angeles public schools to provide a community of support that enables students to finish high school and to reach goals in life. The program, conducted within the public school system, works to determine student needs and to establish relationships with local businesses, social service agencies, health care providers, parent organizations, and volunteer organizations in order to provide necessary resources.

The Communities in Schools of Los Angeles program was initiated in the fall of 2007, and a total of 150 students in Hamilton and Venice High Schools participated. According to the Communities in Schools (2010) Web site, the program now has more than 1,900 students in eight schools around Los Angeles. Communities in Schools, Inc. (2010) reported the following successes for the 2008-2009 school year:

- 91% of students monitored for promotion risk were promoted to the next grade,
- 84% of monitored seniors graduated, and
- 97% of students monitored as potential dropouts remained in school at the end of the 2008-2009 school year.
The Stay in School Toolkit. Another promising venture began in 1986 when United States Representative Harold (Hal) Rogers (who represents Kentucky's Fifth Congressional District) along with business leaders, community leaders, and educators, created an organization called Forward in the Fifth. The purpose of the organization was to reverse low educational attainment rates in Southern and Eastern Kentucky. Engage, advocate, and support are the three key components of Forward in the Fifth's mission (Forward in the Fifth, 2012). During the spring of 2012, Forward in the Fifth and its affiliate, The Center for Rural Development, launched a dropout prevention video and discussion guide. The DVD is simply titled the Stay in School Toolkit. The stories of eight individuals from rural Appalachia are able to be selected and viewed. The individuals include a professional baseball player, an entrepreneur, a Kentucky National Guard sergeant, and a district court judge. Seven of these individuals discuss how they used education to advance their career goals. One individual was an incarcerated young man who cautions the viewer about wasting opportunities to get an education. The DVD includes a discussion guide for each individual's story.

Jim Tackett, Executive Director of Forward in the Fifth, in an electronic correspondence dated, April 11, 2012, stated, “At this time, we do not have any direct data or impact measures in-hand as a result of the Toolkit. Our plan is to follow-up with the training attendees at the beginning of the next semester to identify such information” (J. Tackett, April 11, 2012, personal communication).
There are many intervention programs that are working to reduce the number of high school dropouts. Some of these programs or strategies include ninth grade (freshmen) academies to help students transition from middle school to high school, connecting and building relationships with students, classes, such as High School 101 that teaches survival skills, and programs such as Job Corps.

**Summary**

Review of the literature revealed an inextricable connection between poverty and students who become high school dropouts. The absence of resources, which can include a lack of advocacy, can lead to student disengagement and other events that end with the failure to earn a high school diploma.

There are some programs, including the National Job Corps program, that seem to be successful in assisting students with earning a high school diploma or a general equivalency diploma. Why are these programs working? Is it because of transition programs, effective relationship building, or are there other reasons for the effectiveness of these programs? Is it because some schools or programs are listening? Bridgeland et al. (2006), in *The Silent Epidemic: Perspectives of High School Dropouts*, inquired about what dropouts believed would improve students' chances of staying in school. The top two factors identified were to provide more opportunities for real-world learning and better teachers who make learning interesting. If we are to end the dropout dilemma, we need to listen to what these students have to say.
CHAPTER 3: METHODOLOGY/PROCEDURES

Problem Statement

Approximately 40 years ago, President John F. Kennedy recognized that the failure of students to earn a high school diploma was an issue in the United States. In 1963, Kennedy began the "Summer Dropout Campaign" entirely for identifying and getting potential dropouts to return to school in the fall (Rumberger, 2011). The dropout problem remains a dilemma in 2013. "Every 29 seconds, another student gives up on school, resulting in more than one million American dropouts a year – or 7,000 every day" (DoSomething.org., n.d.).

The purpose of this study was to investigate why a selection of former Job Corps students dropped out of a traditional high school program as well as why they were able to earn a general equivalency diploma (GED) or a high school diploma (HSD) while enrolled in the Job Corps program. I conducted a qualitative study that involved carrying out face-to-face interviews with seven former Job Corps students. The interviews were recorded using a video camera, the video interviews were transcribed into notes, and the notes were analyzed and themes identified from each case study. The themes that emerged from the interviews were evaluated for commonalities and differences.

Conceptual Framework

The conceptual framework for this study is the belief that individuals who dropped out of high school were disengaged. Tyler and Lofstrom (2009) found that students often reported some measure of school disengagement as the primary reason
for leaving school. The participants (Tyler & Lofstrom, 2009) regularly declared they disliked school and found classes to be uninteresting. It was further believed that disengagement did not occur in isolation but was instead influenced by the students' lives. Outside influences and students' home life were indicators of whether individuals would fail to complete high school. When a student becomes a class clown, skips school, hangs with a crowd of other students who do not value an education, it does not happen in isolation. Furthermore, it was believed that poverty has an impact on students' decisions to drop out of school. Jensen (2009) indicated that students who disrupt class by demonstrating impulsivity, common among students from poverty, are actually reacting to stressors in their lives as a survival mechanism. Stanley and Plucker (2008) found there was a large body of research that revealed that minority students, as well as students from low-income families, were less likely to complete high school than their peers. According to Jensen (2009), students from poverty often express feelings of isolation and of being unloved, and these feelings of being forsaken lead to a "downward spiral of unhappy life events, including poor academic performance, behavioral problems, dropping out of school, and drug abuse" (p. 9). It was also believed that students who failed to complete high school did not see the value of an education. Finally, former high school dropouts who completed the Job Corps program and earned either a high school diploma or a general equivalency diploma while enrolled in the program found a higher level of support at Job Corps than in a traditional school setting.
Research Questions

1. How do former Job Corps students, who dropped out of high school, explain why they dropped out of school?

2. Why were these former Job Corps students able to obtain a high school diploma or a general equivalency diploma while enrolled in Job Corps?

Methodology

A qualitative method was used for this study. In order to find out why selected students dropped out of high school and why those students were able to complete the Job Corps program, I interviewed seven individuals who earned a HSD or a GED while enrolled in the Job Corps program. All of the former Job Corps students chosen for the case studies had reached a higher level of success (employment, higher education, or both) than would have been probable without a HSD or GED. Each interviewee has been given a pseudonym for the purpose of being able to protect their identities during discussion of the findings.

Face-to-face interviews were conducted with each case study participant. After having each individual sign a confidentiality agreement, the interviews were recorded with a video camera. I reviewed each interview and transcribed it into notes. I recorded responses to the questions in a spreadsheet and analyzed for common themes as well as differences in the responses of the individuals.

Interviewees were asked to respond to the following statements/questions:

1. Discuss why you quit school.

2. How did you find out about the Job Corps program?
3. Why did you enroll in the Job Corps program?

4. Describe your experience in the Job Corps and explain what if any impact it had on your life.

5. Discuss the most and least helpful things about the Job Corps program.

6. In thinking back about your Job Corps experience, is there anything that you would change?

7. Is there anything else that you would like to share about your Job Corps experience?
CHAPTER 4: FINDINGS/IDENTIFIED STRATEGIES AND PRODUCTS

Findings

I interviewed seven former Job Corps students. Five of the seven former students were male. Of those five, two were Caucasian and three were African American. Two females were interviewed; one was Caucasian and the other was Hispanic. One Caucasian male was from Eastern Kentucky, and the other Caucasian male was from Southeastern Ohio. The remaining males were African American; one was from Delaware, one was from North Carolina, and one was from Georgia. The Hispanic female was from Northern Kentucky, and the Caucasian female was from Florida.

Will

Will, a young Caucasian male from Eastern Kentucky, who was age 25 at the time of the interview, was asked why he quit school. He responded that he had gotten a job at Little Caesar's and had been offered a promotion and a raise if he could work more hours. He explained he really felt it was his excuse to quit school because he actually hated school. When he was asked why he hated school, Will could not give a definite answer other than to say it was probably just because he had to be there.

Will was then asked to explain more about his school experiences before Job Corps. He responded that in one of the Eastern Kentucky counties where he had attended school he got into a lot of fights. Because Will got into fights at school, he ended up getting placed in an alternative school. Beginning in the sixth grade and
continuing through the eighth grade, Will attended the alternative school. He returned to the regular classroom setting during his first year of high school.

When did he quit going to school? Will elaborated that he went to 1 semester in the district where his father lives. After that semester, he went to live with his mother and enrolled in the district where she lived. He went to that school for about 2 years before he quit school. By his own admission, Will's attendance was an issue. He commented he went some of the time but also confessed he had skipped school quite a lot and was behind in school as a result. Admittedly, his attendance was terrible along with his grades, and he felt he would have been too old to graduate by the time he would have been able to graduate from high school.

How did Will find out about the Job Corps program? Will explained that one day he picked up a Jobs Magazine and found an article that asked about going to school and getting paid to go to school. He said he was skeptical but Will also said he thought he, of course, wanted to go to school and get paid. He discussed this opportunity with his father and subsequently decided to enroll in the Job Corps program.

What reason or reasons did Will give for enrolling in the Job Corps program? Will indicated when he was 18 he thought a $0.50 an hour raise was a big pay raise, but later on he came to a different realization. He conveyed that going from $6.00 an hour to $6.50 was not a big raise, but it seemed like a big raise to him at the time. Will explained he felt dependent upon his father and wanted to be able to make it in life on his own. He commented even though he felt like he was a grown man and
needed to leave his father's home, he did not have the money to move out on his own. Will ended up staying with a friend in the town where he was working, but he did not feel that his friend's place was really his home. He reflected he could not afford a place of his own in which to live, had no education, and had no one to provide a stable home life other than his father. He stated he felt he had to do something since he did not want to live to be 30 or 40 years old and not have any place to call his own. He explained he became aware that he was too dependent upon his father and was unable to take care of himself.

Will was next asked to describe his experiences at Job Corps and what if any impact it had on his life. He was adamant that Job Corps was the best thing that had ever happened to him and credited it with saving his life. He said he would not have any possessions, and he would still have been working at jobs that paid little as he had done prior to enrolling in the Job Corps program.

How much experience did Will get working in restaurants before enrolling in the Job Corps program? Will said his first job was at a Wendy's and he left that job to work at Little Caesar's. Will finally dropped out of school during his sophomore year when he was offered a promotion at Little Caesar's and a $0.50 per hour increase in pay. After leaving Little Caesar's, he enrolled in and completed the Job Corps program. While he was enrolled in the program, he went on camp crews. He explained it was on those camp crews that he got to see the United States. When there was a natural disaster in Nevada, Utah, Idaho, or Oregon, Will took the opportunity to work on the camp crews and earn extra money.
While Will was enrolled in the Job Corps program, he stated he felt that he got an educational foundation. He earned a general equivalency diploma (GED), got trained in painting, and he secured a union job after he completed the program. When Will was asked to explain what had happened to the union job, he indicated his Paint Instructor had encouraged him to stay in the program. Since it was in the autumn, Will was told that painting was only going to slow down. Will acknowledged that at the age of 18 he thought he knew everything. He reported he told the instructor he would be fine. The instructor helped Will to find a union job, and Will went to New Albany, Indiana to work as a union painter. As the instructor predicted, work slowed down. Will did not get laid off but he was told he could come in and work for 3 or 4 hours. He understood his employers were just trying to keep him busy. Will said working for 25 or 30 hours a week was not enough to pay his bills. So, he took a voluntary lay off and moved back to Kentucky. This job, from which Will took a voluntary lay off, had a starting pay of $10.72 per hour. Will had left the assistant manager's position at Little Caesar's making $6.50 an hour. Because he went to Job Corps and got a general equivalency diploma as well as vocational training, he was able to earn $4.22 more per hour. If he had continued in the union job in painting, his wages would have increased $0.90 an hour every 90 days until he got journeyman wages. Will conveyed that Journeyman's wages at that time were around $19.00 per hour. Had Will continued with his union job as a painter, he would have eventually been earning nearly 3 times the amount of pay he had earned in his last restaurant job.
Will was next asked to discuss the most and least helpful things about the Job Corps program. He disclosed the most helpful thing about Job Corps was that he was able to get the educational foundation needed for him to be able to make it. He maintained no one is employable without that educational foundation.

Will went on to discuss that he felt that the individuals that end up in the Job Corps program may be more easily pushed into gangs. He affirmed the Job Corps program takes young people who were in his estimation less fortunate. According to Will, the individuals who enroll in the Job Corps program are often those who grow up in tougher environments. He felt this was particularly true if their parents were dead.

Will's own background had a series of losses. First of all, while both of his parents are living, they divorced when he was about 8 years old. Will's mother was his father's third wife. His father quit high school in tenth grade and used drugs and alcohol throughout his life. Will's paternal grandfather died from cancer when his father was 16-years old. Will's mother is a high school graduate. Her father was drowned when she was a small child.

What did not work at Job Corps? In Will's estimation the program was really well structured. He indicated, however, that he felt more diverse trade options should be offered. Most of the trades offered are harder, construction trades. Will did not think that these harder trades are for everyone. He asserted the work is hard, back-breaking work. He suggested that offering courses for which Job Corps students could earn college credit would be helpful. Will's idea was that this would be very
helpful to students who have low incomes and want to go to college. In Will's opinion, many of the students at Job Corps were smarter than average but could not afford to take the time to be full time students. He suggested that Job Corps students could benefit from being able to earn general education requirements for college while enrolled in the Job Corps program.

Will maintained that if you stay focused on the reason that you enroll in the Job Corps program, it is a great program. He expressed that Job Corps was not designed to be a summer camp. Will also affirmed it is difficult to be away from family and friends that you care about.

Will was asked to think back about his Job Corps experience and discuss anything that he would change. He stated he would have listened to his Painting Instructor and would have stayed in the program. While he was making $9.00 per hour at the time of the interview and getting bonuses in addition, Will felt it was nothing compared to how well he would have been doing had he stayed in the union job in which Job Corps placed him. Will attested that anyone who goes to Job Corps and follows the program without getting the idea he is a super macho tough guy, who keeps out of romantic involvements with other students, and who stays focused on the reason he enrolled in the program, can only result in being taken from not being able to take care of himself to being able to take care of himself, as well as to support a family.

Since Will was not working in the trade for which he trained while at Job Corps, I wondered if he thought he would choose the same trade, painting, if he had
the opportunity to do it all over. Will explained that he was interested in computers, however, no computer program was offered at the Job Corps he had attended. He decided on painting because he was not interested in auto mechanics, in pouring cement, or in taking brick and block. He did not want to get into facility maintenance, and he knew carpentry was not for him. So, he was left with the options of culinary arts or painting and decided to take painting. According to Will, his instructor was a great guy, and he spoke with him several times after completing the program. Basically, Will explained that he took painting, as his trade at Job Corps, because it was the trade he disliked the least.

Finally, Will was asked to discuss anything else he wanted to share about his Job Corps experience. He discussed the Center-Standards Officer (CSO) whom he indicated was helpful to him. At one point, Will went back to his father's home after getting upset with a staff member when he had to perform kitchen police (KP) duty. The CSO called him and encouraged him to return. In addition to the CSO, Will also discussed one of the guidance counselors who had been his crew leader on a camp crew trip to Utah. He explained he would have been left in Utah on one of the camp crews to that area if the guidance counselor had not helped him. The group of students who were members of the camp crew was on a plane flying back to Kentucky. While they were in flight, some severe thunderstorms began to occur, and because the storms were so severe, the plane had to fly in a holding pattern. Will described that he and another student were so scared they cried and held hands. He pronounced he simply broke down and he and the other student cried and prayed.
A BRIDGE TO SUCCESS

After the plane landed, he was so unnerved by the ordeal he insisted he was not going to get back on the plane. He, in fact, told the counselor who was in charge of his group that she was going to have to leave him behind in Utah. She, however, was very persuasive and coaxed Will into getting on the plane. The counselor bought Will some Dramamine. He explained that the counselor purchased the Dramamine for him but that he did not want to take it. Instead of taking the Dramamine, he expressed to the counselor that he at least wanted to know about it if he were going to die.

When asked to discuss the reasons he believed most students got kicked out of the program, when he was enrolled in the program, Will indicated a couple of students got sent home for fighting, smoking dope, and failing drug tests. Students that enroll in Job Corps sign a zero tolerance policy regarding violence and the use of drugs and alcohol. Will indicated little patience for students who did not want to follow policy. It was his perspective that anyone who decided to fly across the country to spend a year and devote a great deal of time only to ignore the zero tolerance policy and get sent home had wasted their time. Will pointed out that there is no half of a general equivalency diploma. In his opinion, it was all or nothing.

Will communicated his overall experience in the Job Corps program was positive. He earned a GED while enrolled in Job Corps. He insisted that enrolling in Job Corps was the best thing that ever happened to him and credited the program with saving his life. He was certain he would have had a menial job and would have still
been working in fast-food restaurants had it not been for the fact that he enrolled in and completed the Job Corps program.

At the time of the interview, Will was making $9.00 per hour working as a salesperson at a local furniture store. A few months later, he lost that job and went to work at a children's home near his home in Eastern Kentucky. This would not have been possible if Will not enrolled in Job Corps and earned his GED.

Life can put obstacles in the way for anyone, but obstacles can be overcome. Will's parents' dysfunctional relationship and subsequent divorce is an obstacle many of our nation's youth must overcome in order to simply graduate from high school or earn a general equivalency diploma (GED). Hansen and Toso's (2007) case study of individuals who dropped out of school found similar information. One of the 10 themes that emerged from their study was loss and aloneness or lack of advocacy. Examples included death of a grandparent or grandparents, death of a best friend, and the mental illness of a parent. "More than half of the participants told about extreme loss; none reported that they received help at school" (Hansen & Toso, 2007, p. 38).

Will lost both his paternal and maternal grandmother at an early age. In addition, his parents divorced when he was around 8 years old. Will's older brother died from liver failure at the age of 28 when Will was about 12 years old. In a few short years, he experienced several profound losses. Even though his life was a series of traumatic events, he ended up in an alternative school. Instead of finding out what was causing behaviors and trying to help Will stay in a regular classroom setting, he was labeled as a problem child and placed in an alternate setting.
Will found the support needed to earn a GED while enrolled as a student in the Job Corps program. He also completed a course as a trainee in painting. Will claimed enrolling in the Job Corps program was the best thing that ever happened to him and credited the program with saving his life. Will mentioned a counselor and the center standards officer as individuals who were helpful to him. Obviously, these individuals’ encouragement pushed him to be successful and to complete the program. The program was able to help him because he got the support that he needed 7 days a week 24 hours a day. Not only was support in the education arena, as in a traditional school setting, available, but also support through residential living or dorm staff, as well as through counselors and other staff members.

**Jazz**

Jazz, an African American male from Delaware who was 19 at the time of the interview, declared he was not going to lie about why he quit school. He explained that he had been a goof ball in school, had too many things going on when he was in high school, and basically had to leave school in order to get his act together.

Jazz's biological parents divorced when he was 3 or 4 years old. His mother remarried, and Jazz's step-father was in the catering business. Jazz's father is now deceased and his mother and his step-father are divorced. At the time that the interview was conducted, his mother had a boyfriend whom Jazz considered to be a role model. Both of Jazz's parents dropped out of high school, but his mother subsequently earned a GED. Jazz has one sister who quit high school in the tenth grade and who was incarcerated when Jazz was interviewed.
When he was asked to explain what he meant by goof ball, Jazz explained that he had been the class clown. Jazz was asked to explain what made him the class clown. He went on to explain that he was the class clown and did not really care about much when he was in high school. Jazz admitted he had known he would have been wasting his time if he had stayed in school. He confessed he would not have studied nor done homework if he had stayed in school. It seemed Jazz was really stating going to school was a waste of time, and when asked, he affirmed by explaining that going to school was a waste of time for him. Jazz conveyed that he stopped going to school in order to do something better.

Jazz explained he quit high school to work in his step-father's catering business and to make some money. After that did not work out for him, he said his mother found out about the Job Corps program and told him about it. Jazz and his mother watched some commercials together, and afterwards, he stated that he decided that he would have nothing to lose by going to Job Corps and getting paid for actually doing something. He knew that he wanted to enroll in the culinary arts training at Job Corps before he enrolled in the program. Why did he enroll in the Job Corps program? Jazz divulged that he had wanted to be a chef and realizing that Job Corps offered training in culinary arts, he decided enrolling in the program would be a good start for him.

Jazz said his experience at Job Corps had actually prepared him for life in the real kitchen. He praised his culinary arts instructor whom he professed was one of the best teachers that he had ever had. According to Jazz, while some places do not
really prepare students, he learned how to work in the real world while at Job Corps. He learned about workplace relationships and ethics. Because of the Job Corps program and his instructor, Jazz felt that he learned how to prepare himself for a job and actually show up for work.

In describing his experiences while enrolled in the Job Corps program, Jazz described Job Corps as its own little world. In his opinion, being at Job Corps allowed him to meet a diverse group of people all in one place. Jazz maintained he had been able to learn about different people from different places while he was enrolled in Job Corps. While he acknowledged there sometimes were clashes, he also conveyed that some of what clashed did clash in a good way. He emphasized how critical it is, when one is enrolled as a student, to just focus on what one really wants. He maintained anyone who enrolls as a student in the Job Corps program, and who avoids allowing anyone to distract him, will be able to succeed.

Jazz discussed the most helpful and the least helpful things about the Job Corps program. The instructor for the culinary arts trade actually took the students to live caterings so that they got real-world, hands-on training. One event, which Jazz mentioned, was the Incredible Food Show and takes place at Rupp Arena in Lexington, Kentucky every year. Jazz described that what he learned was not just out of a book and emphasized that it involved a great deal of hands-on learning.

Jazz attested he would not change anything about his experience in the Job Corps program. Before he went to Job Corps, Jazz said he had not been a people person. His comments indicated he usually stayed to himself and did not talk to
people. He claimed he was not a shy person any longer and expressed the ability to meet people, talk to people, and be able to explain the food that he prepared. Jazz asserted going to Job Corps was what gave him the ability to get past his natural shyness and allow him to be able to talk to people.

When asked to share anything he wanted about his Job Corps experiences, Jazz communicated his belief that studying hard made him better. He knew if he tried his best to make sure he could perfect his skills in plating and in perfecting his food, he would be able to put himself into the world of work as a chef and make himself as big as he wanted to be. He credited the fact that he had studied hard and had done what he had needed to do resulting in being able to land a job at a small bistro in Lexington, Kentucky. According to Jazz, the restaurant ranks as one of the top ten restaurants in Kentucky.

Like Will, Jazz’s parents divorced. Not only did his parents get divorced when he was a toddler, his mother and step-father divorced as well. In addition, his father died. His only sibling, a sister, ended up dropping out of school and being incarcerated. Students often act out to get some kind of attention. Perhaps, Jazz who referred to himself as the class clown acted out in school in order to get some attention due to the fact that he needed help in order to succeed in school. Before Job Corps, he reported that he had stayed to himself and was not a people person. This aloneness was a theme which emerged from Hansen and Toso’s (2007) study in which the majority of the subjects in their study experienced profound loss. Jazz’s story, like
Will's, has some difficult losses. The divorces alone account for emotional upheaval in his life.

At the time of the interview, Jazz was attending an advanced culinary arts program at a university in Lexington, Kentucky and was working at a bistro making $12.50 per hour. At the end of June of 2012, he was promoted to Sou Chef and was earning $17.50 per hour.

Since Job Corps is a residential program with support 24 hours a day 7 days a week, Jazz found the support he needed at Job Corps to successfully complete a vocational program and to earn his high school diploma (HSD) from the high school academy at the Job Corps in which he enrolled. In particular, Jazz's culinary arts instructor pushed and mentored him. It is critical that students have someone who mentors and encourages in order for them to be successful in school and in life.

Taylor

Taylor, a 19-year old Caucasian male from Southeastern Ohio, had been homeschooled before enrolling in the Job Corps program. He, a young man who was adopted, moved to Ohio from Maryland with his family when he was 14 years old. Taylor's mother was a drug addict who eventually died of a drug overdose after Taylor and his siblings were removed from her home. His adopted parents are teachers who did not think that, in light of what his father saw go on every day in public school, it would be good for Taylor, his older brother, and his two younger siblings to be enrolled in public school. Taylor's adopted parents felt that putting
their adopted children into public school would be unsafe because of their backgrounds.

When asked why he had quit school, Taylor explained he had not liked being homeschooled. Taylor told me both of his parents are certified teachers. Just before he turned 14 years old, his parents decided to homeschool him. Taylor did not like the idea of being homeschooled because he was unable to have friends or be involved in sports or various other activities. What made his parents decide to pull him out of public school? Taylor said his father concluded he and his siblings were co-dependent. He interpreted his parents' reasoning to mean they believed he would be more susceptible to influences in the public school setting because of his birth mother's drug use. According to Taylor, his parents wanted to keep him from turning out like his birth mother.

When Taylor was 14 and getting ready to go to Mexico to do a mission trip to do carpentry, he got into an argument with his mother about school work and some other family issues. The family was getting ready to move from Maryland to Ohio, and Taylor decided he did not want to move with the family. He walked out but ended up going back home about 2 hours later. His parents assured him it would be put in the past and stay there. Taylor felt, however, that he hit the same wall whenever he turned 17. At the age of 17, Taylor became a run-away when he left home and was gone for 93 days. He traveled from Proctorville, Ohio all the way to Spokane, Washington. Taylor explained he ended up in juvenile hall as a consequence of running away.
So what happened in juvenile hall? During those first 6 months at a juvenile detention center, Taylor said he messed around and did not attend to his school work. He ended up talking to a friend and discussing options. It was during this discussion that Taylor found out about the Job Corps program. Taylor reported he told his friend that he did not like school. As it turned out, the friend with whom Taylor had discussed his options knew about Job Corps and told him about the program. The catch was that Taylor could not enroll without parental permission until reaching 18-years of age.

What was Taylor's reason for enrolling in the Job Corps program? Taylor stated his parents kicked him out when he was 18 because of family problems. He was worried he would end up on the street and have nothing in life. Taylor enrolled in the Job Corps program with the intention of going to one center in Eastern Kentucky. He ended up at a different center but one that was still in Eastern Kentucky. Taylor was told that if he put his mind to it, he would get help with getting a trade and his diploma.

How did Taylor describe his experiences while in the Job Corps program? Taylor enrolled in the carpentry trade and the high school program while he was a Job Corps student. He indicated his experience at Job Corps overall was good. Because he had been homeschooled, he had never been with people his own age in a school setting. When he arrived at the Job Corps Center, he was excited to get there. Taylor realized that he was with people his own age and found himself in a situation where he felt that it was live and let learn. Being enrolled in the program was not just about
making friends, it was about taking a chance on an option that would get him somewhere.

What did Taylor cite as the most helpful thing about his Job Corps experience? Even though he related that he had learned much through his trade along with education and from working with and around people, Taylor commented the most helpful thing he learned was about leadership. He ended up becoming a bay leader in one of the male dorms. If he could go back and repeat his Job Corps experience, one thing he would definitely change would be to get his driver's license. Taylor did not obtain a driver's license while he was enrolled as a student at Job Corps. At one point after completing the program, he worked for a company that put on roofing and vinyl siding and was making $16.50 per hour; however, after being laid off from that job, Taylor could not find work close enough for him to walk to the job sites. At the time of the interview, he was homeless and was surviving by doing odd jobs which he had the skills to perform thanks to his Carpentry Classes at the Job Corps.

Taylor thought any person who enrolls in the Job Corps program should make sure to take advantage of all that is offered. He conveyed that individuals should do more than just what they have to do in order to complete and that whatever is done while enrolled in the program will affect the individual for years to come. Taylor cited his one serious regret as not getting his driver's license. Taylor also discussed the Job Corps staff, and said they made their job a priority. In his opinion, it was not
just a 9 to 5 job for the staff at Job Corps. He credited the staff with having made a huge impact on his life.

Taylor, like Rod and Sam in the study by Meeker et al. (2008), was homeschooled. It did not work out for Rod or Sam; and, even though both of his adopted parents were teachers, it did not work out for Taylor.

Bickerstaff's (2009-2010) study followed a group of nine students for 1 year beginning with the first day in a diploma granting program created for out-of-school youth in a large metropolitan school district in which 61% of the district's high schools graduated less than 50% of the freshman class within 4 years. Like Taylor's parents, Bart's (one of the subjects) mother withdrew him from high school because of her concerns about school violence.

Even though Taylor had his adopted parents, he experienced upheaval early in his life. Not all of his biological siblings were adopted by the same family. His birth mother was a persistent drug user who eventually died of a drug overdose. His adopted parents, while trying to protect him from school violence because of what they assumed could be inherent tendencies related to his birth mother's issues and his life with her, may have been too protective. While Taylor wanted to have friends his own age and be allowed to participate in sports, his adopted parents forced him to be homeschooled. He eventually rebelled and ran away from home and was later kicked out of his adopted parents' home. Again, this is another young man who had no advocates who really tried to understand his needs. Yet again, the aloneness which was a theme that became apparent from Hansen and Toso's study (2007) was evident
in Taylor's experiences. He was taken from his mother and separated from biological
siblings; and, to compound this, he was not allowed to attend a school where he could
meet and form relationships with peers his age.

As with Will and Jazz, Taylor found the support he needed at Job Corps to
successfully complete a vocational program and to earn his HSD from the high school
academy at the Job Corps in which he enrolled. Job Corps' staff are not just on duty
from 9 to 5 but are on duty 24 hours a day 7 days a week. Staff includes vocational
instructors, academic instructors, residential living staff, recreation staff, wellness
staff, and guidance counselors.

Libby

When asked to discuss why she had quit high school, Libby, a 20-year old
Caucasian female from Florida, declared her decision to quit school was a long story.
When Libby stopped going to school was enrolled in an alternative school. She went
on to explain she had not wanted to follow her mother's rules; so, when she was 17,
she moved in with her sister.

Libby believed being forced to go to the alternative school was
counterproductive. In her opinion, mixing together students who are troubled or
misbehaving all in the same school could result in only a negative outcome. Since
Libby mentioned misbehaving, she was asked if she was saying she ended up in
alternative school because she was misbehaving. She confirmed she had been acting
out in school. Libby was asked to explain why she was acting out. She reported the
teachers at her school had not really cared and had not really wanted to teach. It was
her opinion they were just there for a paycheck and the students could do whatever they wanted to do. While there were a few teachers there who cared, it was Libby's estimation that most of the teachers just ignored the students. Libby was asked to discuss how she knew the difference between the teachers who cared and the teachers who did not care. She imparted that those teachers who did care would go around the classroom student-by-student. Those teachers would give the students their assignments and actually take the time to ask if the students needed help with the assignment. Libby described teachers who demonstrated they really did not care by sitting at their desk on their phones. She also conveyed there were some teachers who would pass out work and never explain it to the students.

Like some of the participants in Bickerstaff's (2009-2010) study, Libby felt the teachers were there just to get a pay check. When she acted out, instead of getting the help she needed, Libby got suspended from school. Libby reported she got suspended a lot in school and that most of the suspensions were because she got caught smoking a cigarette in the girls' restroom. When asked what other things she had done for which she got suspended, she disclosed she also got suspended for skipping school. She confessed that skipping school was really easy to do because of the location of the alternative school she attended. The alternative school she attended was about 45 minutes away from where she lived. She had to catch a bus to the traditional high school, get off that bus at the traditional high school, and get on another bus that transported students to the alternative school. Libby explained most of her friends were at the regular high school she had attended before being
transferred to the alternative school. She had friends who were seniors in high school who, like Libby, did not want to be in school. Libby revealed she never had homework to do when she attended the alternative school. She had a job because she wanted money to be able to go and do the things she wanted to be able to do. Because Libby had a job, she bought gas for her friend's car, and they drove around and skipped school all day.

How did Libby find out about the Job Corps program? Libby's mother found out about Job Corps through a friend of hers who had attended a Job Corps Center in Virginia. Libby explained that her mother's friend had told her how great and how awesome the Job Corps program was. After Libby's sister ended up kicking Libby out of her home, her mother decided if Libby was not going to follow her rules she was going to get a dose of tough love. Libby's mother told her she was going to sign her up for the Job Corps program. Since Libby was not yet 18 years old, she informed Libby she could sign her up without Libby having to agree to it. Even though she was not given a choice to stay and not enroll in the Job Corps program, Libby knew it would not be long until she was 18. Libby said she and her mother went downtown, and her mother signed her up for the Job Corps program. While she did not expect to be able to enroll until at least 6 months to a year had passed, Libby was accepted for enrollment into the program within about 2 weeks. She had it in her mind she would leave as soon as she turned 18 years old. Even though she was forced by her mother to enroll in the Job Corps program and felt she would quit the program immediately after her eighteenth birthday, Libby did not leave when she
turned 18. Instead, she met someone who enrolled in Job Corps to better himself, and Libby ended up staying until she completed her trade and earned a high school diploma.

When Libby was asked to describe her experiences in the Job Corps program, she indicated she considers herself to be a social butterfly who loves to talk to people. Because she does enjoy talking to people, Libby felt this made it easier for her to be enrolled in the program. She also conveyed it was while she was enrolled in the Job Corps program that she met her fiancé. Libby reported her fiancé had signed up for the program because he had wanted to better himself and was very serious about the program. She, on the other hand, had been forced to be there and went through a phrase when she really did not care.

How does Libby think Job Corps affected her life? She conveyed that the Job Corps program had a positive impact on her life. Libby explained she got an educational foundation. In her opinion, she did not think she would have earned her HSD had it not been for enrolling in the high school academy within the program.

Libby's mother got remarried when she was 12 to the man Libby believed was her biological father. Until she was 12-years old, she and her sister always had to go visit her sister's dad every summer. One summer, when Libby asked her sister if her sister's dad was her dad too, her sister confirmed for her that they shared the same father. Libby went to her sister's dad and asked him if he was her real dad; he confirmed he was her biological father. Libby said she and the man whom she had thought until this point was her sister's father but not her father took a DNA test.
After the DNA test proved what her sister and her biological father told her was true, the three of them decided they would not tell her mother that Libby knew the truth. About a week after Libby and her sister got back to her mother's, her biological father sent a copy of the DNA test report to her mother. Libby's mother was angry, and Libby reported it made her feel as if she had done something wrong. Her mother admitted she had intended to tell Libby the truth when Libby turned 18 years old. Libby commented she felt as if she had to grow up fast and had to deal with and see things no child should experience.

Both of Libby's parents are high school dropouts who later earned a GED. Both of them were dishonest with her for the first 12 years of her life. This betrayal of trust left her with no role model at home she could trust. By her descriptions of teachers' behavior at the alternative school she attended, she was obviously disengaged with no one at school to whom she could turn. Building relationships with students is a key that needs to be used regularly with students. Libby reported that many of the teachers in her previous school passed out work and sat at their desks on their cell phones. Relationship building was not a priority.

Libby commented about helpful experiences while enrolled in the Job Corps program. She explained that all Job Corps students have a regular routine. According to Libby, all students have to take on the responsibility of cleaning in the dorms every morning and every evening and this was one of the most helpful things about the Job Corps program. What was least helpful about the program? I was surprised to find Libby felt allowing students to work at their own pace was what
Libby viewed as the least helpful thing about the program. In her opinion, this was the one thing she felt really trapped students. She felt allowing students to work at their own pace is detrimental for students when you do not know whether or not they are really serious about completion. Libby admitted she was not serious for a long time when she was enrolled in the program. What turned Libby around and got her to be serious about program completion? She divulged that meeting her fiancé turned her around. He was very serious about the program and convinced her she had to get to work if they were going to have anything as a couple.

What did Libby think it was about Job Corps that kept her there and helped her to earn her high school diploma? She asserted the book work she had to do was not difficult, and it all depended on her getting it done. Libby admitted she did get her work done when she knew she had to get it done, but she claimed it was much harder to learn in that manner than it was to be in a classroom and listen to a teacher teach. Libby went on to explain there had been times while she was enrolled in the high school academy when she had gone to Mrs. Beatle (pseudonym) and explained she was having difficulty with a math problem. Mrs. Beatle always helped Libby. Libby explained she understood why the teachers did not stand up in front of the classroom and teach. She surmised the students were on many different ability levels. Libby felt students should be put in classrooms based on their educational needs. Libby already had 13 credits when she enrolled in the high school academy within the Job Corps program. When she had been there for nearly a year, Libby felt she should already have completed her high school program. However, she claimed
because the work was self-paced, she did not really care and often procrastinated. Libby, like Bart in Bickerstaff's (2009-2010) study just needed someone to give her a little push to motivate her.

When Libby was asked to compare Job Corps with the public school setting, she conveyed that in public school you see those people [students] for 8 hours a day and then go home and never see them until the next day. At Job Corps, you live with them and see them day in and day out. Libby attested that one can often get frustrated, and that is where problems begin. In her opinion, dorm life was an area that could have used serious improvement. Life in the dorm, according to Libby, got more difficult for her after she became a leader. She went on to reveal that as a wing leader in the dorm, she had to go out because of loud-mouthed females in the dorm and a television against a wall blasting on Black Entertainment Television (BET).

While enrolled in the Job Corps program, Libby obtained her learner's permit to drive; but, at the time of the interview, she had not as yet obtained her driver's license. She said that her learner's permit would expire in several months. The one thing she said she would change would be her choice of a trade. While Libby loved culinary arts classes, she hated that she was in education one week and in her vocational class the next week. Instead of culinary arts, Libby stated she would most likely take office administration.

Overall, Libby stated that Job Corps is a good program. In spite of her declaration that Job Corps is a good program overall, Libby identified a weakness in the program. She maintained she had seen many students try to make it on their own
and fail. She reasoned that one cause of the former students not being able to make it was because they did not know how to budget and spend their money. It was Libby's opinion that students should be taught budgeting. Her reasoning was at least half of the time the former Job Corps students were on their own for the first time with their own money. Libby indicated the former students had no idea of how to manage their money in a responsible manner. She felt they wasted their money.

At the time of the interview, Libby was working at home as a customer service representative for a major mobile telephone company and was getting paid approximately $0.19 per minute. Without the HSD that Libby earned while at Job Corps, she could not have applied for the job. Libby, like the previously discussed interviewees, found the support she needed at Job Corps to successfully complete a vocational program and to earn her high school diploma from the high school academy at the Job Corps in which she enrolled.

Juanita

Juanita, who enrolled in the Job Corps program from Northern Kentucky, is a Hispanic female who was nearly 21 years old at the time of the interview. She was born in Mexico and moved to the United States when she was 9 years old. Her parents have been married for 28 years. Juanita has a 28 year old brother and a 10 year old sister.

When asked about why she had dropped out of school, Juanita stated she never actually dropped out of school but instead just left her traditional school to enroll in the Job Corps program and do something different with her best friend who
also enrolled in the program at the same time as Juanita. She insisted she had loved school and never had any problems with school. According to Juanita, she enrolled in the Job Corps program simply because she decided she wanted to do something different. She claimed she had always done well in school and had never had a thought of actually dropping out. In fact, Juanita attested she did not feel as if she had really dropped out of school and reported she had gone directly to the Job Corps program as soon as she completed her sophomore year of high school.

Juanita was asked to discuss why she had chosen to go to the Job Corps program rather than stay at her traditional high school. Because she had known most of the people from her high school since enrolling in fifth grade, she was excited about the prospect of a different experience. Juanita decided she would take the opportunity for what she felt would be a great experience, and her parents [after finding out more about it] decided to let her enroll in the Job Corps program.

How did Juanita find out about the Job Corps program? She explained she learned about the program from a friend who had a friend who had gone to Job Corps. The experience of the friend of a friend who had gone to Job Corps had been positive, so Juanita's friend researched the program and shared what she had found with Juanita.

After the information from the research was shared with Juanita, she and her friend went to a Job Corps Outreach and Admissions Office. They were shown a video of what the program was about, had the different vocational training programs within the program explained to them, and were told they could work at their own
pace. Why did Juanita enroll in the Job Corps program? She explained she had been looking for a different environment in which to learn. Juanita had also picked up on the Culinary Arts Vocational Training at the Job Corps. In addition, she indicated she had really liked the idea of being able to work at her own pace and of being not exactly on her own but at least away from her parents for the first time. So, at the age of 16, Juanita enrolled in the Job Corps program and began her training in the culinary arts trade. While working toward earning her high school diploma and completing the culinary arts trade, she also completed training to be a Certified Nursing Assistant. This training was something that she ended up liking really well.

When asked to describe her experience in the Job Corps program as well as the impact it had on her life, Juanita revealed that enrolling in the program had helped her to develop a tougher skin. She explained that before enrolling in the program she had been too sensitive and cried easily when people said things to her. Developing a tougher skin helped her to be more patient with people and to learn to not judge people right away. Juanita imparted that a variety of ethnicities are evident among the students enrolled in the Job Corps program. She indicated she had really liked the interactions among those different ethnicities. Juanita learned about diversity at Job Corps. She claimed she had been exposed to stereotyping of various ethnic groups and found much of what she had grown up believing was not true.

What was most helpful to Juanita at Job Corps? She stated she felt the culinary arts instructor and the math instructor had been very helpful to her. On the other hand, Juanita felt there was gossiping among staff that took place in regard to
students. In her opinion, the staff members were there to help the students and to be role models. Juanita's opinion brought out the importance of developing relationships with students whether in a traditional school setting or within the Job Corps program. It is paramount students be able to trust staff in order to build these relationships that are so vital to student success.

If Juanita could go back to Job Corps and do anything differently, she reasoned she would go back and focus a bit more in order to complete the program more quickly. She affirmed the importance of staying focused on what students need to do in order to finish as soon as possible. While she felt students often focus on hanging out with other students, Juanita declared this was not the right thing to do. While she admitted she had gotten into "chilling" with other students, it had slowed her down until she finally came to the realization she would not get finished if she did not focus on finishing. Juanita confirmed the importance of taking advantage of what the program has to offer as well as the importance of goal setting.

While Juanita maintained she had not dropped out of school, she did stop going to a traditional high school in order to enroll in the Job Corps program. Juanita's support system at home seems to have been better than that of the previously discussed interviewees. She shares a common characteristic with subjects from Hansen and Toso's (2007) study. Juanita, who claimed to have developed a thicker skin at Job Corps, was a sensitive individual who cried easily before completing the program. She said her experiences in the Job Corps program were beneficial to her, and she learned how to interact with people and to be more patient with others. In
addition, enrolling in the Job Corps resulted in Juanita earning her high school diploma about a year ahead of schedule. At the time of the interview, Juanita was working at an airport restaurant and was earning $9.00 per hour. In addition, she was enrolled in a local college and working toward becoming a medical assistant.

Joshua

Joshua, who was 26 years old when he was interviewed, is an African American male from North Carolina. When he enrolled in the Job Corps program, he was already 24 years old. What were some of the reasons he gave for dropping out of high school? Joshua confessed he had been running with the wrong crowd, friends who were not motivated to go to school or be in school. These friends of Joshua's wanted to skip school instead of attending it. He admitted he had felt working was more important than schooling. Even though he dropped out of school, Joshua declared he had always known he would want to go back to school at some point.

Both of Joshua's parents as well as his two older brothers and two older sisters are high school graduates. His parents are still together after about 30 years of marriage. Joshua stated he had not really seen the value of getting an education.

How did Joshua find out about the Job Corps program? He explained he had seen commercials about the Job Corps program, but he did not feel the program would be what it looked like in the commercials. After moving from North Carolina to Georgia and not being able to find a job, he saw another commercial about Job Corps. Joshua knew he wanted to go back to school. When he saw the other commercial about Job Corps, he shared he had felt it was talking to him and decided
to call the number. Joshua called the number and set up an appointment to meet with an outreach admissions counselor. When he met with the admissions counselor, he told her he wanted to get back in school as quickly as possible because 24 years old is the age limit. The counselor advised him of the quickest entry into the program. Joshua told the counselor to sign him up and within 2 weeks after meeting with the counselor, he was enrolled in the program.

What was Joshua’s experience like at Job Corps? While he said he found there were people at the Job Corps center who tried to be uplifting, there were negative experiences as well. Joshua explained that the students were very "interesting creatures." In his experience, Joshua decided to separate himself from those who tried to bring him down. He knew what he wanted to do, set a goal for himself, and worked on achieving it. He explained that those who helped him to reach his goals were dorm staff, counselors, and his culinary arts instructor. According to Joshua, these individuals kept him in line and made sure he did not mess up.

How did his Job Corps experience affect his life? Joshua was adamant that his Job Corps experience had helped him to be more stable and content. He confessed he had been unable to keep a job before enrolling in the Job Corps program. Joshua divulged the skills he had learned at Job Corps were the skills he needed to help him maintain a job.

At the time of the interview, Joshua was working at two jobs and getting paid $9.00 per hour at each of those jobs; one of the jobs was as a cook in a large hotel.
while the other was as first cook at a small outdoor café. In addition, he was taking on
catering jobs for himself and assisting other chefs with their catering jobs.

The most helpful thing Joshua saw about the Job Corps program was the people who push you. He stated there had been times when he had wanted to give up. The people who saw his potential and pushed him to reach it were very helpful to him. Within 3 months of enrolling in the Job Corps program, Joshua had earned his GED. He also earned a Culinary Arts Completion Certificate while enrolled in the Job Corps program.

Even though Joshua had a positive experience with the staff, he found there was at least one negative aspect he wanted to mention. What did Joshua say was the least helpful thing about the Job Corps program? In Joshua's estimation, it was not helpful to take students on trips every week to allow them to stay off center at a motel. On the other hand, it was obvious Joshua saw the value in the off center work-based learning experiences. These experiences provided Joshua the opportunity to showcase his work ethic and culinary arts skills at the Equestrian Games. Joshua got a job as a hotel cook in Kentucky because of his Job Corps' training.

Joshua stated he would not change anything about his Job Corps experience. In his estimation, more individuals should enroll in the program and take advantage of it. Joshua indicated he felt there is no better opportunity for those who have dropped out of high school. He stated students have their meals provided and have a place to stay. Joshua also explained that staff at Job Corps helps to find job placements for the graduates. His comments were a testimony to Job Corps giving
students what they need in order to succeed. He indicated the program gives the individual all that is needed for success if the individual really wants to be successful.

Joshua reported he had experienced a loss while he was still enrolled in high school. His girlfriend, whom he had picked up every day for school for 3 years, broke up with him. Perhaps this breakup of a 3 year relationship was a profound enough loss to put Joshua on track to becoming a high school dropout. On the other hand, he also reported he was held back a year when he was in sixth grade. Students who were retained in a grade, had poor attendance, failed core content classes (particularly English and/or Math), had a low grade point average, or low achievement test scores, were more likely to not finish high school (Balfanz, 2011; MacIver, 2011; Pinkus, 2008; Tyler & Lofstrom, 2009). While Joshua's parents and siblings all earned a HSD, he dropped out of high school. Joshua, like Jazz, admitted that he had not understood the value of an education. Like Libby, he skipped school with friends. Not being in school was an indicator of being at-risk of dropping out, as reported by MacIver (2011).

Asa

Asa, an African American male, age 19 who was originally from Atlanta, Georgia, earned a HSD while enrolled in the Job Corps program. At the time he enrolled, the highest grade he had completed was eighth grade. Asa stated he quit school because he had not wanted to go to school. Asa confessed he hated homework and he hated going to school and listening to teachers talk about things he was sure he was not going to do. While he knew school was supposed to be about educating
people, he came to the conclusion he knew what he knew and he also knew what he
did not know. Asa did not see the value of an education.

Asa is one of two children; his older sister completed high school and joined
the military. He was not retained in a grade during his elementary school years.
Asa's biological father was never involved in his life. His mother has a long-term
relationship with a male who helped to raise Asa and whom Asa considers as a role
model.

How did Asa find out about the Job Corps program? He explained that he
found out about the Job Corps program one day when he was in court after
committing burglary and after having his mother put out a ruling of detention on him
and serving it out. Basically, Asa's mother filed a petition to the court stating that he
was beyond parental control. Asa acknowledged he had been hanging with the wrong
crowd. What did Asa mean when he stated the people he was hanging with were the
wrong people? Asa explained whether it was legal or illegal everything he and his
friends did was okay in their opinions. If they invited him to do anything, Asa
admitted he went for it without considering the rightness or wrongness of whatever it
was. This led to Asa ending up in court because he had committed burglary. After
ending up in court, Asa was given a brochure about the Job Corps program. He
commented he did not think much about it at first. Eventually, however, Asa decided
to enroll because he knew it was either enroll in Job Corps or the state. What did he
mean by the state? Asa explained if he had stayed in his home state of Georgia, he
would have ended up in jail.
When he was asked to describe his experiences in the Job Corps program and to explain what if any impact it had on his life, Asa explained he had made a promise to himself when he enrolled in the program. He knew if he enrolled in the program, he wanted to get something out of it. Asa did not want to enroll in the program and just waste his time. When he enrolled in the Job Corps program and arrived at the center, Asa had a rough beginning. After rumors got started that he belonged to a crypt (gang), Asa said it got to the point where everybody wanted to go up to him and question him about it. Asa endured some incidents of being picked on by having soap put in his hair and on his clothes. He described the incidents as having been gang related. He was sure if he got into a fight he would have gotten kicked out of the program. Asa disclosed he got confused over if he wanted to stay with the program and just put up with it. Asa did stick it out; he completed the program and earned a HSD.

What did Asa find to be the most helpful thing about Job Corps? He commented he liked the instructors. According to Asa, the instructors were there if you needed them. He trusted the instructors would not let any student fail who was trying. The instructors wanted the students to succeed; they created the impression with Asa that they were not going to let him fail. In addition, Asa also reported counselors helped him with resolving issues. He credited them with helping him resolve his issue of being ridiculed because of rumors that he belonged to a gang. Asa also found the cleanup time in the dorms every morning to be helpful. Because
of the morning activities, Asa found the dorms to be safe, clean places to live while he was enrolled in the Job Corps program.

When asked to identify something negative about his Job Corps experience, Asa could not identify anything negative. Was there anything he would change about his Job Corps experience? Asa declared he would probably go back to Job Corps for the first 6 months and take it more seriously. He especially felt taking TABE\(^1\) testing more seriously would be one thing he would definitely do if he went back to the program as a student.

Asa stated the most helpful thing at Job Corps was the instructors. He reiterated the instructors were there if you needed them. He assured that the instructors would not let students fail especially if they could see the students were trying. As much as I probed for something negative about Asa's experience, he turned every negative experience into something positive. He stated everyone had to pitch in everyday to do clean up in the dorms. He really liked having a safe, clean dorm to return to at the end of the training day.

Was there anything else Asa wanted to share about his Job Corps experience? He explained there was a male staff member in his dorm whom he had thought was really cool. Asa explained he felt the staff member was very up front with the students. Students knew what he expected and rose to his expectations. Asa also went on to speak about the center's facilities. His description of the gym was positive.

\(^1\) TABE refers to Tests of Adult Basic Education in Reading and Math that all Job Corps students are required to take while enrolled in the program.
in that he felt he had been to other places where the gymnasium was not as decent as the one at the Job Corps Center where he was enrolled.

At the time of the interview, Asa was working at a local grocery store as a stocker for minimum wage. He completed the office administration trade while at Job Corps and was planning to move back to Georgia and go for an interview with Central News Network (CNN). He was hoping to get a job as a transcriptionist where he would type the script for the Teleprompters for the news reporters.

Asa, like Will, Taylor, and Joshua, reported not liking school. As in the cases of Libby and Joshua, Asa hung out with other young people and did not attend school.

Summary

The selected group of former Job Corps students who participated in this study reported being successful in the program for a number of reasons. The program was able to help them because support was readily available 7 days a week 24 hours a day. The interviewees reported it was not just a 9 to 5 job for the Job Corps staff. The participants also maintained that people who pushed them were important. The participants felt they would not fail as long as they tried to succeed.
CHAPTER 5: CONCLUSIONS, ACTIONS AND IMPLICATIONS

Conclusions

Analysis of the data indicated one common theme for dropping out of high school was that these individuals had been disengaged in school. The data suggest the interviewees hated or disliked school and did not see the value of an education. One former student said, "It was like a waste of time for me." Another commented, "Making money was more important than my education." Still another commented, "I hated just going there and listening to stuff that I wasn't going to do later." It was also stated, "I hated school," and "I do not like school." Finally, one student quit the traditional school to enroll in the Job Corps program because she wanted to do something different with her best friend who also enrolled in the program.

It is also notable that four of the seven students (Will, Libby, Joshua, and Asa) reported skipping school. While Libby skipped with a single friend, Joshua and Asa both proclaimed that they "hung out with the wrong crowd." Another theme that was common with three of the interviewees was the fact that two of them had been enrolled in an alternative school while one of them had been homeschooled. In addition to these themes, it was interesting to note the theme of loss or lack of advocacy from parents. This was evident in Will, Jazz, Libby, Taylor, and Asa's cases.

Only one of the seven former Job Corps students had a positive comment about school and stated she had loved school. Juanita maintained she actually liked school but left the traditional school setting to try something different with her friend.
Table 2

Reasons Given by Interviewees for Leaving School Before Enrolling In Job Corps

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Pseudonym</th>
<th>Did Not Like School/Did Not Value Education/Making Money Was More Important Than School</th>
<th>Skipped School or Had Poor Attendance</th>
<th>Attended an Alternative School or Was Home Schooled</th>
<th>Hung Out With the Wrong Crowd</th>
<th>Wanted To Do Something Different</th>
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<tr>
<td>Will</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jazz</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Taylor</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Libby</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Juanita</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Joshua</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asa</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
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<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Interviewees reported going to school was a waste of time, making money was more important than an education, and some knew that what they were listening to was not something they were going to do later. The data suggest the interviewees hated or disliked school and did not see the value of an education.

In getting at why the Job Corps program may have worked better for these students than their previous programs, the former students were asked what was most and least helpful to them. Two of the students mentioned taking responsibility in the dorms to do clean up every day. Several also pointed out the instructors were there when you needed them. The instructors really helped, and it was not just a 9 to 5 job for them. Similar to that was Joshua's response. He pointed out "people that push you" were most helpful to him. Will also found getting an educational foundation by
obtaining his general equivalency diploma (GED) was helpful. One interviewee, Taylor, stated learning leadership skills was very helpful to him while he was enrolled in the program. Several of the other interviewees also mentioned they would not be where they are today had they not gotten an educational foundation either by obtaining a high school diploma (HSD) or a GED. Jazz felt one of the most helpful things was to go off center and do actual live caterings. Doing these types of hands-on, real-world learning experiences is something that helps all of the students enrolled in the Job Corps program to be successful in completion of the program and in their employment endeavors upon completion of the program.

What did former Job Corps students find to be least helpful about the program? Will pointed out most of the trade choices are construction trades and not everyone is cut out for construction work. Jazz felt student-to-teacher and teacher-to-student communication needs to be improved. Libby felt working at your own pace could be detrimental. Juanita felt staff gossiping about students was an issue. She also stated staff should do a better job of keeping in touch with former students once the students have completed the program. Joshua attested the off-center trips to stay at a motel over the weekend were unnecessary and should be stopped.

Overall, former students described their Job Corps experience as being positive. One male interviewee stated, "Job Corps's the best thing that ever happened to me. It saved my life." Another of the males interviewed stated, "I'm more content. Like, before I went to Job Corps, I wasn't able to hold onto a job. The skills I learned at Job Corp help me to maintain."
Actions

What can school personnel, and even Job Corps staff, do to keep students enrolled in school or in the Job Corps program? With the findings of this study, counselors, teachers, instructors, administrators should be better prepared to discuss the value of completing their high school program or Job Corps program when students want to quit school or to resign from Job Corps. Staff in these settings should be able to read the stories of these seven former Job Corps students and understand how important it is to make connections with the students. If traditional school employees and Job Corps staff understand more about where these students live and their home life, perhaps more teachers will be able to empathize with their students. Often the only place students find someone who cares is in the education arena. Educators need to understand why any student becomes a class clown, why any student skips school, and why any student hangs with a crowd of other students who do not value an education; these actions do not happen in isolation. This study found that themes of aloneness, lack of advocacy, and profound loss often occurred in students' lives before they dropped out of school. These case studies should be used to guide the discussion between students and counselors in order to discuss withdrawing from school. If more students are persuaded to stay in school, more students will have employability skills. The United States should see a reduction in the crime rate, fewer individuals will be incarcerated, and our nation's economy will improve significantly.
Limitations and Implications

This study could have been more comprehensive if students at Job Corps Centers in other regions of the United States could have been included. Since time was a factor, the study was conducted by interviewing seven former Job Corps students. Five of the students earned a high school diploma while two of the students earned a general equivalency diploma while they were enrolled as students. This study is limited in that the subjects were all graduates from one Job Corps Center located in Eastern Kentucky. For future research, the study could survey and interview students at centers in different regions of the United States.

Students who become dropouts are a cause for concern. It is a concern that has intrigued me for many years. I have three older brothers, two older sisters, and a son who became high school dropouts. The dropout problem had a very personal connection for me. In addition, I have first-hand knowledge of individuals who dropped out of high school but achieved success in the Job Corps program. While those former Job Corps students did not complete a traditional high school program, they enrolled in the Job Corps program, earned a high school diploma or general equivalency diploma, and completed vocational training to become Job Corps graduates.
References


statement/

tmp_publications/cat/best_practices_factsheet


A Bridge to Success for High School Dropouts

Confidentiality Form

I voluntarily agree to participate in the research project about the success of Job Corps students. I understand that this evaluation is being conducted by Roberta Fugett, a doctoral candidate attending Morehead State University. I understand that the evaluation method which may involve me is my participation in a 30 to 60 minute interview.

I grant permission for the interview to be tape recorded or video-taped and transcribed and to be used only by Roberta Fugett for analysis of interview data. I grant permission for the evaluation data generated from the above methods to be used in a capstone project and published.

________________________________________
Research Participant

________________________________________
Date
Appendix B
A Bridge to Success for High School Dropouts Interview Questions

Roberta Fugett, Morehead State University doctoral candidate, will ask each interviewee to discuss the following:

1. Discuss why you quit school.

2. How did you find out about the Job Corps program?

3. Why did you enroll in the Job Corps program?

4. Describe your experience in the Job Corps and explain what if any impact it had on your life.

5. Discuss the most and least helpful things about the Job Corps program.

6. In thinking back about your Job Corps experience, is there anything that you would change?

7. Is there anything else that you would like to share about your Job Corps experience?
Appendix C
DEFINITIONS OF KEY WORDS

Aloneness

For purposes of this study, aloneness refers to an individual's feelings of isolation and lack of a support system to advocate for the individual.

At-risk Student

An at-risk student is an individual who may possibly drop out of school.

There may be warning indicators of being at risk. Such warning indicators may include excessive absenteeism, skipping school, being retained in a grade, failing core academic subjects, or other behavioral issues.

Disengagement

Disengagement is the failure to engage in learning in the classroom and may be due to boredom, lack of motivation, or lack of a challenging learning atmosphere.

Dropout

A dropout is an individual who left the traditional high school setting, a homeschool setting, or alternative school setting without earning the necessary credits to earn a high school diploma.

Job Corps

Job Corps is a national program established in 1964 when the Education Opportunity Act was passed by Congress. The program was part of President Lyndon B. Johnson's War on Poverty. It is the largest residential educational and vocational training program in the United States.
Appendix D
**Direct Quotes Made by the Subjects of the Study**

**Will**

"Job Corps's the best thing that ever happened to me. It saved my life. I wouldn't have anything that I have today. I wouldn't have a job that paid anything. I would still be working at restaurants."

"What I never understood is if you live in Alabama and make a decision to fly across the country and spend a year in this place and devote that much time but act like an idiot and go on pass and smoke weed and get kicked out and sent home, every bit of that's for nothing. It's for nothing because you don't get a semi-degree. You don't get a half of a GED, you get nothing, and you go home. I never did understand that."

**Jazz**

"If I stayed in high school, I knew I was going to waste my time knowing I wasn't going to study, knowing I wasn't going to do homework."

"It was completely hands-on. It wasn't just out of a book."

"I usually stayed to myself. Now, I can talk to people. I can meet people. I can actually explain my food more. I used to be a shy person. I am not actually a shy person anymore."
Taylor

"Don't tell me the sky's the limit when there are footprints on the moon."

"It wasn't just your 9 to 5. There's a lot of teachers, instructors, students, staff, a lot of which I know by name, and I'll probably never forget. Those people have made a huge impact on the way I live my life now."

"When you get to Job Corps, take advantage of everything that's offered. Don't just do what you think you have to do. They offer it within reason, and it will affect you in the years to come. Go ahead and do it while it's there. It's offered. It's free."

Libby

When asked how the Job Corps program had affected her life, Libby stated, "I think it's affected my life in a positive way. If it wasn't for Job Corps, I wouldn't have the foundation. I probably wouldn't be able to have my high school diploma."

"I think the one thing that really traps students is to work at your own pace. When you let students or anybody work at their own pace, you don't know if they are serious about getting completed. I wasn't serious about getting completed for the longest time. I was like, 'Well, hopefully, I'll be here long enough, and they won't kick me out.'"

"The dorm life was horrible. It was the most horrible; I hated dorm life. I would rather sleep out under the gazebo than be in the dorm again. I don't miss the dorm life at all."
Juanita

"I just feel like if anybody's ever willing to go to Job Corps, I think that's a great experience to go through."

Joshua

"You know they say, 'Watch who you hang with.' I wasn't hanging with the crowd to go to that next level."

"It's keeping me more stable [Job Corps]. I'm more content. Before I went to Job Corps, I wasn't able to hold onto a job. The skills that I learned at Job Corps help me to maintain."

"I feel like more students should go to Job Corps."

"They give you a place to stay, they give you food, and they get a job placement. It's everything that you need. If you really want success, I believe you should go to Job Corps."

Asa

"I didn't want to go to school."

"I wasn't the homework type of guy. I hated the homework. I hated just going there and listening to that stuff that I wasn't going to do later."

"I knew school was supposed to be helping people like to get an education; but, at that moment in eighth grade, it felt like I just didn't want to know. Whatever I knew, I just knew. Whatever I didn't, I didn't."

"Cause for a minute there it was like everything we did was cool. I was going to do it. If they said, 'Let's go,' I went."
"They [instructors] were there if you needed them. I felt like they were not going to let you fail if you were trying."

"I'd probably go back to Job Corps for the first six months and take it so seriously, like TABE testing and all."
Appendix E
Permission to Use Data from the Greenwood High School Web site

From: Forsythe, Robert-DTC [mailto:robert.forsythe@warren.kyschools.us]
Sent: Tuesday, April 02, 2013 9:45 PM
To: Roberta L. Fugett
Subject: Re: Request Permission to Use Data

Our Superintendent has approved your use of the data from the Greenwood web site. If you have any follow up questions please call or email. Thanks.
Robby
robert.forsythe@warren.kyschools.us
Sent from my iPad

From: Megan (Hoot) Walker [mailto:mhoot@civicenterprises.net]
Sent: Monday, April 01, 2013 8:34 AM
To: Roberta L. Fugett
Subject: Re: Permission to Use Data in Capstone Project

Roberta,

You have permission-- as long as you cite the source in your work.

Thanks and please send us a copy of your report once it's complete!

Megan

-------------
Megan (Hoot) Walker
Chief of Staff
Civic Enterprises
1101 14th St. NW
Suite 1260
Washington, DC 20005
Direct Line: 202-898-9387
Main Line: 202-898-0310
Mobile: 352-281-4472
Fax: 202-525-3941
mhoot@civicenterprises.net
www.civicenterprises.net
Appendix F
VITA

Roberta L. Fugett

Date of Birth: July 18, 1957

Place of Birth: Dayton, Ohio

EDUCATION

1995 Bachelor of Arts in Education
Morehead State University
Morehead, Kentucky

2002 Master of Arts in Education
Morehead State University
Morehead, Kentucky

2009 Director of Special Education Certification
Morehead State University
Morehead, Kentucky

Pending Doctorate of Education
Morehead State University
Morehead, Kentucky

PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCES

2012-Present Office Administration Instructor
Frenchburg Job Corps
Frenchburg, Kentucky

2010-Present Interdisciplinary Team Coordinator/Disability Coordinator
Frenchburg Job Corps
Frenchburg, Kentucky

2008-2012 Teacher
Frenchburg Job Corps
Frenchburg, Kentucky

2008-Present Online Adjunct Instructor
Indiana Wesleyan University
Marion, Indiana
2008-Present  Online Teacher  
Educate Online, Inc.  
Baltimore, Maryland

2008-2009  Team Leader  
Educate Online, Inc.  
Baltimore, Maryland

2006-2008  Substitute Teacher  
Morgan County Schools,  
West Liberty, Kentucky

2005-2006  LBD Resource Classroom English Teacher  
Menifee County High School,  
Frenchburg, Kentucky

2003-2006  Adjunct Instructor  
Morehead State University  
Morehead, Kentucky

2003-2006  Adjunct Instructor  
Teacher Education Institute  
Winter Park, Florida

2003-2005  LD Collaboration Teacher  
Clark Middle School  
Winchester, Kentucky

2002-2003  Fifth Grade Elementary School Teacher  
Sandy Hook Elementary School  
Sandy Hook, Kentucky

1997-2002  Teacher of Exceptional Children  
Rowan County Senior High School  
Morehead, Kentucky

1996-1997  Teacher of Exceptional Children  
Clay City Elementary School  
Clay City, Kentucky
HONORS

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PRESENTATIONS

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