Resiliency and attribution factors associated with racially and ethnically diverse adolescents with learning disabilities

Karen Yvette Cruter McGee

Follow this and additional works at: https://repository.usfca.edu/diss

Part of the Education Commons

Recommended Citation

https://repository.usfca.edu/diss/256
The University of San Francisco

RESILIENCY AND ATTRIBUTION FACTORS ASSOCIATED WITH RACIALLY AND ETHNICALLY DIVERSE ADOLESCENTS WITH LEARNING DISABILITIES

A Dissertation

Presented to

the Faculty of the School of Education

Learning and Instruction Department

In Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree

Doctor of Education

by

Karen Yvette Cruter McGee

San Francisco, CA
December 2007
This dissertation, written under the direction of the candidate's dissertation committee and approved by members of the committee, has been presented to and accepted by the Faculty of the School of Education in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Education. The content and research methodologies presented in this work represent the work of the candidate alone.

Candidate

[Signature]

Date

Dissertation Committee

Chairperson

[Signature]

Date

[Signature]

Date

[Signature]

Date
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

My parents, Gilbert and Mary Cruter, and my grandparents, Harry and Julia Martin and Mary Moore Cruter were all educators in their own right. Their high expectations, warmth, and direction gave me a clear, well-grounded perspective for the pursuit of this study. I am honored to have the opportunity to incorporate their knowledge and wisdom into this research, and I thank them.

The seeds of this study were sown in classes I took from Dr. Susan Evans. I completed this study under the skilled mentorship of Dr. Patricia Busk. It is exhilarating to be guided by persons such as Dr. Evans and Dr. Busk, persons for whom excellence is the standard. Dr. Lanna Andrews and Dr. Caryl Hodges fall in the same category. They shared their knowledge and wisdom – and their sense of humor. I truly valued the opportunity to participate in an extended discussion and review of my ideas and research. I give my thanks to these wonderful, esteemed women.

My work colleagues were gracious enough to allow me into their classrooms – without their support I would not have had access to the lives of the students whom I surveyed. Susana Ruspini guided me, encouraged me, and made me laugh. She was my wonderful Spanish translator/sage. I thank her and I thank my colleagues and their students.

Finally, none of this research would have come to fruition without the support of my family! They reviewed, revised, taped, scanned, edited, bugged, and loudly cheered me on. They tolerated take-out instead of home-cooked meals. They are my heart. I love them dearly, and I owe them endless thanks.
# TABLE OF CONTENTS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>TABLE OF CONTENTS</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>LIST OF TABLES</td>
<td>vi</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

## CHAPTER

### I. INTRODUCTION ................................................................. 1
- Statement of the Problem .................................................. 1
- Purpose of the Study ....................................................... 5
- Background and Need ....................................................... 7
- Theoretical Rationale ..................................................... 19
- Research Questions ....................................................... 24
- Definition of Key Terms ................................................. 25

### II. REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE ............................................. 34
- Resiliency Theory Research ............................................... 35
  - Definition of Resilience .............................................. 36
  - Development of the Resiliency Theory ............................... 37
  - Longitudinal Research ................................................ 42
  - Cross-Sectional Research ............................................. 45
- Resilience Factors: Individual, Family, Community .................. 47
  - Resilience Factors within the Individual ........................... 47
  - Resilience Factors related to Family ................................ 52
  - Resilience Factors related to the Broader Social Community ... 56
- Resilience and Learning Disabilities ................................... 60
- Attribution Research: Intelligence and Racial Identity Studies ... 71
  - Attribution Research: Views of Intelligence ......................... 74
  - Attribution Research: Motivation to Achieve ....................... 77
  - Attribution Research: Stereotype Threat ............................ 79
- Summary ............................................................................. 82

### III. METHODOLOGY ................................................................. 84
- Design and Variables ....................................................... 85
- Participants ....................................................................... 86
- Human Subjects Considerations ......................................... 90
- Procedures ......................................................................... 92
- Instrumentation .................................................................. 94
  - Implicit Theories of Intelligence Scale for Children—Self-Form . 97
  - Multi-group Ethnic Identity Measure .................................. 98
  - ClassMaps Scales ............................................................ 99
- Research Questions ......................................................... 100
- Data Analysis .................................................................... 101
TABLE OF CONTENTS Continued

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CHAPTER</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>IV. RESULTS ..........................................................</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| Purpose .......................................................... | 105 |
| Research Question 1 ........................................... | 106 |
| Believing in Me .............................................. | 108 |
| My Teacher .................................................... | 109 |
| Taking Charge .................................................. | 110 |
| Research Question 2 ........................................... | 110 |
| Research Question 3 ............................................ | 111 |
| Research Question 4 ............................................ | 113 |
| Research Question 5 ............................................ | 115 |
| Who I Am Overall ............................................... | 116 |
| Who I Am Ethnic Identity Search ............................. | 117 |
| Who I Am Belongings and Commitment ......................... | 118 |
| Additional Findings ............................................ | 118 |
| Racial and Ethnic Background ................................ | 118 |
| Gender and Grade Level ........................................ | 121 |
| Learning Disability Short-Answer Question .................. | 123 |
| Summary ......................................................... | 125 |

| V. LIMITATIONS, SUMMARY, DISCUSSION, IMPLICATIONS, RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH | 127 |

| Limitations ..................................................... | 128 |
| Summary .......................................................... | 130 |
| Discussion ....................................................... | 130 |
| Individual, Family, and Community Protective Factors ........ | 131 |
| Concepts of Intelligence ........................................ | 136 |
| Concepts of Racial Identity .................................... | 137 |
| Learning Disability Short Answer Question ................... | 138 |
| Implications ...................................................... | 140 |
| Recommendations for Further Research ....................... | 142 |
| Final Comments ................................................. | 144 |

| REFERENCES ................................................................ | 145 |

| APPENDIXES ................................................................ | 154 |

<p>| APPENDIX A Introductory Letter to Resource Specialist Program Teachers ........ | 155 |
| APPENDIX B Parental Consent for Research Participation Letter - English ... | 158 |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>APPENDIX</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>C</td>
<td>Parental Consent for Research Participation Letter - Spanish</td>
<td>161</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D</td>
<td>Parent Letter and RSP Survey Spanish Translation Certification</td>
<td>164</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E</td>
<td>RSP Survey - English</td>
<td>166</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F</td>
<td>RSP Survey - Spanish</td>
<td>176</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>G</td>
<td>Research Participation Cover Letter</td>
<td>185</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>H</td>
<td>Teacher Instructions for Administration of RSP Survey</td>
<td>187</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I</td>
<td>Short-Answer Responses to How I Learn Differently</td>
<td>189</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>J</td>
<td>Permission for Use of Survey Questions</td>
<td>193</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Table</td>
<td>Page</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-------</td>
<td>------</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. Individual, Family, and Community Protective Factors; Protective Factors Specific to Youth with Learning Disabilities</td>
<td>73</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Range, Median Number and Minimum Number of Credits for Categorization by Grade Level</td>
<td>87</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Frequencies and Percentages of Successful and Unsuccessful Students by Gender, Race and Ethnicity, and Grade</td>
<td>88</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Racial and Ethnic Breakdown Percentages for Overall School Population, Number of Students in RSP, and Number of RSP Students In Study Sample</td>
<td>89</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Successful and Unsuccessful Group Means and Standard Deviations for Individual Protective Factors: Believing in Me, My Teacher, and Taking Charge</td>
<td>107</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Believing in Me Response Differences for Successful and Unsuccessful Students</td>
<td>109</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Successful and Unsuccessful Group Means and Standard Deviations for the Family Protective Factor</td>
<td>111</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. Frequencies and Percentages of Community Involvement for Successful and Unsuccessful Students</td>
<td>112</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. Successful and Unsuccessful Group Means and Standard Deviations for the Fixed versus Malleable Intelligence Factor</td>
<td>114</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. Successful and Unsuccessful Group Means and Standard Deviations by Degree of Success for Concepts of Racial and Ethnic Identity Factor</td>
<td>117</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11. Individual and Family Protective Factors, Concepts of Intelligence, Concepts of Racial and Ethnic Identity Means and Standard Deviations by Race or Ethnicity</td>
<td>119</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12. Frequencies and Percentages of Community Involvement for Racially and Ethnically Diverse Groups</td>
<td>121</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
CHAPTER I
INTRODUCTION

Statement of the Problem

Do individual, family, and community resilience factors influence academic success for racially and ethnically diverse adolescents with learning disabilities? Do attribution theorists’ concepts of intelligence and racial identity influence academic success for this population of students? This study is an investigation of the resiliency factors and the attribution variables that contribute to the success of racially and ethnically diverse adolescents with learning disabilities.

Resiliency researchers have conducted extensive investigations of the factors that allow children who are in adverse conditions to cope and thrive. Resilience is defined as the continuous interaction between a child in adverse conditions and the child’s ability to be successful given his or her competencies, motivations, and support systems (Condly, 2006). Although in this study success was defined as academic success, in most studies on resilience the definition of success is multidimensional and is based on measures such as health and employment records, involvement with social-services agencies, involvement with either the juvenile-justice or the criminal-justice system, personality inventories, and ratings by others. Resilience researchers (Werner, 1993, 2006; Werner & Smith, 1989, 1992, 2001; Wolin & Wolin, 1993) have investigated both the constitutional make-up of the child at risk and the quality of the child’s immediate and broader environment. Resilience (protective factors) and risk factors are categorized as (a) factors within the individual, (b) factors related to family, and (c) factors related to the broader social community. Resilience researchers have identified numerous variables that influence
resilience in all three domains: individual, family, and community. In this study, resilience was defined as academic success. Of particular interest in this study is whether there are resilience (protective) factors that are specific to, or have more influence upon, the academic performance of racially and ethnically diverse adolescents with learning disabilities. Some researchers have investigated resilience in relation to learning disabilities (Raskind, Goldberg, Higgins, & Herman, 1999; Werner, 1993). Other researchers have investigated resilience (protective) factors for high-school students from different racial backgrounds (Floyd, 1996; Franquiz & Salazar, 2004; Gayles, 2005; Hawkins & Mulkey, 2005). Although racially and ethnically diverse individuals who have learning disabilities are included in the study samples of some of the aforementioned research, there are no studies that target and empirically document resilience (protective) factors that may specifically influence academic performance among racially and ethnically diverse adolescents with learning disabilities.

Research in the area of attribution theory also can provide a perspective for factors that may contribute to the academic success of racially and ethnically diverse adolescents with learning disabilities. Graham (2001), an attribution theorist, believed that many African American children perform poorly in school not because of low intellectual skills but because of feelings of hopelessness, low expectations, and denial of the importance of effort or because they give up when confronted with failure. The purpose of her research was to understand the motivation for achievement and the motivation for social interactions among African American students. Although Graham’s study had peer aggression as a focus, in addition to
academic motivation, the larger purpose of her research was to provide a framework for understanding factors relevant to social and academic motivation among African American youth. Graham’s research has relevance for African Americans as well as students from other racially and ethnically diverse groups (Graham, Taylor, & Hudley, 1998).

Dweck (2000), another attribution theorist, examined a different perspective of ability and effort. She studied students’ views of their own intelligence. According to Dweck, students have two ideas about their intelligence. Some students think that their intelligence is a fixed, innate trait. They are either intelligent or not. Other students think that their intelligence is malleable, that is, it can be developed by effort. If the student works harder, he or she will become smarter. Intelligence is a part of the federal definition of learning disability, and students often equate identification for special-education services with being “dumb.” Of interest in this study was whether a view of intelligence as fixed or malleable was a factor that influenced the academic performance of adolescents with learning disabilities. Both resiliency theory and the aspects of attribution theory described above are relevant to the investigation of academic performance among African American and other racially and ethnically diverse adolescents with learning disabilities.

Steele and Aronson (1995) conducted attribution research that is relevant to the investigation of academic performance factors for racially and ethnically diverse adolescents with learning disabilities. They conducted research with African American and European American college students in which they investigated the environmental and cultural explanations given by scholars for why different racial
and or ethnic groups vary on measures of intelligence (Suzuki & Aronson, 2005). They hypothesized that variations in academic performance might be attributed to stereotype threat. Stereotype threat is defined as performance anxiety based on the fear that one’s performance will confirm the negative societal stereotypes regarding one’s group. In each study, African American and European American students were matched based on their previous Scholastic Aptitude Test scores. When the concept of stereotype threat was applied to African American college students, it was found that stereotype threat was induced and intellectual performance was diminished when two conditions were present. The conditions were the mention of race and that one’s intellectual ability was to be evaluated (Davis, Aronson, & Salinas, 2006). Further research indicated that stereotype threat might underlie female versus male differences in advanced mathematics performance, as well as racial differences in male performance in mathematics (European American males vs. Asian males) (Aronson, Lustina, Good, Keough, & Steele, 1999; Spencer, Steele, & Quinn, 1999). There is an element of attribution theory in research on the concept of stereotype threat in that performance on standardized tests is decreased because the person fears that others will attribute his or her performance to the applicable stereotype, and the person is thus at-risk of confirming the stereotype. Davis et al. explored racial identity as a protective factor for this group of students. They found that students who scored high on the Internalization of Racial Identity portion of the Black Racial Identity Attitudes Scale (BRIAS) performed better on standardized tests when stereotype threat was introduced, than students who did not score high on the BRIAS measure. The researchers concluded that an internalized racial identity moderated intellectual
performance in stereotype-threat conditions. Dweck (2000), Davis et al., Graham (2001), and Steele and Aronson (1995) have investigated achievement motivation from different perspectives. Their research findings are relevant to the study of racially and ethnically diverse adolescents with learning disabilities.

Resiliency researchers have identified protective factors that support positive adjustment in children’s lives. Attribution researchers have found that differences in concepts of intelligence as well as motivation for achievement can have a positive or a negative impact academic effort. Stereotype threat can have a negative impact on academic performance, and stereotype threat can be diminished when racial identity is a protective factor. No research to date has applied the aforementioned findings of both resiliency and attribution researchers to the population of interest in this study: academically successful and academically unsuccessful racially and ethnically diverse adolescents with learning disabilities.

**Purpose of the Study**

The purpose of this study was to contribute to the knowledge regarding resilience and attribution variables that influence academic performance among racially and ethnically diverse high-school students with learning disabilities. Specifically, the first purpose of the study was to explore individual-, family-, and community-resilience factors that influence academic performance among racially and ethnically diverse high-school students with learning disabilities. Fifty-seven racially and ethnically diverse high-school students with learning disabilities who were provided one class period of Resource Specialist Program support (RSP) were surveyed in these three areas. Individual resilience factors were defined as school-
work habits, the willingness to ask for help from others, and the adolescent’s relationship with his or her RSP teacher. The family-resilience factor was defined as the degree to which a family member was involved in supporting the adolescent’s academic progress. The community factor was defined as the degree of involvement in the greater community, specifically, the amount of time spent in sports, employment, and church.

The second purpose of this study was to explore the concepts of intelligence held by academically successful and academically unsuccessful racially and ethnically diverse students with learning disabilities. Concepts of intelligence were defined as the adolescent’s perception of possession of fixed or malleable intelligence. The third purpose of study was to investigate the racial identity status of these students. Racial identity was defined as the degree of identification with the social construct of the adolescent’s own racial group, as measured by a standardized instrument.

Resilience researchers (Condly, 2006; Werner, 1993, 2006; Werner & Smith, 1992, 2001; Wolin & Wolin, 1993) have conducted extensive investigations of the individual, family, and community factors that allow children in adverse conditions to thrive. To thrive as a concept was measured in a multidimensional manner, and one of the dimensions was academic success. Graham (2001) and Dweck (2000) are researchers who have investigated academic success from an attributional perspective. Graham focused, for the most part, on African American students. Dweck’s studies were not usually specific to race. Both researchers found evidence that motivation for academic achievement was influenced by student beliefs about
why outcomes occur. Davis et al. (2006) found that even when stereotype threat was induced, academic performance was not impaired when racial identity served as a resilience factor. Floyd (1996), Gayles (2005), and Hawkins and Mulkey (2005) investigated resilience factors specific to African American students. Plunkett and Bamac-Gomez (2003) investigated academic motivation among Mexican-origin immigrant adolescents in Los Angeles, California.

Although there are numerous studies regarding racially and ethnically diverse students with disabilities (Artiles, Rueda, Salazar, & Higareda, 2002; Losen & Orfield, 2002; Skiba, Poloni-Staudinger, Gallini, Simmons, & Fegins-Azziz, 2006), the focus of these studies has been on variables that contribute to disproportionate representation in special education (demographics, assessment measures, English-language-learner status, judgmental status of the specific disability category, etc.). There has not been a focus on variables that may influence academic performance for racially and ethnically diverse students in special education. The purpose of this study was to contribute to the knowledge base regarding resilience and attribution variables that are present among academically successful and academically unsuccessful racially and ethnically diverse high-school students with learning disabilities.

**Background and Need**

The overrepresentation of minority students placed in special education is a complex issue that provides a context for the purpose of this study. Legislation currently titled the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) that guaranteed a free and appropriate education to all students who were found to have disabilities was passed in Congress in 1975. IDEA has resulted in tremendous
improvements in the education of children with disabilities. According to the Twenty-fifth Annual Report to Congress on the Implementation of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act 9, as of 2002, 6.5 million children in the United States have access to better educational opportunities as a result of the law. Since the passage of IDEA, there has been an increase in the graduation rates of students with disabilities, and since 1978 the number of college-bound students with disabilities, although still low in number, has almost tripled since 1978 (Losen & Orfield, 2002). Progress notwithstanding, from 1975 to the present, there continues to be public concern over the disproportionately large numbers of minority children identified for services in the high-incidence categories of mild mental retardation, emotional disturbance, and learning disabilities.

Donovan and Cross (2002) defined disproportionate representation as the numbers of students of each race or ethnicity identified for special and gifted education in comparison with the numbers of each race or ethnicity in the general student population. They referred to the three categories of mild mental retardation (MMR), learning disabilities (LD), and emotional disturbance (ED) in special education as judgmental categories in that the characteristics of these three categories are not readily observable. Gifted and talented also was referred to as a judgmental category. Donovan and Cross indicated that African American students were overrepresented in the MMR, LD, and ED categories and underrepresented in the gifted and talented category. In 1998, African American and Native American children were more than half of the approximately 1.5 million minority children identified as having MMR, LD, or ED. African American students were the group
most likely to be identified as having mental retardation, especially as compared with European American students (Losen & Orfield, 2002). Similar data were reported for Hispanic Americans. English-language learners (especially those whose first language is Spanish) tended to be overrepresented in special education at the secondary level and underrepresented at the elementary level (Artiles, Rueda, Salazar, & Higareda, 2002). Artiles et al.’s data of students in California was a small snapshot of trends in special-education identification of English-language learners across the United States.

Data showing positive educational outcomes for minority students in special education would temper the concern about overrepresentation. It is alarming, however, that the current data show a relative lack of positive benefit for the majority of minority students in special education (Patton, 1998). Of particular interest in the current study are the resilience factors and the motivational factors related to academic achievement that influence racially and ethnically diverse students in special education to be more academically successful. Over 30 years of research on the overrepresentation of racially and ethnically diverse students in special education has focused on variables such as biased assessment, the judgmental characteristics of special-education categories that are not readily observable (Donovan & Cross, 2002), limited teacher experience, lower teacher expectations, and so on; however, there has been a limited focus on variables that influence to positive educational outcomes for minority students in special education.

Sesma and Roehlkepartain (2003) investigated correlations among 40 developmental assets (protective factors) and high-risk behaviors and thriving
behaviors (resiliency) for 217,277 youth in grades 6 through 12 (including 69,731 racially and ethnically diverse youth). Analysis of the student surveys revealed the importance of the 40 developmental assets in supporting healthy behavior for all youth. Additionally, there was some variance along racial and ethnic lines in the relationship between the categories of developmental assets and different outcomes. Religious institutions were viewed by Hispanic Americans as important community resources, Vietnamese Americans placed an emphasis on the challenges associated with balancing American and Vietnamese cultures, and African Americans and Hispanic Americans placed an emphasis on the involvement in the lives of children by adults who were outside of their immediate family. Although how racial or ethnic differences varied in the importance attached to developmental assets (protective factors) was investigated by Sesma and Roehlkepartain (2003), their survey did not address differences that might exist for youth with disabilities.

Societal attitudes regarding the measurement of intelligence can impact children of different racial groups negatively. There are some researchers, for example, whose data lend credence to their claim that African Americans are intellectually inferior to European Americans. Rushton and Jenson (2005) contended that there continues to be a 1.1 standard deviation difference between the IQs of African Americans and European Americans. In stark contrast, Dickens and Flynn (2006) analyzed standardization samples from four commonly administered IQ tests. They found that between 1972 and 2002 African Americans had increased their scores by 5 or 6 points compared with non-Hispanic Caucasians. Dickens and Flynn examined changes in how African Americans are classified (genetics) as well as
changes in how African Americans identify themselves. They found that neither of these variables could explain the gain in IQ points. The researchers suggested that the gain in IQ points had to do with environmental influences, not genetics. According to Stipek (2001), IQ test scores that vary along racial or ethnic lines can best be explained by test takers’ experiences; however, minority youth continue to be at-risk to the extent that they are impacted by that bias.

Intellectual capacity also was investigated by Fryer and Levitt (2006). Fryer and Levitt examined racial differences in the cognitive ability of children aged 8 to 12 months. Using a nationally representative data set of 10,000 children born in 2001, the researchers found no statistically significant difference in test outcomes between European Americans and African Americans. Differences in test scores that occurred as the children grew older could be attributed to environmental influences. The environmental influences described in this study were single parenthood, parental income, parental occupation, parental education, and the number of siblings in the household. Longitudinal studies of resilience among children and youth suggest that all of these factors can be risk factors (Werner, 2000, 2006). Resilience researchers have found that intellectual capacity can be a protective factor (Doll & Lyon, 1998; Werner, 2000). The presence of at least average intellectual capacity is a part the federal definition of the special-education category of learning disability.

Blackwell, Trzesniewski, and Dweck (2007) evaluated students’ perceptions of their own intelligence. They investigated the role of implicit theories of intelligence in relation to the mathematics achievement of 373 seventh graders. Over a period of 2 years, the mathematics achievement of the seventh-grade students who
believed in the incremental theory of intelligence (that intelligence is malleable) was significantly higher than for seventh graders who believed in the entity theory of intelligence (that intelligence is fixed). Of interest in this current study is the concept of intelligence held by racially and ethnically diverse students with learning disabilities who, by definition, possess at least average intelligence, but who may be subject to societal stereotypes about race and special education. They may think they have fixed intelligence either because of their racial or their special-education identity.

Stereotype threat is a construct that developed from the investigation of an explanation for differences in academic achievement. According to Aronson and Steele (Aronson, 2002; Steele & Aronson, 1995), stereotype threat is defined as performance anxiety based on the fear that one’s performance will confirm the negative societal stereotypes regarding one’s group. Stereotype threat can have a negative impact on the standardized test scores for groups who are stereotyped by society as having lesser intellectual abilities (Suzuki & Aronson, 2005). Subjects studied initially by Aronson and Steele were African American college students. More of the same research was conducted with women and men in the area of mathematics, and European American and Asian American males in the area of mathematics. There are no studies to date in which the populations studied were racially and ethnically diverse adolescents with learning disabilities. It is possible that these students may experience the threat of a double stereotype: identity as a racial minority and identity as a student with a disability. Davis et al. (2006) examined the concept of racial identity in relation to the academic performance of students in
stereotype threat circumstances. They found that evidence of racial identity (as measured by a standardized instrument) moderated student test performance. Of interest is the racial identity status among adolescents with learning disabilities who are the subject of this study.

Resilience researchers define resilience as the individual, family, and community factors that allow an adolescent to cope successfully with life conditions that put the adolescent at risk for the development of psychopathology (Werner, 1993; 2006; Werner & Smith, 1992, 2001; Wolin & Wolin, 1993). At the core of the concept of resiliency is that the subject can adapt and achieve competence in life circumstances (Garmezy, Masten, & Tellegen, 1984). There are several studies that investigated resiliency in relation to learning disabilities. In one such study, Werner (1993) conducted longitudinal research in which she found that the 22 members of her Hawaiian American cohort, who had been identified at age 10 as having learning disabilities, did indeed become resilient when they reached age 32. Resiliency measures included criminal and health records, marital and employment status, interviews, and rating scales. Werner’s group of 22 cohort participants did not demonstrate resiliency during adolescence. Her findings of resiliency at age 32 added to the notion that resiliency is a multifaceted, dynamic phenomenon. An individual’s response to challenging circumstances may vary depending the developmental stage or change in available opportunities (employment, as an example).

In a second longitudinal study, Raskind, Goldberg, Higgins, and Herman (1999) followed 41 upper-middle-class students who attended the Frostig Center, a school for children with learning disabilities. Success attributes were documented at
the mean age of 32.1 for 21 of the 41 students in this study. Ratings of resiliency were based on public records, interviews, and researcher ratings of the presence or absence of success attributes. Both Werner (1993) and Raskind et al. (1999) found evidence of resiliency within their cohorts; however, the results were specific to adults and not to adolescents. Additionally, the cohorts differed from each other in socioeconomic status and racial background. The population studied by Werner consisted of Asians and Polynesians who lived in Hawaii, half of whom were of low socioeconomic status. The population studied by Raskind et al. was majority European American and upper-middle-class.

The purpose of Blum, Kelly, and Ireland’s (2001) longitudinal research was to compare protective (resilience) factors among a nationally representative sample of learning disabled, emotionally disabled, and mobility impaired 7th through 12th graders with a comparison group of students without disabilities. They found that the same protective (resiliency) factors existed across groups; however, young people with disabilities were more likely to be exposed to risk factors and less likely to have access to protective (resilience) factors than the students without disabilities. Except for the aforementioned study there has been little research that has examined resiliency variables specific to adolescents with learning disabilities.

Numerous researchers have investigated resiliency variables (protective factors) for racially and ethnically diverse youth (Floyd, 1996; Gayles, 2005; Kitano & Lewis, 2005); however, no empirical research exists as to specific resiliency variables (protective factors) for racially and ethnically diverse adolescents with learning disabilities. In Werner’s (1993) longitudinal study, all of the members of her
cohort lived in the multiracial community on the island of Kauai. Racial or ethnic identity was not included in the measures used to identify resilience among the 22 adolescents who had learning disabilities.

Demographics as well as post high-school outcomes vary for all youth with learning disabilities. Demographics and post-high-school outcomes also vary for youth of different racial and or ethnic groups who have learning disabilities. A large body of data and analysis resulted from the first National Longitudinal Transition Study (NLTS) (Wagner et al., 1993), a comprehensive study of transition experiences of young people with disabilities that was mandated by the U.S. Congress in 1983. Data were collected on 8,000 youth with disabilities during 1987 and 1990 via phone interviews, surveys, and analyses of student records. The findings of this first NLTS were that 68% of high-school youth with disabilities came from households with incomes of less than $25,000. Thirty-seven percent of youth with disabilities were living in a single-parent home compared with 25% of youth without disabilities. Forty-one percent of students with disabilities had heads of household who had not graduated from high school. Lower socioeconomic status, living in a single-parent home, and having a head of household who had not graduated from high school are three risk factors identified in the resilience literature (Luthar & Zelazo 2003; Werner, 2006). Youth with disabilities had greater attendance problems than the regular-education population. Youth with disabilities who were also poor were less likely to enroll in either college or vocational programs after high school. The Minorities in Education Annual Status Report (October, 2003) documented continued lower enrollment of African Americans and Hispanic Americans in college compared
with European Americans although gains of over 122% had been made in this area since 1987 (McGlynn, 2004).

Data obtained from the first National Longitudinal Transition Study (NTLS; Wagner, Blackorby, Cameto, Hebbeler, & Newman, 1993) were compared with data obtained in the second National Longitudinal Transition Study (NLTS-2; Wagner, Newman, Cameto, & Levine, 2006) in order to investigate school-completion and school-dropout trends for youth with disabilities. Surveys of all youth with disabilities ages 15 through 19 revealed that the school-dropout rate decreased from 1987 to 2003. Sixty-two percent of the youth studied had a learning disability. Some researchers have investigated the probable causes for dropping out of school by students with disabilities. In a study of 556 students with learning disabilities or mental retardation where half had dropped out of school and half had not, Dunn, Chamber, and Rabren (2004) found that there were four factors related to dropping out of school. Disability status was the first factor. A regression analysis was performed to identify which indicators were more valuable in the prediction of school drop-out. The data analysis revealed that the students with learning disabilities were estimated to have a much higher probability of dropping out (.58) than students with mental retardation (.37) The three additional factors that separated students who stayed in school from those who dropped out were the students’ perception of preparation they had received during school for post-high-school endeavors, the presence of a helpful person, and their participation in a supportive class..

According to the NLTS and the NLTS-2, the school completion rate for students with learning disabilities improved between 1987 and 2003. In 1987, the
completion rate for all students with disabilities was 54%; in 2003 the rate was 72%.
High-school completion status of Hispanic Americans with disabilities was lower 
than that of African American and European American students for both years (44% school completion rate in 1987 and 60% in 2003). African American school-completion rates were 55% in 1987, and 77% in 2003. European American completion rates were 56% in 1987 and 74% in 2003.

An analysis of the variables related to the academic achievement and high-school completion rates of the students in the NLTS studies revealed factors in three interrelated areas: individual, family, and school or environmental factors. Several individual factors were identified, including the type of disability, age, social skills, and persistence. Family factors identified were household income, family expectations for academic performance, and family support for learning. School factors were grade retention, grades obtained in courses, and student mobility. The relationship between student and teacher was not mentioned in the analysis of school factors; however, young people spend a significant portion of each weekday in school, and teachers can have a lasting, significant influence on the lives of children and adolescents with disabilities (Murray, 2003). The impact of qualified, caring teachers who have high expectations of their students is a protective factor that cannot be minimized, particularly if those students have disabilities. Although the teacher-student factor was not a part of the NLTS analysis, this area is of interest in the current study.

Also, although the NLTS researchers did not label them as such, the aforementioned individual and family factors are some of the same risk and resiliency
(protective) factors found in resiliency research. Of interest in the current study is the perspective that academically successful and academically unsuccessful racially diverse adolescents with learning disabilities have in relation to themselves and their families, as well as their high-school teachers.

In the National Longitudinal Transition Study, additional types of data were collected for youth from diverse backgrounds. Twenty-four percent of students in special education were African American students, whereas 12% of students in general education were African American. African American youth with disabilities had attendance problems that were greater than their European American peers with disabilities. African American and Hispanic American youth with disabilities were more likely to spend less time in regular education than their European American disabled peers. Post high-school, African American youth with disabilities were less likely to find competitive jobs, and they earned lower salaries on jobs than their European American peers. Some positive post-high-school changes were documented in the NLTS-2 (2005) study. Twenty-nine percent of youth with disabilities who were high-school drop-outs had enrolled in one or more classes to complete their high-school diploma. Two years after leaving high-school, nine percent of youth with disabilities who were high-school dropouts had earned a high-school certificate (GED) or diploma. Thirty-nine percent of youth with disabilities who earned a high-school diploma, and nine percent of youth with disabilities who dropped out of high school had enrolled in some form of post-secondary education.

There are racially and ethnically diverse youth with learning disabilities who are academically successful. Much attention has been focused on the
overrepresentation of racially and ethnically diverse youth in special education, and little attention has been given to the successful students in that population whose resilience can be inferred from their successful progress towards high-school graduation. There is a dearth of information on the resiliency and attribution variables that exist within this population of adolescents. The purpose of this study is to explore the protective factors and motivational variables that influence academic performance for this group of young people.

**Theoretical Rationale**

There are two theories that provide a context for exploring success factors that exist among racially and ethnically diverse adolescents with learning disabilities. Resiliency is the first theoretical construct, and attribution theory is the second.

Resiliency theorists seek to identify protective factors that promote positive adaptation in the face of adverse circumstances. Resiliency theory represents a paradigm shift in the focus of research in child development from the “at-risk” perspective to the “at-promise” perspective. Resiliency research provides a focus on methods by which positive functioning among at-risk groups can be promoted, rather than a focus on treatment of disorders after they have developed.

Resiliency is a concept that emerged from studies conducted by several different researchers in the 1960s and 1970s. Garmezy (1984) and Anthony (1974) studied children of schizophrenics and found that there were numbers of children who demonstrated healthy adaptations to their environments although they lived in high-risk environments. In 1954, Werner began a longitudinal study of an entire community of at-risk infants on the Hawaiian Island of Kauai. She published
preliminary results of her study in the 1980s (Werner & Smith, 1992). She found that some members of her cohort exhibited healthy adjustment because of protective factors that included close family ties, informal support systems within the community, and personal characteristics such as in sociability (Luthar, 2006). Garmezy (1984), Rutter (1987), and Werner and Smith (1992) provided the impetus for a shift in the concern of child development researchers from pathology to a focus on the process of healthy development. They investigated the tendency for humans to self-correct and develop normally in all but the most hostile circumstances (Werner & Smith, 1989). The major overall finding of these researchers was that growing up in adverse conditions did not equate necessarily to adverse outcomes in adulthood.

As resiliency research evolved, the concept of resiliency expanded. Initial studies placed an emphasis on the personal attributes internal to the child; further research pointed to resilient adaptation that may have been influenced by factors external to the child (Luthar, 2006). Resilience researchers identified and categorized factors within the child, factors specific to family, and factors within the broader social environment. Researchers also began to recognize that resiliency was not a static phenomenon, but rather that it fluctuated over time as influenced by developmental stages, new risk factors, and changing life circumstances. A finding replicated by several resilience researchers (Luthar & Cicchetti, 2000; Luthar & Zelazo, 2003) was that resilience is domain specific. A child might appear to demonstrate outward resilient behavior (e.g., educational resilience) but may at the same time experience inner distress (e.g., internal vulnerability). The result of these findings is that resilience researchers are more specific in their definitions of
resilience: educational resilience (academic success) and emotional resilience (psychological health) are examples.

Resiliency has been investigated in relation to numerous life stressors: parental mental illness, parental divorce, alcoholism, abuse, severe economic hardship, community violence, concentration camps, war, and natural disasters (Doll & Lyon, 1998; Werner, 2006). The unique experiences of racially and ethnically diverse families (racial discrimination, immigration) are experiences that also have been viewed through the resilience lens, although there is a paucity of research in this area.

There are several aspects of resiliency research that are important to the investigation of factors that influence academic performance for racially and ethnically diverse adolescents with learning disabilities. First, the “at-promise” focus of resiliency theory directs the researcher away from the deficit perspective and toward the variables that may influence successful adaptation. Resiliency researchers concur that a focus on the early promotion of resilient functioning is more effective than a focus on treatment for maladaptive behavior (Luthar, 2006). Second, the focus of resiliency theory can provide a framework for examining if the individual, family, and social protective factors of interest in this study do indeed influence youth in the direction of academic success. Third, there are over 50 years of studies on the balance between risk and protective factors that can result in resilience. In this study, resilience is defined as academic success. Previous studies have documented the beneficial effect that interventions to promote resilient functioning (e.g., academic success) can have on youth. If the protective factors chosen for this study do promote
academic success, educators can use those factors to promote resilient functioning among other students of the same background who are not academically successful.

This study is an investigation of the resiliency variables and the attribution variables that influence the academic performance of racially and ethnically diverse adolescents with learning disabilities. Research in the area of attribution theory also can provide a perspective for motivational factors that may influence the academic performance of students in this group. Graham (2001) is an attribution theorist who proposed that many African American children perform poorly in school not because of low-intellectual skills but because of a feelings of hopelessness, low expectations, denial of the importance of effort, or because they give up when confronted with failure. The purpose of her research was to understand the motivation for achievement and the motivation for social interactions among African American students. Graham postulated that student beliefs about why outcomes occur may determine subsequent actions or behavior. For example, if a student is asked the question of why he or she failed a test, the answer (either “I didn’t study enough” or I’m just not smart”) influences the student’s personal motivation. In the United States, failure is often attributed to ability (or lack of) or effort (or lack of). Although Graham’s study had peer aggression as a focus in addition to academic motivation, the larger purpose of her research was to provide a framework for understanding factors relevant to social and academic motivation among African American youth.

The motivational patterns and self-concept of 36 Hispanic American youth were investigated by Gordon (1996). Those students in the study who were resilient (resilient was defined as a 2.75 grade point average) might have answered Graham’s
question of why they (the student) failed the test by stating that they must not have studied enough, because Gordon’s study found that the resilient students believed in their cognitive abilities. Although the students in Gordon’s study did not have learning disabilities, the research findings regarding the relationship between motivation and resilience have implications for the current study.

Dweck (2000), another attribution theorist, examined a different perspective of ability and effort. She studied students’ views of their own intelligence. According to Dweck, students have two ideas about their intelligence. Some students think that their intelligence is a fixed, innate trait. They believe that the amount they have is finite. Consequently they must prove that they have enough intelligence in an academically challenging situation, or they must hide their perceived lack of intelligence if the academic challenge is too great. According to Dweck, students with the view that intelligence is fixed want to look smart (to themselves and others) and want to avoid looking dumb. These students have the performance goal of winning positive judgments about their competence. Their effort is to show others that they are still smart even when they are presented with a challenging task. Other students think that their intelligence is malleable, that is, it can be developed by effort. If the student works harder, he or she will get smarter. This group of students has the learning goal of working harder in order to get smarter. Whether a student has a fixed view or a malleable view of his or her intelligence is a factor that might influence the academic performance of racially and ethnically diverse students with learning disabilities, particularly because there is a stereotype that students who receive special-education services must be “dumb.” The aspects of attribution theory described above are
relevant to the investigation of academic performance for racially and ethnically diverse adolescents with learning disabilities. Graham’s (1997), Gordon’s (1996), and Dweck’s (2000) studies demonstrated that academic motivation was influenced positively or negatively by the child’s interpretation of failure (attribution). The youth in this current study have learning disabilities and, by definition, they have experienced academic failure. Attribution theorists suggest that how failure is interpreted by a child can influence academic performance. It is possible that the attributions of the youth in this current study may influence them to be academically successful or to fail.

Do individual, family, and community resilience factors influence academic performance for racially and ethnically diverse adolescents with learning disabilities? Do attribution concepts of intelligence or racial identity influence academic performance for this population of students? The purpose of this study is to contribute to the knowledge regarding the aforementioned factors. The research questions are as follows.

**Research Questions**

1. To what extent is there a difference in individual resilience (protective) factors for academically successful and academically unsuccessful racially and ethnically diverse 9th- through 12th- grade adolescents with learning disabilities?

2. To what extent is there a difference in family resilience (protective) factors for academically successful and academically unsuccessful racially and
ethnically diverse 9th- through 12th-grade adolescents with learning disabilities?

3. To what extent is there a difference in community resilience (protective) factors for academically successful and academically unsuccessful racially and ethnically diverse 9th- through 12th-grade adolescents with learning disabilities?

4. To what extent is there a difference in views of intelligence (fixed versus malleable) for academically successful and academically unsuccessful racially and ethnically diverse 9th- through 12th-grade adolescents with learning disabilities?

5. To what extent is there a difference in concepts of racial identity among academically successful and academically unsuccessful racially and ethnically diverse 9th- through 12th-grade adolescents with learning disabilities?

**Definition of Key Terms**

Following are the operational definitions of key terms used in this study. There may be other definitions of the terms listed below; however, for the purposes of this study, the stated definitions will apply.

**Academic success:** In this study resilience equates to academic success. Youth who are successful academically may possess protective factors that ameliorate risks present in their lives (Werner & Smith, 2001). Risks for the youth in this study are enrollment in a special-education class (RSP) and membership in an underrepresented minority group (African American, Hispanic American, etc.). For the purpose of this
study, academic success is defined in terms of a minimum number of credits earned at each grade level toward completion of the 220 credits required for graduation. The minimum number of credits is set by the school district. Students in the school district earn credits by obtaining a D or higher grade in each class and by meeting the requirements of the school-district attendance policy. Freshman credit status equals 0 to 59 credits, sophomore status equals 60 to 119 credits, junior status equals 120 to 179 credits, and senior status equals 180 to 220 credits. The questionnaire was administered after the first progress report in the fall of the school year and before the end of the first semester, thus, the definition of academic success for the ninth-grade level was 30 credits passed at the end of the first progress report of the ninth-grade school year.

Attribution theory: Attribution theory is a theory that has to do with how people interpret or explain events. A person’s explanation of why an event occurred influences his or her subsequent action. One example in this current study is that academic performance may be influenced by how racially and ethnically diverse students with learning disabilities interpret their intelligence. A student with a fixed view of intelligence may interpret failure, when faced with an academic challenge, as not being smart, and a subsequent behavior is to not put forth more effort. A student with a malleable view of intelligence may interpret failure, when faced with an academic challenge, as the need to put forth more effort because the student thinks he or she will get smarter by working harder.

Developmental assets: The Search Institute (Benson & Leffert, 2001) used the term developmental assets as a synonym for the term protective factors. Developmental
assets describe factors that help youth to become resilient in the face of risk factors. Developmental assets are either internal or external factors. Many of the developmental assets are the same individual, family, and community characteristics labeled by other resilience researchers as protective factors.

**Fixed intelligence:** In this study, fixed intelligence refers to the belief students have about their intelligence. Students who believe that their intelligence is fixed believe that it is internal, cannot be changed, and cannot be developed. It is a fixed entity, thus the term entity theory. According to Dweck (2000), when presented with an academic challenge, students who have a fixed, entity theory of intelligence are more concerned with demonstrating they are smart than with learning something new. In contrast, students who believe their intelligence is malleable are less concerned with demonstrating they are smart and more concerned with learning something new.

Three questions derived from a factor analysis of the Implicit Theories of Intelligence Scale for Children – Self Form (Dweck, Chiu, & Hong, 1995) (questionnaire section entitled “What I Think”) was used to measure fixed intelligence.

**Learning disability:** A learning disability is defined as “a disorder in one or more of the basic psychological processes involved in understanding or in using language, spoken or written, which may manifest itself in an impaired ability to listen, think, speak, read, write, spell, or do mathematical calculations and has a severe discrepancy between intellectual ability and achievement in one or more of the academic areas specified in Section 56337(a) of the [California] Education Code” (24th Edition – California Special Education Programs - a Composite of Laws, 2002, p. A-15). For the purpose of this study, students are presumed to have a learning disability because
of their enrollment in the RSP class. The presence of a learning disability also was verified through student self-report.

**Malleable Intelligence:** In this study, malleable intelligence refers to the belief students have about their intelligence. Students who believe their intelligence is malleable believe that it is dynamic and it can be changed or developed. The student believes that intelligence is incremental, thus the term incremental theory. Students who believe their intelligence is malleable are less concerned with demonstrating they are smart and more concerned with learning something new. In contrast, students who believe their intelligence is fixed are more concerned with demonstrating they are smart and less concerned with learning something new. Three questions from the Implicit Theories of Intelligence Scale for Children – Self Form (Dweck, Chiu, & Hong, 1995) (questionnaire section entitled “What I Think”) were used to measure malleable intelligence.

**Protective factors:** Protective factors and developmental assets are the same as resilience factors. Protective factors, developmental assets and resilience factors are characteristics within the individual, family, and community that promote resilience. They are factors that moderate risk and enhance good, healthy life-outcomes (Werner, 2000). Examples of protective factors at the individual level include an internal locus of control, a sociable temperament, and the ability to interact with and ask for support from others. At the family level, examples of protective factors include a warm relationship with at least one parent or caregiver, high expectations from family members, and the opportunity for positive relationships with members of the extended family. Protective factors at the community level may include positive
involvement in schools of high quality, and involvement in prosocial organizations such as churches, sports programs, and employment.

Protective factors were measured with a researcher-designed student survey. Individual protective factors will be measured by the following sections: “Believing in Me,” “Taking Charge,” and “Who I Am.” Family protective factors were measured by the following sections: “Talking with my Parents” and “Who I Am.” Community protective factors were measured by the following sections: “Who I Am” and “Your Activities Outside of Your Classroom” (see Student Survey, Appendixes E and F).

Racial identity: Tatum (1997) referred to racial identity as the importance one places on belonging to a given racial group. In the current study, racial identity refers to this social construct. The Multigroup Ethnic Identity Measure, a standardized instrument, was used to measure students’ concepts of their individual racial identity (Phinney, 1992). For the purpose of this study, racial or ethnic groups are the following underrepresented groups: African American, Asian American, Hispanic American, Native American, Pacific Islander, and mixed (parents are from two different groups). It should be noted that the identification of an adolescent as a member of a particular racial group (African American, Hispanic, etc.) does not imply homogeneity. Racial identity is a complex phenomenon involving the interaction of all of the following: country of origin, generational status, language status, immigrant versus involuntary minority status (Ogbu, 1986), and level of acculturation (Plunkett & Bamaca-Gomez, 2003).

In this study, membership in one of the underrepresented groups mentioned previously is a risk factor. In contrast, racial and ethnic identity (the social construct
described by Tatum, 1997) has been shown in some studies to be a protective factor. The influence of racial identity on the academic performance of racially and ethnically diverse youth with learning disabilities is one of the variables considered in the current study.

**Resilience:** Resilience is the interaction between a child in adverse conditions and the child’s ability to be successful given his or her competencies, motivations, and support systems (Condly, 2006). Researchers measure resilience on a number of dimensions. In the current study, resilience was measured by academic success. Characteristics that promote resilience (academic success) are called protective factors or developmental assets. They are grouped as individual, family, and community factors. Individual, family, and community factors include an internal locus of control, a warm supportive relationship with at least one caregiver, and involvement in community activities such as church, sports, or employment. In this study, academic progress was measured by a tally of the number of credits earned toward graduation during each school year. The minimum number of credits necessary to make successful progress toward graduation during each school year is decided by the school district. Youth who complete the minimum number of credits for their grade level are academically successful. Students who do not complete the minimum number of credits for their grade level are academically unsuccessful.

**Resource Specialist Program:** The Resource Specialist Program (RSP) is a study-skills class designed to support the special-education student in his or her regular education classes. Students in RSP typically have learning disabilities. They possess
at least average intelligence, yet their academic skills are typically 3 to 4 years below grade level.

**Risk factors**: Risk factors are biological or socio-emotional difficulties that increase the chances of negative developmental outcomes in people (Werner & Smith, 1992). Risk factors can exist within the individual, the family, and the greater community. In this study, the specific risk factors were the existence of a learning disability and membership in a racial or ethnic minority in the United States.

**Stereotype threat**: Stereotype threat is defined as performance anxiety in an academic setting based on the fear that one’s performance will confirm the negative societal stereotypes regarding one’s group. Stereotype threat can have a negative impact on the standardized test scores for groups who are stereotyped by society as having lesser intellectual abilities. Two groups who may experience stereotype threat are racially and ethnically diverse groups and females. A positive racial identity has been found to moderate stereotype threat among racially and ethnically diverse groups (Davis, Aronson, & Salinas, 2006).

**Summary**

Although researchers have shown some positive outcomes for students who are provided special-education services in this country, there continues to be a longstanding concern about the overrepresentation of racially and ethnically diverse minority students in special education. There are national figures that document higher dropout rates, higher truancy rates, lower graduation rates, lower employment rates, and so on for this population. There are, however, numbers of racially and ethnically diverse adolescents with learning disabilities who are academically
successful; yet there is little research that has this population as a specific focus. Numerous researchers have documented protective (resilience) factors and attribution factors that influence success for students in other populations. Is it possible, then, that individual, family, and community resilience factors influence academic success for racially and ethnically diverse adolescents with learning disabilities? Is it possible that attribution theorists’ concepts of intelligence and racial identity influence academic success for this population of students? A survey of racially and ethnically diverse adolescents with learning disabilities can shed light on these questions.

Chapter II contains a review of pertinent research in the areas of resiliency and attribution theory. Longitudinal and cross-sectional studies are described in the review of literature in the area of resiliency. The sample sizes and populations vary, and the definitions of resiliency in the review are multidimensional; however, the research provides a context for the first three questions contained in this study (individual, family, and community factors that influence academic success). In addition, several specific aspects of attribution research (Aronson, 2002; Dweck, 2000; Graham, 2001; Phinney, 1992, etc.) provide a framework for the fourth and fifth questions posed in this study. The fourth and fifth questions address the influence of concepts of intelligence and concepts of racial identity on academic success. The review of literature in the areas of resiliency and attribution reveals a paucity of information on factors that influence academic success for the population that is specific to this study: racially and ethnically diverse adolescents with learning disabilities. The study design and instrumentation are described in Chapter III.
Chapter IV provides the study results and Chapter V contains a discussion of results, limitations, implications, and recommendations for further research.
This study is an investigation of the resiliency and attribution variables that influence the academic performance of racially and ethnically diverse adolescents with learning disabilities. A review of the literature is presented in four sections. The first section encompasses a review of research related to the development of resiliency theory, as well as the development of resiliency theory via longitudinal and cross-sectional research. Studies reviewed in the first section provide a sample of some of the foundational resiliency research. The second section includes a review of resilience factors: (a) individual factors of temperament, (b) factors related to family, and (c) factors related to community. Many of the studies in the second section are longitudinal, some are cross-sectional. The sample populations and sizes vary, and the definitions of resilience are multidimensional; however, the research findings have applicability to the population that is the subject of this study. Members of the population of interest (racially and ethnically diverse adolescents with learning disabilities) are contained in the different populations of some of the studies reviewed, although the variables of interest in this study (race or ethnicity, high-school-age students, students with learning disabilities) were not specified in those studies. The third section describes research regarding resilience and learning disabilities. In this research the sample sizes are relatively small, the populations vary, and resilience factors were evident in adulthood, not adolescence. The risk factor (the presence of a learning disability) is the same risk factor attributed to the
youth in the current study, thus the results of these studies may have some relevance to the current study.

The resilience research reported in the review of literature is longitudinal, the populations vary, and the resilience factors are multidimensional and are measured in adulthood. In the current study; the research is cross-sectional, and there is one specific population. Also, in the current study the resilience (protective) factors are multidimensional; however, resilience is defined solely as academic success. The resilience research described in the literature review outlines the underpinnings of resiliency theory and provides a context for the population and resilience characteristics that are the subject of this study.

The fourth section describes views of intelligence, racial identity, and stereotype threat from the perspective of selected attribution theorists. The studies reviewed in this section provide a theoretical context for how intelligence, race and stereotype threat can apply to the population of interest in this study.

Resiliency Theory Research

A review of resilience definitions and the development of resiliency theory are presented in order to set the stage for the context of this study. Resilience definitions provide an overall explanation of the phenomena described in resilience research. An exploration of the development of resiliency research provides an historical framework for the subject of this study. Additionally, reviews of the findings of longitudinal and cross-sectional researchers provide a more detailed explanation of the resiliency concept.
Definition of Resilience

Resilience researchers defined resilience as the factors that allow a child to cope successfully with life conditions that put the child at risk for the development of psychopathology (Werner, 1993, 2006; Werner & Smith, 1992, 2001; Wolin & Wolin, 1993). At the core of the concept of resiliency is that the child can adapt and achieve competence in life circumstances (Garmezy, Masten, & Tellegen, 1984). Resilience is defined as the continuous interaction between a child in adverse conditions and the child’s ability to be successful given his or her competencies, motivations, and support systems (Condly, 2006).

Resilience is a complex phenomenon. According to Sameroff (1999), a resilience factor is either promotive or protective. A promotive resilience factor is at the positive end of a continuum. It has the same positive influence on both low-risk or high-risk populations (responsive parenting is an example). A protective factor has neither a positive nor negative influence within a low-risk group; however, a protective factor has a positive effect in a high-risk group (Gutman, Sameroff, & Eccles, 2002; Rutter, 1987).

The resilience concept can be better understood if it also is viewed from the perspective of the definition of risk. If resilience and risk are defined as opposite ends of the spectrum of how people respond to stress and adverse events, resilience is the positive end of the spectrum and is equated with overcoming or adapting to adversity. Risk is the negative end of the spectrum and is equated to lack of recovery or adaptation to stress and adversity. In the current study, promotive and protective
resilience factors can influence academic success, and risk factors can influence academic failure.

Some researchers have used the terms “protective factors” as a means of describing characteristics that are buffer risk and support healthy development (Werner, 2000). For these researchers, the term resilience is used to describe what occurs when protective factors help individuals to manage risk. Other researchers have used the terms “developmental assets” as synonyms for protective factors (Benson & Leffert, 2001). The presence of a higher number of developmental assets serves to balance the negative influence of risk factors. According to Werner (2006) and Naglieri and LeBuffe (2005), resilience is a state of being that is inferred from the measurement of the dynamic interaction of risk and positive adaptation to life circumstances.

Development of Resiliency Theory

The focus of the current study is the academic performance of racially and ethnically diverse youth who have learning disabilities. Although numbers of these youth are not academically successful, there are also those who are academically successful. Resiliency theory provides a framework for understanding the internal and external influences that may differentiate the two groups of students. Resiliency is a useful theory for the current study in that there is a focus on the human tendency to thrive and a focus away from pathology or failure. Inasmuch as there is little information in educational or psychological research that describes academically successful racially and ethnically diverse youth who have learning disabilities and
how those youth differ from their unsuccessful classmates, resiliency provides a plausible theoretical perspective.

In the mid-to-late 1970s, child-development research moved from a focus on pathology to more of a focus on the tendency for humans to thrive and move in the direction of healthy development (Werner & Smith, 1989). Werner and Smith (1989, 1992) studied 698 multiracial children of Kauai, Hawaii over a period of 30 years. The children were followed from the fourth week of gestation to age 30. Werner and Smith investigated both the constitutional make-up of the child at risk and the quality of the child’s immediate and broader environment. They considered the interaction of nature and nurture as a dynamic interaction that varied across time.

In their longitudinal research, Werner and Smith (1989, 1992) identified one third of their participants as high-risk children. These children had been exposed to varying degrees of perinatal stress, were born into poverty, and lived in families with chronic dysfunction. Werner and Smith found some differences within the high-risk population. One of every three children who were considered high-risk exhibited a balance between risk, stressful life events, and protective characteristics. The balance within the child and his or her environment resulted in resilient outcomes. These children developed into “competent and autonomous young adults who ‘worked well, played well, loved well, and expected well’” (Werner & Smith, 1989, p. 152; 1992, p. 192). The protective factors documented for these children were numerous. In infancy, these children were alert, vigorous, affectionate, and they had engaging temperaments. They lived in households with less than four children, and their mothers were competent caregivers who had some education. They had relationships
with supportive grandparents, siblings, and teachers. In childhood and adolescence, these children demonstrated advanced self-help skills, an internal locus of control, and average to above-average intelligence. There was an expectation that they help with chores at home, and they had close relationships with competent peers. They had successful school experiences. They had special talents or hobbies, and they had strong motivation to achieve. As adults, they demonstrated the ability to plan, and they had strong religious connections. Information that documented resilient outcomes came from numerous sources: physical and psychological exams, interviews and questionnaires, as well as standardized assessments. The researchers also gathered data by investigating records from educational, health, and social-services agencies. Data were collected at several different points in the lives of the participants. The children studied all possessed a large number, but not necessarily all of, the resilience traits mentioned above. Although the current study of interest is cross-sectional in that the population (adolescents) is only being studied at one point in their high school years, the findings from Werner and Smith’s longitudinal study point to the kinds of factors that may differentiate adolescent youth who are successful from those who are not.

Longitudinal studies of resilient children from high-risk backgrounds comprise the bulk of studies in the area of resilience. Werner (2000) and Werner and Smith (1989, 1992, 2001) were among those researchers who investigated children from high-risk backgrounds. They investigated economic hardship, substance abuse, child abuse and neglect, parental mental illness, teenage motherhood, and perinatal complications. They found that one of every three children who were considered
high-risk exhibited a balance between risk, stressful life events, and protective characteristics. The balance within the child and his or her environment resulted in resilient outcomes.

In addition to the studies conducted by researchers such as Werner (2000) and Werner and Smith (1989, 1992, 2001), there are several other broad areas of resilience research. One set of studies has focused on resilient outcomes for children who were subjected to long-term stressors, such as divorce, as one example (Wallerstein & Blakeslee, 1989). Wallerstein (1985) and colleagues (Wallerstein & Blakeslee, 1989; Wallerstein, Lewis, & Blakeslee 2000) conducted a longitudinal study of 131 middle-class, majority European American children in California from divorced families. The data obtained by the researchers via extensive, open-ended interviews conducted at 18 month, 5-, 10-, 15-, and 25-year points yielded evidence that parental divorce had a long-lasting influence in the lives of the study participants. The influences were both negative and positive. One major negative impact was that parental divorce was related to changes in the ability of the study participants to involve themselves in long-term, committed relationships as adults. Another negative impact was that as adults, they experienced a series of on-going losses due to family constellation changes (remarriage-and-divorce, step-families, live-in relationships, etc.). Both of the aforementioned negative results were risk factors for the study participants. A major positive impact found in Wallerstein’s qualitative research was that despite the risk factors present in their lives the study participants displayed characteristics of resilience: many participants described themselves as stronger and more independent. They indicated they were able to be responsible for their own
well-being at an early age. They had a system of supportive siblings. Although the participants in the Wallerstein (1985) and Wallerstein and Blakeslee (1989) studies included mostly European American and middle to upper-middle class participants, the resiliency factors highlighted by these researchers were similar to those highlighted by Werner and Smith (1989, 1992). These children of divorce had consistent relationships with supportive grandparents and teachers, they had an internal locus of control, they possessed advanced self-help skills, and they pursued their personal talents or areas of interest. The Werner and Smith (1989, 1992, 2001) and the Wallerstein and Blakeslee studies tracked two different populations of children, yet some of the same characteristics of resiliency were common to both groups: a personal sense of independence, supportive family members and teachers, and involvement in areas of talent or special interest. The current study is an investigation (albeit not longitudinal) of the extent to which the same resiliency characteristics may be present in the current population of interest: racially and ethnically diverse adolescents with learning disabilities.

Another population, children who were exposed to political violence or war, was the focus of another set of studies. One of those studies was of adults who survived World War II concentration camps as children. Moskovitz (1983), in his follow-up study of Nazi Holocaust survivors who had been sent from concentration camps to a nursery school in England, found that all of the survivors attributed their resilience to their involvement with one warm, caring teacher in the nursery school. Dalianis (1994) studied children whose mothers were political prisoners during the Greek Civil War. In both groups of studies, the researchers documented the positive
involvement of significant others (the nursery school teacher, other mothers) as protective factors that would support continued competence or continued developmentally appropriate growth under stressful conditions. Support from teachers and other positive adults were found to be protective factors for three vastly different populations: children on the island of Kauai, children of divorce, and children who experienced war or violence. These studies provide data that suggests these protective factors should be included in the current study of how racially and ethnically diverse adolescents with learning disabilities can thrive (be academically successful) in their school environment.

**Longitudinal Research**

Werner (1992, 1994, 1995, and 1996) and Werner and Smith (1989, 1992, and 2001) conducted some of the earliest research on resilience. The purpose of the research was to ascertain why and how some children growing up in adverse conditions thrived, whereas many of their counterparts did not. Werner and her colleagues conducted a seminal longitudinal study in which they tracked the cognitive and psychological development of 698 individuals born in 1955 on the island of Kauai, Hawaii. The cohort was multiracial, as defined by the country of origin of the child’s immigrant ancestors (Japanese, part and full Hawaiian, Filipino, Portuguese Anglo-Caucasians, and other ethnic mixtures).

These individuals had perinatal problems and were born into adverse conditions: extreme poverty, parental alcoholism, or mental illness. They were evaluated at ages 1, 2, 10, 18, 31, and 40. A descriptive methodology (interview; physical and psychological assessment; review of school, health, and agency records)
was used in the study. The attrition rate for the first 20 years of the study was low: 96% of the 1955 birth cohort participated in the 2-year follow-up, 90% in the 10-year follow up, and 88% in the 18-year follow-up. There were 505 of the original 698 participants remaining in the 30th year of the study (82% of the surviving members of the original cohort).

The researchers found stressors or risks during the different stages of development of their cohort. They also found protective factors – factors that enabled individuals to remain resilient in spite of their adverse conditions. As examples, resilient members of the cohort possessed good cognitive ability, a positive temperament that facilitated social interaction, and there was a close bond with a primary caregiver. They possessed special talents or hobbies, they had a strong religious orientation, and they demonstrated an ability to plan and think ahead. Other protective factors were supportive grandparents, siblings, teachers, and schools. Werner (1992, 1994, 1995, and 1996) and her colleagues (Werner & Smith 1989, 1992, 2001) concluded that growing up in adverse conditions did not equate necessarily to adverse outcomes in adulthood. Sixty percent of the males and 70% of the females demonstrated resiliency in adulthood: job satisfaction, marital stability, a personal sense of self-efficacy, and general psychological health.

In research conducted before the 1970s, the emphasis was on retrospective analyses of casualties – those individuals who had poor outcomes because of negative life events. The focus of retrospective research was not on the lives of survivors. Werner and Smith’s (1989) research was prospective, not retrospective, and demonstrated variance in how people respond to life’s adversity. Their longitudinal
study (as well as other similar studies in the US and Europe) was an opportunity to document how protective factors served to minimize the negative impact of risk factors so that the result was resilience: healthy, age appropriate development in youth and adulthood. Werner and Smith’s focus on protective factors present in the lives of youth who thrive is of value in the educational arena. Peter Benson (2003) conducted research on protective factors present in the lives of students and found that increasing those factors protected young people from problem behaviors. His studies were prospective, as were the studies by Werner and Smith. The current study is prospective in that racially and ethnically diverse students with disabilities are surveyed regarding the extent to which protective factors found in resiliency research minimize the impact of risk factors and maximize the opportunity for academic success.

Although Werner and Smith’s (1989, 1992, 2001) longitudinal study is probably the study most referred to in the resilience literature, there are several other longitudinal studies of children who lived in high-risk circumstances. There were numerous studies conducted in the United States; there also were studies in Great Britain, New Zealand, Australia, Denmark, Sweden, and Germany (Doll & Lyon, 1998; Werner, 2006; Werner & Smith, 2001). These studies investigated between 100 to 1,000 or more male and female participants, using several age-appropriate tools to measure adaptation. Data were collected at several different points in the participants’ life cycles. In all of the aforementioned studies, data also were collected on low-risk comparison groups. Additionally, there were low attrition rates in each of the studies. The individual characteristics that were associated with resilience for infants in high-
risk environments were sociability, low emotionality, high vigor, and alertness (Werner, 2006). The individual characteristics of children and adolescents were that they had an engaging temperament, they were affectionate, they had a sense of autonomy, they were socially mature, their intelligence was average to above average, they had high motivation to achieve, they possessed special talents, a positive self-concept, an internal locus of control, the ability to plan, a strong faith, and advanced self-help skills (Werner, 2006). Family and community resources that were found in resilient high-risk children were that there were fewer than four children, there was maternal competence, a close bond with the primary caregiver, supportive grandparents, supportive siblings, competent peer friends, supportive teachers, successful school experiences, the presence of mentors, and pro-social organizations such as youth clubs and religious groups. All of the previously mentioned individual characteristics and family and community factors were documented in two or more of the aforementioned longitudinal studies, thus the rational for including these characteristics and factors in the current research.

**Cross-sectional Research**

Although most of the research in the area of resiliency theory has been in the form of longitudinal studies, some researchers have conducted cross-sectional studies as a means of investigating resilience. The Search Institute, headed by Peter Benson (Benson & Leffert, 2001), used cross-sectional methodology to investigate resilience. The Search Institute is a group of researchers who identified protective factors that could influence healthy behavior. The Search Institute surveyed teenagers across the United States. Benson’s (2003) research resulted in the identification of external and
internal developmental assets (protective factors) that had important influences on student behavior. The research results from Benson’s studies were that the presence of these developmental assets (protective factors) could protect young people from problem behaviors and could promote positive attitudes and behaviors. The Search Institute compiled a list of 40 developmental assets, such as (a) adult relationships: the young person receives support from three or more nonparent adults, (b) homework: the young person reports doing at least one hour of homework every school day, (c) planning and decision making: the young person knows how to plan ahead and make choices, and (d) personal power: the young person feels a sense of control over what happens in his or her environment (Benson & Leffert, 2001). Developmental assets were defined as both external and internal. Many of the Search Institute’s developmental assets, such as those mentioned above, are similar to the protective factors researched by Werner (1992, 1994, 1995, 1996) in her longitudinal study, as well as the protective factors found by the researchers in the other previously mentioned longitudinal studies.

Resilience theory has resulted from a shift among social scientists away from a focus on maladaptative to a focus on adaptive behavior. Multiple measures have been used in both longitudinal and cross-sectional research to document evidence of a resilient response to many life stressors experienced by persons who vary by gender, age, socioeconomic status, and ethnicity. Of interest in this current study are racially and ethnically diverse adolescents with learning disabilities who are either academically successful or academically unsuccessful. There are several risk factors for this group: (a) membership in a racial group other than European American, (b) a
determination of the presence of a learning disability, and (c) the stigma of enrollment in special-education classes where students are often called “dumb” and the likelihood of high-school graduation and gainful employment are decreased. Although there is an overrepresentation of racially and ethnically diverse youth with learning disabilities in special-education classes in the United States, some of these youth are resilient. They are academically successful – they have thrived despite the presence of adversity. Resiliency theory may provide an explanation for these youth who are academically successful. Resiliency theory also may provide a perspective for investigating those racially and ethnically diverse youth with learning disabilities who are not academically successful.

**Resilience (Protective) Factors: Individual, Family, and Community**

The academic performance of racially and ethnically diverse adolescents who have learning disabilities can be better understood by exploring specific risk and protective factors in the lives of these youth. Resilience researchers have provided a structure for this exploration. They set out to investigate both the constitutional make-up of the child at risk and the quality of the child’s immediate and broader environment. Protective and risk factors are categorized as (a) factors within the individual, (b) factors related to family, and (c) factors related to the broader social community.

**Resilience Factors within the Individual**

Researchers have found numerous variables that influence resilience, and many studies point to a common group of factors that exist within an individual (Naglieri & LeBuffe, 2005; Werner, 2006; Werner & Smith, 1989, 1992, 2001).
Naglieri and LeBuffe (2005) indicated that the study of resilience necessitates valid, reliable, well-developed measures so that the theoretical contributions made about resiliency may be operationalized for the benefit of the children studied. In that vein, Naglieri and LeBuffe developed a rating scale called the Devereux Early Childhood Assessment (DECA). The main purpose of the scale was to assess three areas of resilience among children ages 2 through 5: initiative, self-control, and attachment. The standardization sample for the DECA was 2,000 children from throughout the United States. The researchers established the construct validity of the DECA by comparing an experimental group of children who already had been found to have emotional or behavioral problems (n= 95) with a comparison group of children who had not been found to have emotional or behavior problems (n=86). A $d$-ratio was calculated (a calculation of the standard deviation differences between groups, described as small (.2), medium (.5), and large (.8). Children with no known emotional or behavior problems obtained higher scores on all three areas of resilience: initiative, self-control, and attachment. Although the DECA was based on evaluations of young children ages 2 through 5, Naglieri and LeBuffe contributed to the research indicating the validity of the resilience construct in the three aforementioned areas, thus those three areas were included in the resiliency portion of the questionnaire developed for the adolescents in the current study.

Condly (2006) reviewed the literature on resilience in children with an emphasis on educational implications. Condly found two major individual protective factors for children. Good cognitive ability enabled the child to evaluate his or her environment and to decide which things were or were not within his or her control.
Positive temperament was the second protective factor. A positive temperament facilitated positive interaction and support from others and lessened the likelihood of the child feeling sorry for himself or herself. Condly noted that intelligence also could be a risk factor as well as a protective factor. He cited research that documented a connection between intelligence, internal stress, and depression.

Intelligence and positive temperament were cited by Luthar (2006) as commonly mentioned individual protective factors. Additional personal characteristics found in Luthar’s review of the resilience literature were the ability to self-regulate, an internal locus of control, good self-concept, and belief in oneself. Luthar found evidence of the importance of exploring individual protective factors in children in conjunction with family and community protective factors, and he emphasized their interactive nature.

Cultural knowledge was an individual protective factor that was evident in the research conducted by the Search Institute (Benson & Leffert, 2001). Benson surveyed approximately 217,000 sixth- to twelfth-grade students across the United States. His survey participants included a cross section of youth in terms of ethnic identity and intellectual ability. Based on his surveys of adolescents, he and his colleagues developed a list of 40 developmental assets - protective factors that promoted resilience. Included in the list of developmental assets was cultural competence: the concept that a young person was knowledgeable about and comfortable with people of different cultural, racial, or ethnic backgrounds (Benson & Leffert 2001). Of note is that this protective factor related to race has to do with knowledge of the backgrounds of others. The importance one may place on belonging
to a given racial group was not mentioned by Benson and Leffert, although it was mentioned in other studies (Davis, Aronson & Salinas, 2006; Graham, Taylor & Hudley, 1998). The importance of belonging to a particular racial group is part of the questionnaire developed for the current study.

The population investigated by Floyd (1996) (high school students) and the independent variable in the study (academic success) was the same as in the current study. Floyd interviewed 20 (10 male, 10 female) African American 12th-grade urban-high-school students from low-socioeconomic-status backgrounds in order to study internal as well as external factors contributing to resilience. The risk factors faced by all 20 students had to do with socioeconomic difficulties. Resilience was defined as academic success: eligibility for college entrance, senior status based on credits earned, and enrollment in at least one college track class. Floyd concluded that the academic success of the 20 students could be attributed to three protective factors. Each student lived in a supportive home environment and each youth was involved with caring, committed educators and other adults. Floyd found two individual protective factors: each student demonstrated perseverance and a sense of optimism. The students made verbal statements that focused on setting goals and working to accomplish them. These verbal statements were evidence of one of the individual protective factors described by Doll and Lyon (1998) in their review of resiliency research: high standards of achievement.

Robertson, Harding, and Morrison (1998) compared risk and protective factors of Latino students in order to study early indicators of these characteristics and to try to create an early identification framework for at-risk students. A total of
169 Latino participants (89 males, 80 females) were divided into four categories: at-risk (due to school and family difficulties as identified by professionals), students identified as learning disabled, students identified as needing speech services, and not at-risk (students not identified as in need of supplemental academic or social services). Numerous survey instruments were used to investigate both student and teacher perceptions of academic and social skills (classroom participation, problem behavior, self-concept, social support from significant individuals, social problem solving in peer-teacher and parent interactions, cooperation, and school bonding).

Some of the findings pertinent to the current study were that nonrisk students in general and specifically girls obtained higher grades overall and they had better study skills. The nonrisk students demonstrated better social skills than their at-risk peers. Students with learning disabilities rated themselves higher in self-concept compared with speech students, although they reported more problem behaviors than non-at-risk students. Girls reported a greater support network. The researchers concluded that risk-resilience constructs reliably distinguished between the groups of the students in this study. The constructs also identified students in need of extra school-linked support services. The individual protective factors noted in this study were similar to some of the protective factors mentioned previously: good study skills, good self-concept, and a good support network. Also, in this study gender was an individual protective factor: girls obtained better grades than boys, and they also reported having a good support network.
Doll and Lyon (1998) provided a broad perspective of the research on individual protective factors. They conducted an extensive review of resiliency research and found the following salient individual characteristics:

- good intellectual ability; language competence; positive temperament or easygoing disposition; positive social orientation including close peer friendships; high self-efficacy, self confidence, and self esteem; achievement orientation with high expectations; resilient belief system, faith; higher rate of engagement in productive activities (p. 354).

The previously mentioned researchers pointed to a common group of individual resilience attributes. Those traits most frequently mentioned were intelligence, positive temperament, internal locus of control, and motivation to achieve. Thus, these traits are included in the current study. Of note is that many researchers highlighted the importance of evaluating individual protective factors in relation to family and community variables. Evidence suggests that resilience is an interactive phenomenon.

**Resilience Factors Related to Family**

Resilience research underscores the importance of family connections as an essential protective factor (Naglieri & LeBuffe, 2005; Werner, 2006; Werner & Smith, 1989, 1992, 2001). Svetaz, Ireland, and Blum (2000) found in their study of 16,340 seventh- through twelfth-grade adolescents of which 1,603 were identified as having learning disabilities that close connections with parents and school personnel had a strong influence on decreased violence, emotional vulnerability, and suicide attempts. Doll and Lyons (1998) reviewed approximately 55 resiliency studies with different subjects and different methodologies and found a common thread of family-related factors. They found that at least one parent or caregiver provided a warm
affectionate relationship, parenting consisted of high expectations, positive structure and warmth, and there were opportunities for positive relationships and support from members of the extended family (Frison et al., 1998; Raskind et al., 1999; Werner, 2005).

Werner (2006) reviewed 17 longitudinal studies conducted in the United States and in other countries. Three examples are the Rochester Longitudinal Study, the National Child Development Study in Great Britain, and the Lundby Study in Sweden. The Rochester Longitudinal Study compared the children of 180 women with a history of mental illness with a normal comparison group. The children of the groups were evaluated at birth, 4, 12, and 30 months, 4 years, and through the elementary and secondary grades. In Great Britain, psychological, physical, and educational data were collected from birth to adulthood on 16,994 persons who were born in 1958. In the Lundby Study in Sweden, 148 children who had been exposed to risk factors such as abuse, parental psychopathology, alcoholism, family dysfunction in childhood (Werner, 2006) were followed through midlife. The evidence of risk and positive adaptation seen in the children in the Rochester, the Great Britain, and the Swedish Studies was representative of the protective factors found in the other longitudinal studies analyzed by Werner. Resilient youth and adults had developed a basic sense of trust because of secure attachments either to a mother or an alternate caregiver early in life. A strong bond with a grandparent was important. Close sibling relationships were protective factors in that caring for siblings promoted social maturity and a personal sense of responsibility for the at-risk child. When associated with family ties a sense of responsibility regarding household chores and part time
work was a protective factor. Werner (2000) termed this protective factor required helpfulness. At-risk girls responded positively to socialization practices that promoted independence and emotional support, whereas at-risk boys responded positively to homes where socialization practices included structure, supervision and rules. In addition, a gainfully employed competent mother provided a buffer for some of the environmental risks mentioned previously. Werner (2006) summarized the family factors that had been replicated in two or more of the longitudinal studies reviewed: there were less than four siblings, there was a competent mother with some education, there were strong attachment and involvement with a primary caregiver, grandparents were supportive, and there were close relationships with supportive siblings. Family as a protective factor was an essential resilience attribute in the aforementioned studies, and thus was included in the questionnaire developed for the current study.

A supportive family and home environment was one of the protective factors found in Floyd’s (1996) investigation of academically successful African American high-school students. In another study of academically successful African American high-school students, ethnographic interviews were conducted with three high-school seniors (Gayles 2005). Gayles defined resilience as academic success. The three seniors interviewed had the following commonalities: they were the first in their families to graduate from high school with honors and attend college, they all had been awarded college scholarships, and their families were defined as having lower socioeconomic status. They attended a low-achieving high school in a violent neighborhood. Gayles concluded that, although the three males were exceptions in their high school in terms of academic achievement, they were able to mitigate
possible negative social consequences by separating their academic achievement from their social status. This protective factor that Gayles concluded had contributed to the students’ academic success differed from factors noted in Floyd’s study of academically successful African American youth; however, the three study participants, as described by Gayles, exhibited some of the characteristics noted in other resilience studies. The three study participants possessed social status, and an important protective factor was their supportive relationships within their families.

Some researchers have explored academic success factors present among Hispanic Americans. Ceballo (2004) employed a qualitative methodology in her study of first-generation Latino college students. She interviewed 10 Latino undergraduate students at Yale University (5 male, 5 female) in order to determine the reasons for their academic success. Ceballo found four common themes from her analysis of data: (a) parents verbalized a strong commitment to the importance of education, (b) parents supported their children’s sense of autonomy, (c) parents provided nonverbal support for their children’s education, and (d) role models and supportive teachers were a part of the students’ lives. Ceballo’s findings match several of the family and community protective factors noted by other resilience researchers.

A common family protective factor documented by Werner (2006), Floyd (1996), Gayles (2005), and Ceballo (2004) was the support of a parent or caregiver. For youth who are in special education (e.g., an RSP class), parent (guardian) involvement is an integral part of the Individual Education Plan developed for each student. The support of a primary caregiver (the primary caregiver might be a parent,
a grandparent or a guardian) in an educational setting has particular relevance for the youth in this current study, and is thus included as part of the study questionnaire.

Resilience Factors Related to the Broader Social Community

Resilience research also indicates that connections within the broader social community can serve as buffers against risk (Frison et al., 1998; Naglieri & LeBuffe, 2005; Raskind et al., 1999; Werner 2006; Werner & Smith 1989, 1992, 2001). Long-term relationships with friends, neighbors, and teachers served as protective factors for at-risk individuals across the life span. A warm, organized school environment that provided opportunities for nurturing and responsibility was another protective factor noted in the aforementioned studies. Teachers and mentors were noted to contribute universally in significant ways to the positive adjustment of at-risk children and youth. Moskovitz (1983) studied 24 children who had survived the Nazi Holocaust in World War II. Survivors were interviewed 30 to 40 years after the Holocaust, and all 24 named one nursery school teacher as the person who provided a warm, nurturing educational environment where they learned to behave with compassion.

In some resilience studies, religion was found to be a strong protective factor. The purpose of Blum, Kelly, and Ireland’s (2001) longitudinal research was to compare protective (resilience) factors among a nationally representative sample of learning disabled, emotionally disabled, and mobility impaired 7th through 12th graders with a comparison group of students without disabilities. They found that the same protective (resiliency) factors existed across groups; however, young people with disabilities were more likely to be exposed to risk factors and less likely to have
access to protective (resilience) factors than the students without disabilities.
Religiosity (church attendance, prayer) was found to be a community protective factor, as was school connectedness.

Church support was one protective factor that mitigated risk for African American youth in the study conducted by Frison, Wallander, and Browne (1998). The purpose of the study was to identify protective factors among African American youth with mild mental retardation who reached adulthood without significant problems. Frison et al. studied a group of 147 African American adolescents, ages 13 to 17, who were enrolled in four different schools in a Southeastern state, and who were classified as mildly mentally retarded. Families of the adolescents participated in a structured interview. Part of the interview was to complete a Special Adolescent Project Protocol that included several research-based measures: the Multigroup Ethnic Identity Measure, the Adolescent Life Experiences Survey, the Achenbach Youth Self-Report, and the Achenbach Child Behavior Problems Scale. Classification as mildly mentally retarded was defined as the risk factor. Resilience was defined as higher educational attainment, low rates of juvenile delinquency, and low rates of teenage pregnancies. The researchers found that ethnic identification was an individual protective factor and intergenerational support was a family protective factor. In this study, church support was identified as the community protective factor. The Frison et al. study is similar to the current study in that researchers investigated protective factors among racially and ethnically diverse youth who qualified for special education. The Multigroup Ethnic Identity Measure is a measure common to the Frison et. study and the current study. The population in the
Frison et al. study differs from the population in the current study in that the youth in the Frison et al. study were classified as mildly mentally retarded, and the youth of interest in the current study are classified as having a specific learning disability. Another important difference is that both parents and adolescents were interviewed regarding protective factors in the Frison et al. study, and in the current study the questionnaire was given only to adolescents.

One result of the research conducted by Sesma and Roehlkepartain (2003) was that three community protective factors included in a list of 40 developmental assets were positively correlated with thriving behaviors (resiliency) for 217,277 youth in grades 6 through 12 (including 69,731 racially and ethnically diverse youth). Examples of thriving behaviors were a low chance of involvement in problem alcohol use, and a low likelihood of engaging in antisocial behavior. An analysis of the surveys completed by the youth in the study revealed the importance of all of the 40 developmental assets (protective factors) in supporting healthy behavior for all youth. There was some variance along racial and ethnic lines in the relationship between the categories of developmental assets and different outcomes. Religious institutions were viewed by Hispanic Americans as important community resources, Vietnamese Americans placed an emphasis on the challenges associated with balancing American and Vietnamese cultures, and African Americans and Hispanic Americans placed an emphasis on the involvement in the lives of children by adults who were outside of their immediate family. Although how racial or ethnic differences varied in the importance attached to developmental assets (protective factors) was investigated by
Sesma and Roehlkepartain (2003), their survey did not address differences that might exist for youth with disabilities, which will be the focus of the present research.

Hawkins and Mulkey (2005) analyzed data from the National Education Longitudinal Study of 1988 (NELS: 88) for approximately 1,000 male and 1,000 female middle-school students and found that athletic involvement supported academic resilience among African American youth. Academic success was defined (a) as student plans to enroll in a college-prep curriculum at the high-school level and (b) as good behavior in school. Peer status also was included as a resilience characteristic although it was not directly related to academic success. Sports participation was found to be a community factor that was associated positively with academic success.

Doll and Lyons (1998) characterized broader social community factors as the contextual factors of resilient individuals. Involvement with positive adult role models in high quality schools and community settings, and membership in pro-social community organizations and activities were the social characteristics Doll and Lyons found in their meta-analysis of resiliency research. Doll and Lyons’ findings lend support to the notion that an investigation of community factors should be included in the current study.

In summary, the review of research on individual, family, and community resilience factors provides a context for the subject of this proposal. Although a wide variety of populations have been investigated and multiple measures have been employed to identify protective factors, there have been no investigations using academic success as a measure of resiliency for the specific population that is the
subject of this current study: academically successful and academically unsuccessful racially and ethnically diverse adolescents with learning disabilities.

**Resilience Research and Learning Disabilities**

The purpose of this proposal is to investigate the variables that influence the academic performance of racially and ethnically diverse adolescents with learning disabilities. This section of the literature review presents research on protective factors in relation to learning disabilities. Being diagnosed with a learning disability is a risk factor for a child, thus researchers who have investigated resilient persons with learning disabilities can provide some insights into relevant protective factors for this group.

In her longitudinal study of children born in 1955 in Kauai, Hawaii, Werner (1993) investigated resilience in relation to learning disabilities. Twenty-two of the 698 individuals studied by Werner were diagnosed with learning disabilities at age 10 based on the federal criteria: a significant discrepancy between ability and achievement as well as the presence of a psychological processing disorder. The 22 individuals (14 males, 8 females) diagnosed with learning disabilities were compared with a comparison group chosen from the original group of 698 individuals in the cohort. Seventeen of the 22 individuals came from homes rated as low or very low in socioeconomic status. Only five children of the cohort were defined as middle or upper-middle class. The individuals with learning disabilities were matched with individuals who did not have learning disabilities but who were of the same gender, socioeconomic status, and ethnic background. Differences were investigated on
several variables at birth, infancy, and early childhood. Differences also were investigated at ages 18, 32, and 40.

Higher percentages of early risk factors were evident in the children who had learning disabilities (LD); there were a higher proportion of prenatal complications, low birth weight, congenital defects, and birth conditions that were judged to be related to minimal brain dysfunction. At age one year, a higher proportion of the children who were later diagnosed with learning disabilities were described by their mothers as lacking in affection, not wanting to be held, and irritable. The mothers were rated as fretful and having inconsistent behavior by clinicians observing mothers and babies in their homes (Werner 1993). At age two, the children who were later diagnosed with learning disabilities and their mothers continued to be rated in negative terms. As examples, the children were described as more restless unhappy and easily distracted, and mothers were rated as being more overprotective, indifferent, or careless (Werner & Smith, 2001). Intelligence measures revealed lower scores for the children who were later diagnosed with learning disabilities than for the children in the comparison group.

Between the ages of 10 and 18, more than 80% of the children diagnosed with learning disabilities had contact with a community agency. This rate of contact was nine times higher than the comparison participants (matched for ethnicity, age, gender, and socioeconomic status), and three times higher than the total cohort of the Kauai study. Most of the contacts that took place for the 10 to 18 year olds with learning disabilities were with the criminal-justice system. Academic and psychological measures administered to the youth with learning disabilities at grade
12 differed from the comparison group. Youth with learning disabilities obtained lower scores on tests of academic achievement; their academic performance was lower in comparison with the comparison group. Their scores differed on the California Psychological Inventory, a measure of self-competence. Youth with learning disabilities obtained statistically significantly different scores from the comparison group on the Novicki Locus of Control Scale. They scored statistically significantly higher in the external direction. They believed that life events were the result of fate and were beyond their control.

By age 18, only 25% of the children diagnosed with learning disabilities could be described as resilient (on multiple measures). Those who could be described as resilient attributed their positive outlook and outcomes to positive support from family, peers, and elders. The students with learning disabilities described interventions by special-education teachers, mental-health personnel, and counselors as not very helpful (Werner, 1993).

Data were obtained at age 32 on 82% (n=18) of the individuals who were diagnosed with learning disabilities. Results indicated a substantial move in the direction of resilience. The percentage of those with mental-health difficulties or criminal involvement decreased significantly. Marriage, divorce, and employment rates were the same as those in the comparison group. None of the individuals for whom data were obtained were unemployed or were on welfare. Fifty percent of the individuals diagnosed with learning disabilities had completed their high-school education. Seventy-five percent reported that their jobs, their marriages, and their social relationships were positive. At age 40, ratings indicated that there was still 75%
of the cohort with learning disabilities who had made positive adaptations in their lives. Of the 50% (9 individuals) who did not complete their high-school education, four either had a criminal record or psychiatric problems.

Five areas of protective factors were salient to the investigation of the lives of the individuals diagnosed with learning disabilities: (a) positive temperaments that increased the likelihood of the establishment of connections with caring, supportive adults; (b) individual areas of competence used realistically as far as educational and career planning and an expectation of responsibility in terms of regular chores or domestic obligations; (c) nurturing and structured care-giving styles of parents, especially mothers who promoted self-esteem and a sense of security; (d) supportive “surrogate parents” who promoted trust and belief in the future (teachers, elders, youth group leaders, church members); and (e) positive opportunities occurring at major transition periods (from high school to work, single status to married status, parenthood) that supported positive adult adaptation.

Results similar to those of Werner (1993) were obtained in another longitudinal study of a group of 41 students who were identified as having learning disabilities and who had attended the Frostig Center, a school for children with learning disabilities (Raskind, Goldberg, Higgins, & Herman, 1999). Participants in the study were 27 males and 14 females. The sample was 88% White, 10% Hispanic, and 2% African American. The socioeconomic status of the families of origin of the sample varied as follows: 73% were upper-upper-middle class to upper-middle class, 12% were middle class, and 15% were either upper-lower or lower-class. These researchers collected data at four time points (entry into the Frostig Center, exit from
the Frostig Center, 10 years after exit, 20 years after exit) in order to investigate why some students with learning disabilities were successful in life whereas some were not. The researchers looked at numerous protective factors as predictors of success.

Data were gathered for 41 participants (mean age of 32.1 years) using in-depth interviews, public records, current testing, and school-case records. Researchers rated the participants on six success attributes: proactivity, perseverance, self-awareness, goal setting, presence and use of effective support systems, and emotional stability. Success was evaluated along several dimensions: social and family relationships, employment position or status, educational attainment, psychological health, and life satisfaction. Successful participants possessed protective factors to a greater extent than did unsuccessful participants. For example, the acknowledgment of individual’s learning disability was a protective factor in that there was a personal understanding of strengths and weaknesses (Wong, 2003). The researchers also found that the protective factors (such as social and family relationships, employment status, etc.) used to rate the participants were better predicators of success than IQ, academic achievement, life stressors, gender, socioeconomic status, and ethnicity.

Although a substantial percentage of Frostig study participants were of higher socioeconomic status and a substantial percentage of participants in the Werner study were of lower socioeconomic status, similar resilience factors were found in both studies.

Three years before the longitudinal study conducted by Raskind et al. (1999) at the Frostig Center in California, Miller (1996), another researcher, conducted open-ended interviews with 10 Midwestern college students who had been designated as
learning disabled in elementary or high school. Student interviews were analyzed using qualitative procedures, and seven themes of resilience emerged. The themes that emerged were (a) identifiable experiences of success, (b) strengths in specific areas, (c) a sense of self-determination, (d) periods of time where specific life changes occurred, (e) close friendships, (f) teachers who were encouraging, and (g) acknowledgement of the learning presence of a learning disability.

The number of participants in Miller’s (1996) study was small (n=10) compared with the number of participants in the Raskind et al. (1999) study (n=41) and the Werner (1993) study (n=22). Miller’s study was a cross-sectional study, and the other two studies were longitudinal studies. When the participants in Werner’s (1993) study were interviewed at age 18, they did not describe interventions by special-education teachers, mental-health personnel, and counselors as being helpful. The college students in Miller’s (1996) study and the adults in the Raskind et al. (1999) study identified teachers and other school personnel as reliable supports. Other resilience themes were similar for all three groups: a positive temperament, individual areas of competence, acceptance of self, a willingness to seek out support of family and community members, and positive opportunities occurring at major life-transition periods. There were differences in the socioeconomic status of the participants in Werner’s study (a high percentage of participants lived in poverty) and Raskind et al.’s study (a high percentage were either middle or upper class). No information was given as to the socioeconomic status of the participants in the Miller study. Resilience was defined in a multidimensional manner by Werner and Raskind et al., whereas Miller defined resilience as a B+ grade point average in student’s college major.
Although there were differences in number of participants, socioeconomic status, and definition of resilience, each study yielded some common themes of resilience. Individual protective factors were positive temperaments that increased the likelihood of the establishment of connections with caring, supportive family and community members, acceptance of self, willingness to persevere, an internal locus of control, and individual areas of competence used realistically as far as educational and career planning and an expectation of responsibility in terms of regular chores or domestic obligations. Family protective factors were nurturing and structured caregiving styles of parents, especially mothers who promoted self-esteem and a sense of security. Community protective factors were the presence of supportive surrogate parents who promoted trust and belief in the future (teachers, elders, youth group leaders, church members); and positive opportunities occurring at major transition periods (from high school to work, single status to married status, parenthood) that supported positive adult adaptation.

More recently, Svetaz, Ireland, and Blum (2000) conducted a cross-sectional analysis of 16,340 adolescents, 1,603 of whom were found to be students with learning disabilities. The researchers investigated risk and resiliency in relation to emotional distress, involvement in violence, and suicidal behavior for youth with and without learning disabilities. The students included in the survey were selected from data obtained from the National Longitudinal Study of Adolescent Health. The sample included two times as many males as females, and the ethnicity of the sample was European American, African American, or Hispanic American. In the entire sample of 16,340 students, 8.8% with learning disabilities were European American,
12% were African American, and 10.3% were Hispanic American. In-depth, 90-minute home interviews were conducted with adolescents and one parent (usually the mother).

The researchers found that emotional distress (as measured by interview questions) was higher for students with learning disabilities and that female students with learning disabilities were more likely to make suicide attempts and be involved with their peers in violent activities than were males. Risk factors related to school were a history of repeating grades and a history of trouble in school (as defined in the interview questions). The strongest risk factor for students with learning disabilities was that they had been a victim of or had witnessed a violent act. This experience by itself increased the likelihood of an adolescent with a learning disability participating in a violent act by approximately 80 times. This association also was found in the population of students without learning disabilities. Protective factors were found to be parent connections (lower risk) and school connections (lowest risk). Religious identity was found to be an individual variable associated with lower risk in the areas of emotional distress, suicide attempts, and involvement in violence; however, lower levels of suicide attempts was the only one of the three variables with a statistically significant odds ratio. Another variable that was associated with reduced risk in the areas of violence involvement and emotional distress was appearing younger than ones’ peers (Svetaz et al., 2000).

Svetaz et al.’s (2000) study differed from those of Raskind et al. (1999) and Werner (1993) in that the study was cross-sectional, whereas Werner and Raskind’s research was longitudinal. Svetaz et al.’s sample size was much larger than the
samples contained in the Werner and Raskind studies. Although racially and ethnically diverse students were a significant portion of Svetaz’s research sample, race was not listed as either a risk or a protective factor.

Frison, Wallander, and Browne (1998) investigated resilience among African American youth who were found to be eligible for special-education services under the mild mental-retardation category. The purpose of the study was to identify protective factors among African American youth with mild mental retardation who reached adulthood without significant problems. This study is described in this section because although the special-education category of the youth studied was mild mental retardation and not learning disability, it is a study in which there was an investigation of protective factors for racially and ethnically diverse youth receiving special-education services. Frison et al. studied a group of 147 African American adolescents (ages 13 to 17) who were enrolled in four different schools in a Southeastern state and who were classified as mildly mentally retarded. Classification as mildly mentally retarded was defined as the risk factor. Resilience was defined as higher educational attainment, low rates of juvenile delinquency, and low rates of teenage pregnancies. Extensive interviews were conducted with families of the identified adolescents. The interviews included several research-based measures such as the Multigroup Ethnic Identity Measure, the Achenbach Youth Self-Report, the Adolescent Life Experiences Survey, and the Achenbach Child Behavior Checklist Behavior Problems Scale. Ethnic identification, intergenerational support, and church support were identified as protective factors for adolescents who were resilient as defined above.
Racially and ethnically diverse youth with learning disabilities were included as part of the research conducted by Robertson, Harding, and Morrison (1998). Robertson et al. compared risk and protective factors of Latino students in order to study early indicators of these characteristics and to try to create an early identification framework for at-risk students. A total of 169 Latino elementary students from four schools in a central coast California community (89 males, 80 females) were divided into four categories: at-risk (due to school and family difficulties as identified by professionals), students identified as learning disabled, students identified as needing speech services, and not at-risk (students not identified as in need of supplemental academic or social services). Eighteen of the 169 study participants were classified as learning disabled, and eight of the 169 were classified as speech impaired (another category in special education). Numerous survey instruments were used to investigate both student and teacher perceptions of academic and social skills (classroom participation, problem behavior, self-concept, social support from significant individuals, social problem solving in peer-teacher and parent interactions, cooperation, and school bonding).

Some of the findings were that nonrisk students in general and specifically girls obtained higher grades overall and had better study skills. The nonrisk students demonstrated better social skills than their at-risk peers. Students with learning disabilities rated themselves higher in self-concept compared with speech students, although they reported more problem behaviors than non-at-risk students. Girls reported a greater support network. The researchers concluded that risk-resilience constructs reliably distinguished between the groups of the students in this study. The
constructs also identified students in need of extra school-linked support services. The protective factor noted in this study for students with learning disabilities was high peer self-concept. For students receiving speech services, there were no protective factors that emerged from either student or teacher interviews. For the nonrisk students, that is, students who had not been referred for school related services, the protective factors that emerged were good study skills, a good self-concept, a good support network, and positive problem-solving skills. Also, in this study gender was an individual protective factor: girls obtained better grades than boys, and they also reported having a good support network. Of note is that of the 169 racially and ethnically diverse (Latino) students in this study, those with learning and speech disabilities were only 15% of the total group (n=26).

Special-education placement based on the presence of learning or behavioral difficulties was the focus of a study conducted by Medina and Luna (2004). Medina conducted a qualitative study of Mexican American students, and she identified several risk factors that contributed to the lack of success of her subjects. Medina interviewed six Mexican American students who were enrolled rural public schools and who were in special-education classes due to the presence of learning or behavioral disabilities. Two themes that emerged from in-depth interviews were a sense of discouragement and alienation. The students expressed that they did not feel a part of their school community, and they described stress because of differences between the culture of the school environment in relation to their Mexican American background. The placement of the students in special-education classes was mentioned as negative (a risk factor); however, some of the students noted a
connection with their school due to interactions with involved and caring teachers (a protective factor).

Resilience researchers have identified three broad categories of resilience (protective) factors. The findings are summarized in Table 1. The findings are the results of longitudinal and cross-sectional research. There were multiple measures used to investigate resilience and the protective factors noted varied in importance and impact depending on the risks present and the developmental stage of the population studied. Table 1 also includes the protective factors identified in the literature that were found among youth with learning disabilities. These factors were not found in isolation but in combination with the individual, family, and community factors noted in Table 1. Research specific to racially and ethnically diverse youth identified the same protective factors noted in the three aforementioned categories: individual, family, and community. Ethnic identification was found to be a protective factor in several studies of racially and ethnically diverse youth but was not found in other resiliency research.

Resilience research provides an important theoretical foundation for investigation of the problem that is the subject of the current study. Attribution research also provides an additional theoretical perspective for the subject of the current study.

**Attribution Research: Intelligence and Racial Identity Studies**

This study is an investigation of the variables that influence the academic performance of racially and ethnically diverse adolescents with learning disabilities.
In this study there is a focus on African American and Hispanic American youth. The few studies that have investigated success factors among African Americans or Hispanic Americans in general and in conjunction with learning disabilities have been described in previous sections on individual, family, and community protective factors and in the section on resilience and learning disabilities. Some researchers have investigated the concepts of resilience and attributions for educational performance in relation to the African American or the Hispanic American experience. Graham, Taylor, and Hudley (1998) and Steele and Aronson (1995) are two groups of such researchers. Their studies as well as the investigations of other researchers provide a context within which the subject of this dissertation proposal may be viewed. Findings from the studies reported lend support to the notion that attributions regarding concepts of intelligence and race may be protective factors and may influence academic success.

Of interest in the current study are aspects of protective factors that are related to the concepts of intelligence and racial identity held by racially and ethnically diverse students with learning disabilities. As clarification, one of resilience researcher Benson’s (2003) 40 developmental assets was the concept of personal power: a young person believes that he or she has control over life events. Resiliency researchers Doll and Lyon (1998) identified self-esteem and self-confidence and high expectations for achievement as individual factors that influenced resilience. Werner (2006) identified average to above-average intelligence, internal locus of control, and high-achievement motivation as additional factors that influenced resilience. Although Benson, Doll, Lyon, and Werner defined resilience using multiple
Table 1

Individual, Family, and Community Protective Factors; Protective Factors Specific to Youth with Learning Disabilities

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Individual Protective Factors</th>
<th>Family Protective Factors</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Average or above average intelligence</td>
<td>warm, affectionate parent or caregiver</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>positive temperament, socially oriented</td>
<td>warm, structured, high expectation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>positive social orientation</td>
<td>supportive, nurturing family</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>achievement orientation with high expectations</td>
<td>parental support of education</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>self-efficacy</td>
<td>small family size (&lt; 4 siblings)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>internal locus of control</td>
<td>maternal competence</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>belief system, faith</td>
<td>supportive grandparents</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ethnic identification **</td>
<td>supportive siblings</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Community Protective Factors</th>
<th>Protective Factors Specific to Youth w/LD</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>relationships with caring teachers</td>
<td>acceptance of self, learning disability</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>access to positive adult models</td>
<td>possession of coping, stress reduction strategies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>access to pro-social organizations</td>
<td>effective use of support systems</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>religious involvement</td>
<td>individual areas of competence</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>athletic involvement*</td>
<td>positive opportunities during life transition periods</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* denotes factor found only in one study
** denotes factor specific to racially and ethnically diverse youth
measures, the protective factors they identified can apply to academic success, the specific definition of resilience in this current study.

Steele and Aronson (1995) found that stereotype threat, that is, the decrease in academic performance because the student fears that others will attribute his or her performance to the applicable stereotype, is moderated by racial identity. The factors identified by the all of the aforementioned researchers are factors that might be explored in racially and ethnically diverse adolescents with learning disabilities. Additionally, the attribution perspectives presented by Dweck (2000) and Graham, Taylor, and Hudley (1998) on self-theories provide a perspective for the research questions of this current study.

_Attribution Research: Views of Intelligence_


People are motivated to achieve based on their personal theories of intelligence (Ames & Archer, 1988; Aronson, 2002; Dweck, 2000; Mueller & Dweck, 1998). Dweck and her colleagues identified two views that students can have about their intelligence. First, students can view their intelligence as fixed, that is, it cannot be developed (entity view). The second view is that intelligence is malleable,
that is, a student can get smarter by putting forth more effort (incremental view).
When students have a fixed view of their intelligence, they decide that academic
failure means they are not smart, and a consequence is that they do not put forth more
effort. When students have a malleable view of intelligence, they tend not to see
challenging academic situations as negative (that they might fail) but as positive (that
they will get smarter by putting forth more effort).

Additionally, two patterns of reactions to failure emerged from this research:
helpless reactions and mastery-oriented reactions. Students who selected a fixed view
of their intelligence demonstrated a helpless reaction; once they experienced failure
they felt they could do nothing because the situation was out of their control (Dweck,
2000). These students were described as having performance goals: they were
individuals who sought to avoid the negative reaction of others by convincing others
of their competence (Elliott & Dweck, 1988). In contrast, students who selected a
malleable view of their intelligence demonstrated mastery-oriented reactions in a
failure situation. They did not view themselves as failures, only that they needed to
look for ways to improve their performance. This group of students was found to
have a learning-goals approach: they focused on increasing their ability and mastering
new challenges.

Evidence of the two patterns of reactions to failure can be found in Elliott and
Dweck (1988). In this study, 101 fifth-grade children from a semirural school
environment were asked to choose either a performance goal box or a learning goal
box. The children were not aware that the same task was in both boxes but that the
boxes were simply labeled differently. After the children selected their preference,
they received training on the task contained in the box. After the training, they received feedback. Both groups were told they had failed at the task (failure feedback). The problem-solving efforts and verbalizations given by the children before the failure feedback were rated by the researchers as either useful or ineffective. The researchers rated the problem-solving efforts given by the children after the failure feedback in the same manner – as either useful or ineffective. Before the failure feedback, problem-solving approaches and verbalizations for the performance-goal-box and the learning-goal-box children were the same. After the failure feedback, the response of the performance-goal-box children was to demonstrate learned helplessness characteristics, and the response of the learning-goal-box children was to demonstrate mastery-oriented effective problem-solving strategies. Elliott and Dweck’s findings suggested that a malleable view of intelligence, in the face of failure, impacts academic success in a way that is different from a fixed view of intelligence. Students with learning disabilities have, by definition, experienced academic failure at some point in their schooling, yet there are some who are academically successful. Although Elliott and Dweck studied fifth-graders, it is possible that the results of their research can provide a perspective on how views of intelligence may influence academic success or academic failure among racially and ethnically diverse youth with learning disabilities.

It is possible that a malleable view of intelligence is a protective factor. Students who possess a malleable view of intelligence may become academically successful because they have a sense of control over events in their lives (i.e., school failure) and because they have a sense of self-efficacy and self-esteem. Intelligence is
a part of the federal definition of learning disability, and students often equate identification for special-education services with being “dumb.” Of interest in this study, is if there are differences in the views of intelligence held by academically successful and academically unsuccessful racially and ethnically diverse youths with learning disabilities.

**Attribution Research: Motivation to Achieve**

Research that addresses the motivation to achieve among racially and ethnically diverse students is also of interest in this current study. Graham, Taylor, and Hudley’s (1998) peer nomination research explored an aspect of attribution theory that was different from that explored by Dweck (2000) and colleagues. The purpose of the research of Graham et al. was to explore what motivated African American and Hispanic American students to achieve. Three studies were conducted. The participants of the first study included approximately 300 African American sixth, seventh, and eighth graders from a middle school in Southern California. As a means of investigating what the study participants valued, Graham et al. used a peer nomination methodology where study participants were asked to select classmates whom they admired and respected. Percentages were obtained based on the nomination patterns of the study participants. Percentages were computed based on the gender of the study participants and the achievement level of students nominated.

Graham et al.’s (1998) research findings were that academic effort and success were valued more by African American girls (48%) and less by African American boys (16%). Also, when boys selected other males whom they admired, they were less likely to select high-achieving males. The boys tended to
undernominate their male classmates who were high achieving. They tended to overnominate their male classmates who were low achieving. Graham et al. (1998) replicated the study with approximately 400 African American, Hispanic American, and European American middle-school students. Data were analyzed across ethnicity and gender. Females from all three groups nominated high-achieving females within their own groups as those they most admired. Results for the males were more complex. African American and Hispanic American males were more likely to select low-achieving males as those they most admired; however, European American males were more likely to select high-achieving males. Graham et al. replicated their study with African American and Latino second and fourth graders. The results for this population were that females selected high-achieving females as those students they most admired. Of particular interest, were the different results found for the males. Second-grade and fourth-grade males nominated high achievers more than they nominated low achievers. The conclusions suggested by the researchers, based on all three studies, were that negative ethnic stereotypes of racially and ethnically diverse males were more impactful during early adolescence (middle school) and that elementary-age males and females were more similar in the value they placed on high-achieving students. The evidence suggested that age, race, and gender impacted the value students placed on high or low achievement; however, the researchers did not explain the complexities of the interactions, except that the interactions could be attributed to different peer values. The peer-nomination methodology did not shed light on performance outcomes of the participants themselves, that is, whether or not the value assumed to be held by a female African American or Hispanic American
who chose a high-achieving peer as a person she most admired, translated into her own academic effort. Nonetheless, the research findings by Graham et al. lent support for the notion that race may be one of the factors that should be included in an exploration of what attributions racially and ethnically diverse students make about their academic success or failure. The complexity of the interaction between race and motivation regarding educational achievement is highlighted in the research of Graham et al.

**Attribution Research: Stereotype Threat**

The complex interaction between racial or ethnic diversity and academic achievement was the focus of the research conducted by Steele and Aronson (1995). Although the participants of Steele and Aronson’s attribution research were college students, the results have relevance to the investigation of factors that influence academic performance for racially and ethnically diverse adolescents with learning disabilities. Steele and Aronson studied the perspectives of 20 to 35 African American and European American college students on the cultural and societal explanations for differences in IQ scores of racial groups (Suzuki & Aronson, 2005). They hypothesized that variations in academic performance might be attributed to stereotype threat. Stereotype threat is defined as performance anxiety in an academic setting based on the fear that one’s performance will confirm the negative societal stereotypes regarding one’s group. In each study, African American and European American students were matched based on their previous Scholastic Aptitude Test scores. When the concept of stereotype threat was applied to African American college students, it was found that stereotype threat was induced and intellectual
performance was diminished when two conditions were present. First, students were told that their intellectual ability was being evaluated, and second, race was explicitly mentioned. Further research indicated that stereotype threat might underlie male or female differences in advanced mathematics performance, as well as racial differences in male performance in mathematics (European American males versus Asian males; Aronson et al., 1999; Spencer et al., 1999). There is an element of attribution theory in the research on the concept of stereotype threat in that performance on standardized tests is decreased when the person fears that others will attribute his or her performance to the applicable stereotype, and the person is at-risk of confirming the stereotype. The concept of stereotype threat can be described as a risk factor, and as such, may influence students to be less academically successful. Racially and ethnically diverse students who are the subject of the current study experience stereotype threat in two areas: race and learning disability. Both labels may connote lesser intelligence, thus students may be influenced to be less successful academically. Davis, Aronson, and Salinas (2006) did not study learning disability designation as a stereotype; however, they studied racial and ethnic identity. They found that a strong identification with racial and ethnic identity could be a protective factor that influenced academic success in a positive direction.

Davis, Aronson, and Salinas (2006) explored racial identity as a protective factor for 98 African American undergraduates. Their hypothesis was that having a higher score on a measure of racial identity would predict higher scores on the Graduate Record Examination. They found that students who strongly endorsed their racial identity performed better on the standardized test when stereotype threat was
introduced, than students who were not so identified. The researchers concluded that racial identity moderated intellectual performance in stereotype threat conditions. These findings support the inclusion of racial identification as a part of the current study regarding factors that influence academic success among racially and ethnically diverse adolescents with learning disabilities.

Davis et al. (2006), Dweck (2000), Elliott and Dweck (1988), Graham (1997), Graham et al. (1998), Mueller and Dweck (1998), and Steele and Aronson (1995) have investigated how academic success or failure may be impacted by student attributions – student explanations for events that occur in their lives. The persons in their studies were not youth who had learning disabilities; however, the variables in their studies (e.g., independent variables such as views of intelligence) may have some relevance to the adolescent who has a learning disability. As mentioned previously, at least average or above-average intelligence is part of the federal definition of a learning disability, and students often equate identification for special-education services with being “dumb.” Of interest in this current study is whether academic performance is impacted by a student’s view of his or her own intelligence as fixed or malleable. There are stereotypes regarding membership in racial groups (such as those underrepresented groups that are included in the current study). The concept of stereotype threat has been shown to influence academic performance and racial identity has been shown to have a moderating impact on stereotype threat. Of interest in this current study is if concepts of intelligence and concepts of racial identity influence academic performance among racially and ethnically diverse adolescents with learning disabilities.
Summary

In summary, the majority of resilience research has been longitudinal, and some resiliency research has been cross-sectional. A wide variety of populations have been investigated: the children in Kauai, Hawaii, children in European countries, children of divorce, children who have experienced war or other violence, children with and without emotional or behavior problems, children from different racial or ethnic groups (African American, Hispanic American), adults with learning disabilities, males versus females, and adolescents. The population sizes of the studies have varied from 10 students to 217,000. Resilience has been measured by several different means: self-report, questionnaires given to family, school staff, and community members. Educational, medical, social services, and juvenile justice records have been used to measure resilience. Academic success (defined in varying ways) has been used as a resilience measure. It is remarkable that all of the resilience studies described in this review of literature have found resilience (protective) factors in three areas: individual factors, family, and community factors, thus it is essential that questions about academic success for students in the current study reflect these three categories.

According to Werner and Smith (1992), resilience (protective) factors can diminish the impact of risks and stressful events in children’s lives. They indicated that protective factors can support healthy, age-appropriate development and that these factors are protective irregardless of race, culture, socioeconomic status, geographical location, or time in history. The review of the resilience literature has provided evidence of numerous findings of resilience using multiple measures with
many different populations. The implication of the research on the academic performance of racially and ethnically diverse populations and the research regarding the academic performance of persons with learning disabilities is that there may be protective factors that are specific to or may be of more importance in those groups. There is a paucity of empirical data on resilience (protective) factors that are specific to racially and ethnically diverse adolescents with learning disabilities. Exploration of those specific factors within the framework of individual, family, and community categories can shed some light on the questions of academic performance posed in this study.

Attribution researchers do not necessarily use resilience terms, yet the focus of the research presented in this review of attribution literature is on factors that influence academic performance. A better understanding of academic performance (academic success or failure) might result from an analysis of resilience characteristics (protective factors) in conjunction with views of intelligence. Additionally, some researchers suggested that racial identity may be an important protective factor that moderates academic performance for racially and ethnically diverse populations. Of interest in this current study is a survey of views of intelligence and race in order to investigate whether these two factors may influence the academic success or lack thereof for racially and ethnically diverse adolescents who have learning disabilities.
CHAPTER III

METHODOLOGY

The purpose of this study was to investigate resilience variables (protective factors) and attribution variables that influenced the academic success of racially and ethnically diverse students with learning disabilities. This study explored individual, family, and community resilience (protective) factors for this population. Individual factors included schoolwork habits, the willingness to ask for help from others, and the adolescent’s relationship with his or her Resource Specialist Program (RSP) teacher. The family resilience factor included the degree to which a parent or guardian was involved in supporting the adolescent’s academic progress. The community factor included the degree of involvement in the greater community (sports, employment, church involvement). Degree of involvement was determined by the number of hours per week the adolescent was involved in those activities. Individual, family, and community protective factors were the dependent variables.

Another focus of this study was to explore whether possessing either a fixed or malleable view of intelligence influenced academic performance among racially and ethnically diverse students who have learning disabilities. The last area of focus of this study was to investigate if racial identity influenced academic performance among racially and ethnically diverse students with learning disabilities. Views of intelligence and racial identity were dependent variables. A comparison of the aforementioned resilience and attribution variables was made between academically successful and academically unsuccessful racially and ethnically diverse students with learning disabilities.
Constants in this study were membership in an underrepresented racial and ethnic category (African American, Hispanic American, Asian American, or Pacific Islander) and the presence of a learning disability. Both of these constants were risk factors.

In the methodology section, the research design and variables are explained, followed by a description of the study participants and human subjects considerations. Also described are procedures for data collection and instrumentation. The research questions are restated and are followed by the description of the data analyses.

**Design and Variables**

This research was a cross-sectional descriptive study in which academically successful and unsuccessful high-school adolescents with learning disabilities were surveyed with regard to resilience and attribution factors. Individual, family, and community resiliency (protective) factors, views of intelligence as either fixed or malleable, and racial identity were dependent variables. Academic performance (successful or unsuccessful progress toward high-school graduation) was the independent variable.

Academic success is defined as the minimum number of credits earned at each grade level toward completion of the 220 credits required for high-school graduation. The minimum number of credits to be earned at each grade level is set by the school district. Students in the school district earn credits by obtaining a D or higher grade in each class and by meeting the requirements of the school-district attendance policy.

This study used an instrument to ascertain information about the research questions. The instrument consisted of three previously developed questionnaires:
three questions from Dweck’s (2000) Implicit Theories of Intelligence Scale for Children – Self-Form, 30 questions from the ClassMaps Survey developed by Doll (2007), and the complete (15 questions) Multigroup Ethnic Identity Measure (MEIM; Phinney, 1992). Permission to use the questions was obtained from the authors (see Appendix)

Participants

In this study, a total of fifty-seven 9th-, 10th-, 11th-, and 12th-grade students with learning disabilities were surveyed to explore factors that might influence academic success: successful progress toward high-school graduation. The students were each assigned to one period of RSP for study-skills support as a part of their school schedule. The students surveyed were a convenience sampling.

The requirement for graduation from the students’ high school is 220 units. For the purpose of this study, successful progress toward high-school graduation was defined in terms of the number of credits earned during each grade. The number of credits to be earned at each grade level was determined by the school district. Freshman credit status equaled 0 to 59 credits, sophomore status equaled 60 to 119 credits, junior status equaled 120 to 179 credits, and senior status equaled 180 to 220 credits. The questionnaire was administered after the first progress report in the fall of the school year and before the end of the first semester, thus, the definition of academic success for the ninth grade level was 30 credits of passing grades at the end of the first progress report of the ninth-grade school year.

Students were asked on the survey to specify the number of credits they had earned. Students had been given their transcripts by their counselors earlier in the
school year and they had been informed of their credits at their Individual Education Plan meetings. The number of credits earned was used to identify academically successful and academically unsuccessful students. Table 2 illustrates the range of credits acquired at each grade level, the median number of credits earned, and the minimum number of credits required for successful academic progress at each grade level.

Of the 57 students who completed the questionnaire, 41 (72%) were male and 16 (28%) were female. According to the statistics published by the California State Department of Education (Special Education Division, California Department of Education, 2006), the percentage of males versus females identified with learning disabilities is two to one (66.6% male and 33.4% female). The percentages found in the current study are similar to statewide statistics.

Table 2

Range, Median Number, and Minimum Number of Credits for Successful Categorization by Grade Level

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade Level</th>
<th>Credit Range</th>
<th>Median # of Credits</th>
<th>Successful Minimum</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>15 to 40</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>45 to 147</td>
<td>95</td>
<td>60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>90 to 175</td>
<td>152</td>
<td>120</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>158 to 255</td>
<td>216</td>
<td>180</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 3 illustrates the breakdown of successful and unsuccessful students by grade, gender, and race and ethnicity. Approximately 34% of the successful students were European American, 45.2% were Hispanic American, 11.9% were African American, and 9.5% were other. Twenty percent of the students classified as unsuccessful were European American, 53.3% were Hispanic American, 26.7%
were African American, and there were no unsuccessful students in the other category.

The participants were students who attended a suburban, grades 9 to 12, public high school in the San Francisco Bay area during the Fall school term. The total enrollment at the high school was 1,958. The total number of students receiving special education services at the school was 264 (13%). Of the 264, there were 186 (70%) students who are enrolled in at least one period of RSP support. The majority of these students received RSP support because of qualification for special-education services under the specific learning-disability category. The ages of study participants ranged from 13 to 18 years. The majority of the study sample students were age 15 (26%), age 16 (16%), or age 17 (23%).

Table 3

Frequencies and Percentages of Successful and Unsuccessful Students by Gender, Race and Ethnicity, and Grade.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Demographic</th>
<th>Successful (n = 42)</th>
<th>Unsuccessful (n=15)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>f</td>
<td>%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gender</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>56.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>17.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Race and Ethnicity</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>European American</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>33.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hispanic American</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>45.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>African American</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>11.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>9.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grade</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9th</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>26.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10th</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>23.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11th</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>16.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12th</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>33.3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Students in the school came from various racial and ethnic backgrounds. The population percentages are illustrated in Table 4. The percent of European American students in RSP at the high school was slightly higher than the percent of European American students in the overall school population. The percent of European American students in the study sample was much smaller than either the overall number of European American students in RSP or in the overall school population. The percent of Hispanic American students in RSP was slightly lower than the percent of Hispanic American students in the overall school population, but the percent in the study sample was slightly higher. The percent of African American students in RSP was double that of the percent of students in the overall student population, and the percent of African American students in the study sample was almost triple the percent in the overall student population. Donovan and Cross (2002) and Artiles, Rueda, Salazar, and Higareda (2002) documented the overrepresentation of African American and Hispanic American students in special education categories.

Table 4
Racial and Ethnic Breakdown Percentages for Overall School Population, Number of Students in RSP, Number of RSP Students in Study Sample

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Racial or Ethnic Background</th>
<th>Overall School Population (n=1,958) %</th>
<th>Students in RSP (n=186) %</th>
<th>Students in Study Sample (n=57) %</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>European American</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hispanic American</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>47</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>African American</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asian American</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pacific Islander</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
such as specific learning disability, the category of interest in the current study. The percentages in the current study are a reflection of the overrepresentation found by the aforementioned researchers.

Students were given the survey during their RSP class period. There were approximately 8 to 10 students in each RSP classroom. Surveys were completed in seven RSP classes.

**Human Subjects Considerations**

High-school students in this study were protected in accordance with the ethical principals and standards that set by the American Psychological Association (2002) and enforced by the University of San Francisco Institutional Review Board for the Protection of Human Subjects (IRBPHS). Written permission to administer the survey was obtained from the district superintendent and the school principal. The students’ Resource Specialist Program teachers were asked and gave written permission for access to their classes in order for the survey to be administered (Appendix A).

A passive consent letter of explanation was mailed by the principal’s office to the parents or guardians of the students surveyed. Parents were asked to return their letter in the addressed, stamped envelope provided only if they did not want their teenager to participate in the study. A credentialed educator who is a native speaker translated the parent letter into Spanish for Spanish-speaking parents. A credentialed Spanish teacher has verified that the translation was written at the third- to fifth-grade level for parents (Appendix D).
The first contact with the students was when the RSP teachers announced to their classes that the school mailed home a letter to the students’ parents about student participation in the study. The letter was read to the students in their RSP class, and students were given a copy of the letter. The second contact with the students was the day of the survey administration.

Permission for students' participation in the study was obtained by means of a passive consent letter mailed to their home. The school where the study took place allowed for passive consent in circumstances where there was minimal risk to the student. The letter signed by the school principal verified this policy. On the day of the questionnaire administration, if parents had mailed back the letter stating their teenager may not participate in the survey, that student was to be given an article about academic success to read while the survey was being administered to the rest of the class. None of the parents mailed back the letter refusing permission for their teenager to participate in the study.

All students in the class were given a copy of the academic success article, so as to not focus undue attention on a student whose parents might have refused permission for their teenager to participate in the survey. On the day of the survey, all students were read and given an additional letter of explanation. They were told at that time that their participation was voluntary and that all information would be kept confidential. The students were told their decision to participate or not participate would have no impact on the services they received at the school, their student status, or their grades. Students were told that their responses were anonymous and that no one would see individual student responses. In addition, students were told that their
questionnaire responses would be kept in a secure location away from the school campus. No students refused to participate in the survey. The article given to students had they or their parents declined to participate in the survey was an excerpt from "Succeeding with LD: 20 True Stories about Real People with LD" (Lauren, 1997).

Procedures

The participants were a convenience sample of 9th, 10th, 11th, and 12th graders, and each was enrolled in one or more RSP classes. The students’ Resource Specialist Program teachers were asked and gave permission for access to their class in order for the questionnaire to be administered. They agreed to administer the questionnaire (see Appendix A). On the day of administration, the RSP teacher and the instructional associate were given a copy of the questionnaire in English and a copy in Spanish, for use during the questionnaire administration. The teacher and the instructional associate were asked to pass out packets with copies of the questionnaire and accompanying materials to their students. The teachers were asked to administer the questionnaire.

The specific data-collection procedure was as follows. The researcher gave the RSP teachers and instructional associates a packet for each student containing (a) an introductory letter, (b) the RSP Survey, and (c) an alternate article about success. (All students received the alternate article about success so that those students whose parents had not given permission for them to participate in the study would not be singled out.) Students whose parents signed and returned the letter stating that their child was not allowed to participate were to be given a packet containing two items:
the introductory letter, and the alternate article about success. Nonparticipants were to be given these two items so as to not call attention to their nonparticipation.

Instructions for the RSP teacher were as follows. First, the teacher read the introductory letter out-loud to the students. Second, the teacher asked students if there was anyone who did not wish to participate in the study. Those students who did not wish to participate were informed that their alternate activity was to read the article on success (contained in their packet). There were no students who did not wish to participate in the study. Third, the teacher instructed study participants to turn to page two of the questionnaire. The teacher read page two to the study participants (list of directions). Fourth, the teacher told the participants to answer the demographics questions on page three of the study. Participants were asked to write in the number of credits they had earned in the “Here are a few questions about you” section on page three. Fourth, students were instructed to complete the questionnaire. The teacher read the questions to the students as they completed the questionnaire, and the instructional associate circulated around the classroom to help students if they had questions.

All English Language Learners in the RSP class had been designated as either limited English proficient (LEP) or fully English proficient (FEP). School-district policy did not allow for students who were designated LEP or FEP to be given materials in Spanish, thus these students were given the questionnaire in English. The RSP teacher and the instructional associate were allowed to provide language support to the LEP and FEP students in that they could refer to the Spanish version of the questionnaire to answer any questions the English Language Learner students had.
The ClassMaps (Doll, 2007) portion of the questionnaire was been translated into Spanish by Doll and her colleagues. The remaining portions of the questionnaire were translated into Spanish by a credentialed native Spanish-speaking teacher. The translation was written at the third- to fifth-grade level for students.

When students completed the questionnaire, the students placed their questionnaire in an envelope and handed the envelope to the RSP teacher. If there were students who chose not to participate, they were instructed to hand their envelope to the teacher with the other students. Students kept their introductory letter and the article about success.

**Instrumentation**

In this study, adolescents with learning disabilities were asked to fill out a questionnaire with regard to three resilience (protective) factors that might influence their success in high school. Individual factors, the first of the three protective factors, were defined as schoolwork habits, the willingness to ask for help from others, the adolescent’s relationship with his or her RSP teacher, and skill of goal setting. Questions included in the area of individual factors were numbers 1 to 8 in the “Believing in Me” section and questions 19 to 26 in the “Taking Charge” section (Doll, 2007). There was one question included in the “Who I Am” section that had to do with the understanding of the individual student’s learning disability. Included in this portion of the questionnaire was a short-answer question where the participant listed how she or he learned differently because of a learning disability. Student responses to the short-answer question were analyzed to determine common themes.
The family resiliency factor, the second of the protective factors to be investigated, was defined as the degree to which a family member was involved in the adolescent’s educational experience. Items that address this factor were numbered 27 to 33 in the “Talking with my Parents” section (Doll, 2007). Community resiliency (the third protective factor to be surveyed) was defined as the degree to which involvement in the greater community (sports, employment, church) influenced the adolescent’s academic progress. Questions that address this factor were in the section entitled “Your Activities Outside of Your Classroom,” numbers 24, 25, and 26. Community involvement questions having to do with church, employment, and sports were researcher developed based on two of the 40 Developmental Assets (protective factors) from the Search Institute in the area of “constructive use of time” (Search Institute, 1997). The two assets were “young person spends three or more hours per week in sports, clubs or organizations at school and/or in the community” and “young person spends one or more hours per week in activities in a religious institution” (Search Institute, 1997). Study participants were asked to report the number of their hours of participation in sports, employment and church activities.

In this study, the second area of focus was to ascertain if racially and ethnically diverse high-school students with learning disabilities who were making adequate progress toward high-school graduation possessed either a fixed or a malleable view of their intelligence. Fixed or malleable intelligence was assessed by three questions (questions 9, 10, and 11) in the “What I Think” section (Dweck, 2000). Dweck, Chiu, and Hong (1995) found from their reliability and validity studies...
of the Implicit Theories of Intelligence Scale for Children-Self Form that only three questions were needed to provide a measure of fixed or malleable intelligence.

The third area of focus for this study was to ascertain the concepts of racial identity of this group of students. Racial identity was assessed by the administration of the Multigroup Ethnic Identity Measure (MEIM; Phinney, 1992). The MEIM questions were numbers 1 to 15 in the “Who I Am” section of the survey. The factor analysis conducted by Roberts et al. (1999) indicated that the MEIM comprises two factors; however, a 12-item overall score can be derived from the MEIM. Results of the survey were categorized as overall scores, and results were tallied for the two separate factors.

The instruments developed by Dweck (2000), Doll and Spies (2007), and Phinney (1992) were combined into one questionnaire. The instruments in the questionnaire were presented in a fixed order. Page one was the title page, page two was the list of survey directions, page three listed demographic questions (grade, gender, age, credits completed toward high-school graduation), page four listed “Believing in Me” and “What I Think” questions, page five listed “My Teacher” and “Taking Charge” questions, page six contained “Talking With My Parents” questions, page seven listed the 12 MEIM questions, page eight listed the MEIM demographics questions as well as the question about the student’s learning disability, and page nine listed questions about church, sport, and employment involvement.

The research instrument was formatted based on the guidelines suggested in the Dillman Total Design Method (Crosby, Ventura, & Feldman, 1989), except that the size of the survey was 8 X11 in. instead of 61/2 X 8 ¼ in. specified by Dillman.
The larger size improved readability for students with learning disabilities. The instrument included three types of questions. Checklists and fill-in-the-blank items were used for respondents to provide demographic data such as age, grade, racial identity, and the number of credits toward high-school graduation. Likert scales and rating scales comprised the bulk of the questionnaire (Appendixes G and H).

Implicit Theories of Intelligence Scale for Children – Self Form

Three instruments were used to obtain information on the research questions of this study. The first instrument consisted of three questions from the Implicit Theories of Intelligence Scale for Children – Self Form, (ITISC – SF) developed by Dweck (2000). The responses to the three questions were a 6-point Likert scale. Study participants choose one of the 6 points: from 1 = strongly disagree to 6 = strongly agree. Responses to the three questions were averaged to yield an overall implicit theory score. A higher score indicated the presence of a stronger fixed theory, and a lower score indicated the presence of a stronger malleable theory.

Reliability and validity studies conducted for the ITISC-SF were reported by Dweck et al. (1995) and by Levy, Stroessner, and Dweck, (1998). The researchers reported that across the six studies, statistical analysis using Cronbach’s coefficient alpha resulted in coefficients that ranged from .94 to .98, thus, relatively high reliability was suggested. There were several issues that were addressed in order to obtain validity evidence of the implicit theories measure. First, items that would represent an incremental (malleable) theory of intelligence were not included in the measure. This decision was made because researchers found from their previous studies that respondents who chose entity theory (fixed intelligence) items also chose
incremental theory (malleable intelligence) items, so it was possible that there was an element of social desirability when incremental questions were included in the measure. Second, in order to obtain construct validity evidence, the researchers conducted a factor analysis of the intelligence measure questions along with a factor analysis of 20 other aspects of their implicit theories measures (they analyzed the intelligence measure as well as the morality and personal characteristics measures). They found that the three intelligence measure questions formed a factor that was separate from the other implicit theories measures (morality and personal characteristics), thus respondents who agreed with the statements about entity (fixed) intelligence were not responding because of social desirability. Additionally, the factor analysis suggested that implicit theories about human attributes such as morality and personal characteristics are statistically independent (Dweck et al., 1995). For the purpose of this research, the intelligence measure (three questions) was included in the student survey. The results of the factor analysis previously reviewed indicate that only the three questions are needed to provide a measure of a fixed or a malleable view of intelligence.

*Multigroup Ethnic Identity Measure*

The second instrument used in the RSP Questionnaire, the Multigroup Ethnic Identity Measure (MEIM), was developed by Phinney (1992) for use with teenagers and young adults of diverse backgrounds. The MEIM questions are numbers 1 to 15 in the “Who I Am” section. The responses to questions 1 to 12 are a 4-point Likert scale. Numbers 13, 14, and 15 are demographic questions specific to parents’ racial background.
Phinney (1992) found that in several studies conducted subsequent to 1992, Cronbach’s coefficient alphas were consistently above .80 for various ethnicities and ages. Roberts et al. (1999) conducted a factor analysis of a large sample of adolescents and found that the factors measured by the MEIM were ethnic identity search (a developmental and cognitive component) and acknowledgement of belonging and commitment to one’s racial or ethnic group (an affective component). The ethnic-identity-search factor is assessed by questions 1, 2, 4, 8, and 10 in the “Who I Am” Section. The acknowledgement, belonging, and commitment component is assessed by questions 3, 5, 6, 7, 9, 11, and 12 in the “Who I Am Section.” Questions 13, 14, and 15 were to specify the respondent’s actual racial or ethnic identity.

ClassMaps Scales

The third instrument used in the RSP Questionnaire was the ClassMaps Scales developed by Doll and Spies (2007). Doll and Spies found in their studies of reliability and validity that the sections of the ClassMaps Scales could be used separately or as a whole. Four sections of the ClassMaps Scales were used in the survey: “Believing in Me” questions one to eight, “My Teacher” questions 12 to 18, “Taking Charge” questions 19 to 26, and “Talking With My Parents” questions 27 to 33. (Questions 9 to 11 are the “What I Think” section: the three implicit theories of intelligence questions developed by Dweck, 2000.) The responses to questions in the four sections were 4-point ratings: “never,” “sometimes,” “often,” and “almost always.” The 4-point ratings were scored as follows: Never = 1, Sometimes = 2, Often = 3, and Always = 4. Average scores were obtained across all items. The
ClassMaps Scales sections of the questionnaire were coded so that higher scores would indicate stronger agreement.

The content for the characteristics in the ClassMaps Scales was derived from various individual measurement instruments and classroom research conducted on each characteristic (Doll & Spies, 2007). In a study of third-, fourth-, and fifth-grade male and female students (n = 420), overall reliability coefficients ranged from .86 to .96. The ClassMaps Scales were found to be statistically significantly correlated with the Yale School Development Program School Climate Survey (.47 to .80). A factor analysis confirmed eight separate factors: “Believing in Me,” “Taking Charge,” “Following Class Rules,” “My Teacher, My Classmates – A,” “My Classmates – B,” “Talking with my Parents,” and “I Worry that….” Doll and Spies (2007) indicated from their factor analysis that each scale could be used separately. Inasmuch as the factors are separate, only four ClassMaps factors were included in this research because of their relevance: “Believing in Me,” “My Teacher,” “Taking Charge,” and “Talking with my Parents.”

**Research Questions**

The questions posed in this study are as follows:

1. To what extent is there a difference in individual resilience (protective) factors for academically successful and academically unsuccessful racially and ethnically diverse 9th- through 12th-grade adolescents with learning disabilities?

2. To what extent is there a difference in family resilience (protective) factors for academically successful and academically unsuccessful racially and
ethnically diverse 9th- through 12th-grade adolescents with learning disabilities?

3. To what extent is there a difference in community resilience (protective) factors for academically successful and academically unsuccessful racially and ethnically diverse 9th- through 12th-grade adolescents with learning disabilities?

4. To what extent is there a difference in views of intelligence (fixed versus malleable) for academically successful and academically unsuccessful racially and ethnically diverse 9th- through 12th-grade adolescents with learning disabilities?

5. To what extent is there a difference in concepts of racial identity among academically successful and academically unsuccessful racially and ethnically diverse 9th- through 12th-grade adolescents with learning disabilities?

Data Analyses

In this study, differences in variables that exist among academically successful and academically unsuccessful racially and ethnically diverse adolescents with learning disabilities were explored using a research-based instrument. The instrument was a combination of three different stand-alone measures. Although the stand-alone measures were combined to give the physical appearance of one complete instrument, each measure was analyzed separately in order to answer the research questions. The data that resulted from the questionnaire were primarily of a descriptive nature. Questionnaires were separated into two groups, academically
successful and academically unsuccessful, based on the number of credits earned toward graduation. For both groups, ratings for each section of the questionnaire were tallied and analyzed using sample frequencies, means, and standard deviations. Additionally, independent-sample t tests were used to investigate differences between questionnaire scores of successful and unsuccessful participants. Data were presented in the form of tables and figures where appropriate.

Answers to research questions numbers one, two, and three (individual, family, and community resilience characteristics) were derived from an analysis of the four sections of the ClassMaps Scales developed by Doll and Spies (2007). Each question on the ClassMaps Scales has four different ratings and they were scored as follows: Never = 1, Sometimes = 2, Often = 3, and Always = 4. Means and standard deviations were obtained across all sections. Also, an independent-sample t test calculated from the means and standard deviations was used to investigate any differences between successful and unsuccessful participants. Student responses on individual sections were summarized into two levels, and a chi-square test was used to determine whether or not there was a statistically significant difference between the two levels.

Research question number four (fixed versus malleable intelligence) was answered by an analysis of responses to the three questions in the “What I Think” Section of the research instrument. The responses to the three questions were in the form of a 6-point Likert scale. Study participants selected one of the six choices: from 6 = strongly disagree to 1 = strongly agree. Numerical values assigned each choice were reversed when the selections were scored so that direction of the scoring on the
“What I Think” section matched the direction of the scoring on the remaining portions of the questionnaire. Scores on the three questions were be averaged to yield a mean implicit theory score. A higher score indicated the presence of a stronger fixed theory of intelligence and a lower score indicated the presence of a stronger malleable theory of intelligence. Responses of successful and unsuccessful participants were compared by means of an independent-sample t test.

Research question number five (racial identity) was explored by an analysis of questions one to 15 in the “Who I Am” section of the questionnaire. Questions one to 12 in the “Who I Am” section are in the form of a 4-point Likert scale. Researchers (Phinney, 1992; Roberts et al., 1999) identified three factors in the Multigroup Ethnic Identity Measure: first, an overall ethnic identity factor, second, an ethnic identity search (a developmental and cognitive component) factor, and a third factor, the acknowledgement of belonging and commitment to one’s racial or ethnic group (an affective component). In accordance with the researchers’ findings, three means were calculated to address the research question regarding racial identity. A mean for the first 12 questions was calculated for each participant. Means for the ethnic-identity-search factor were calculated using questions 1, 2, 4, 8, and 10 in the “Who I Am” Section. Means for the acknowledgement, belonging, and commitment component were calculated using questions 3, 5, 6, 7, 9, 11, and 12 in the “Who I Am Section.” Overall means and standard deviations were calculated for successful and unsuccessful participant groups. Responses of successful and unsuccessful participants were compared by means of an independent-sample t test. Participants were separated into ethnic groups based on their answers to questions 13, 14, and 15.
in the “Who I Am” section. Means, standard deviations, and t tests were used to explore differences among ethnic-group participants. Differences between successful and unsuccessful participants in an individual ethnic group were explored using the same statistical measures. Student responses on individual questions were summarized into two levels, and a chi-square test was used to determine whether or not there was a statistically significant difference between the two levels.
CHAPTER IV
RESULTS

Purpose

There is little empirical data regarding the difference in individual, family, and community resilience (protective) factors for academically successful and academically unsuccessful racially and ethnically diverse 9th- through 12th-grade adolescents with learning disabilities. There is also a paucity of data regarding the difference in views of intelligence (fixed versus malleable) and concepts of racial identity for academically successful and academically unsuccessful racially and ethnically diverse 9th- through 12th-grade adolescents with learning disabilities. An exploration of resilience and attribution theories suggests, however, that there are protective factors found in the research that may influence academic success. The purpose of this study is to explore the differences in individual, family, and community protective factors for academically successful and academically unsuccessful racially and ethnically diverse adolescents with learning disabilities. Additionally, the purpose of this study is to explore the differences in views of intelligence (fixed versus malleable) and concepts of racial or ethnic identity among academically successful and academically unsuccessful adolescents with learning disabilities.

The individual resilience factors investigated included schoolwork habits, the willingness to ask for help from others, and the adolescent’s relationship with his or her Resource Specialist Program (RSP) teacher. The family resilience factors investigated included the degree to which a parent or guardian was involved in
supporting the adolescent’s academic progress. The community factors investigated included the degree of involvement in the greater community (sports, employment, and church involvement). Degree of involvement was determined by the number of hours per week the adolescent was involved in those activities. Individual, family, and community protective factors were dependent variables.

The attribution variables investigated included the concept of either fixed or malleable intelligence and the concept of racial and ethnic identity. Both of these variables were measured in conjunction with successful or unsuccessful academic status. The results were reported for each research question.

**Research Question One**

To what extent is there a difference in individual resilience (protective) factors for academically successful and academically unsuccessful racially and ethnically diverse 9th- through 12th-grade adolescents with learning disabilities?

The individual resilience factors investigated included schoolwork habits, the willingness to ask for help from others, and the adolescent’s relationship with his or her Resource Specialist Program (RSP) teacher. Answers to this research question were derived from an analysis of three sections of the ClassMaps Scales developed by Doll and Spies (2007): Believing in Me, My Teacher, and Taking Charge. The three sections consisted of statements for which the student chose answers from a 4-point Likert scale: never (1), sometimes (2), often (3), and almost always (4). Mean values between 1 and 2.5 indicated that respondents answered “never” or “sometimes” to statements such as “I expect to do very well when I work hard in class” (Believing in Me), or “My RSP teacher likes having me in this class” (My Teacher), or “I learn because I want to and not just because the teachers tell me to” (Taking Charge). Mean
values between 2.6 and 4.0 indicated that respondents answered “often” or “almost always” to the same kinds of questions. If respondents answered “never” or “sometimes” (mean values between 1 and 2.5), the factor was not a protective factor. If respondents answered “often” or “almost always” (mean values between 2.6 and 4.0) the factor was protective. A protective factor promoted resilience.

Table 5
Successful and Unsuccessful Group Means and Standard Deviations for Individual Protective Factors: Believing in Me, My Teacher, and Taking Charge

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Protective Factors</th>
<th>Successful (n = 43)</th>
<th>Unsuccessful (n = 14)</th>
<th>t</th>
<th>df</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Believing in Me</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M</td>
<td>3.13</td>
<td>2.64</td>
<td>3.31*</td>
<td>55</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SD</td>
<td>.47</td>
<td>.53</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>My Teacher</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M</td>
<td>3.42</td>
<td>3.06</td>
<td>1.70</td>
<td>55</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SD</td>
<td>.66</td>
<td>.74</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Taking Charge</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M</td>
<td>2.69</td>
<td>2.32</td>
<td>2.32</td>
<td>55</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SD</td>
<td>.49</td>
<td>.66</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* Statistically significant when overall error rate controlled at .05 level

The following overview of results is a preliminary description of data on all three of the sections called individual protective factors. The highest individual protective factor mean value was for successful students in the section entitled My Teacher (Table 5). The lowest individual protective factor mean value was for unsuccessful students in the section entitled Taking Charge. Mean values for successful students in all three sections (Believing in Me, My Teacher, and Taking Charge) were above 2.6, thus these three areas are protective factors for the successful racially and ethnically diverse adolescents with learning disabilities in this study. Mean values for unsuccessful students were well above 2.6 in the My Teacher section, slightly above 2.6 in the Believing in Me section and below 2.6 in the Taking Charge section.
Charge section. These scores suggest that involvement with the RSP teacher (My Teacher section) is a protective factor for unsuccessful students (as well as successful students). Belief in self (Believing in Me) is somewhat of a protective factor for unsuccessful students; however, academic independence (Taking Charge) is not a protective factor for unsuccessful students.

**Believing in Me**

There was a statistically significant difference between the means for successful and unsuccessful students in the resilience factor section called Believing in Me (Table 5). The mean value for successful students was 3.13, and the mean value for unsuccessful students was 2.64. An independent-samples t test indicated that the difference in the means was statistically significant at the .05 level (Table 5). The higher mean for the successful group of respondents suggests that Believing in Me is a protective factor for that group. The Believing in Me means were investigated further, and thus a chi-square analysis of data was conducted. The analysis indicated that 35 of the 43 successful students responded more often to believing in themselves. When asked questions such as “I expect to do very well when I work hard in my classes” and “I can do as well as most kids in my class,” more successful students gave responses of “often” or “almost always.” The 14 unsuccessful students, however, were evenly divided in their responses regarding whether or not they believed in themselves. Of the 14 unsuccessful students, 7 gave responses of “often” or “almost always” and 7 gave responses of “sometimes” or “never” ($\chi^2$ (1df) = 4.98) (Table 6).
The means in the Believing in Me section for both successful and unsuccessful students were 2.6 or above. Students responded “often” or “almost always” to the following statements: “I can do my work correctly,” “I can do as well as most kids in my class,” “I can help other kids understand the work in my classes,” “I can be very good student,” “I can do the hard work,” “I can get good grades,” “I know I will learn what is taught,” and “I expect to do very well when I work hard in class.” Higher means on the Believing in Me section indicated that belief in self is a protective factor for most students surveyed, and it is a statistically significant factor for successful students.

My Teacher

There were no statistically significant differences between successful and unsuccessful students in the resilience factor section entitled My Teacher (Table 5). The fact that My Teacher mean values for both successful and unsuccessful respondents were above 2.6 indicated that a relationship with the RSP teacher was a protective factor. The highest means for the entire population sample (N=57) were found in the responses to the questions in the My Teacher section (successful 3.42, unsuccessful 3.06). Means above 2.6 indicated that students responded with “often”
or “almost always” to questions about their relationship with their RSP teacher. Both successful and unsuccessful students responded that their RSP teacher “often” or “almost always” liked the student, listened carefully, offered help, showed respect, was fair, made the classroom fun, and thought the student did a good job in class.

Taking Charge

There were no statistically significant differences between successful and unsuccessful students in the resilience factor section entitled Taking Charge (Table 5). Mean values for the Taking Charge section were 2.6 or below. Students in the current study responded “never” or “sometimes” more frequently when they were asked to rate the following statements: “I want to know more about the things we learn in my classes,” “I can guess what my grade will be when I turn in my work,” “I work as hard as I can in my classes,” “I find and fix my mistakes before turning in my work,” “I learn because I want to and not just because the teachers tell me to,” “When the work is hard in my classes, I keep trying until I figure it out,” “I know the things I learn in class will help me outside of school,” and “I can tell when I make a mistake on my work in my classes.” Student responses to the Taking Charge statements suggest that academic independence is not a protective factor for either the successful or unsuccessful racially or ethnically diverse adolescents with learning disabilities who are the focus of the current study.

Research Question Two

To what extent is there a difference in family resilience (protective) factors for academically successful and academically unsuccessful racially and ethnically diverse 9th- through 12th-grade adolescents with learning disabilities?
The family resilience factor was investigated by an analysis of participant answers to statements on the Talking with My Parents section of the questionnaire. Some of the statements in this section were “My parents and I talk about my grades,” “My parents help me with homework when I need it,” and “My parents talk about the ways that I can do well in school.”

An independent-samples t test showed no statistically significant differences in the means for the family resilience factor as measured by answers to the Talking with My Parents section. Means were very similar when students were categorized as successful or unsuccessful (Table 7).

**Table 7**

Successful and Unsuccessful Group Means and Standard Deviations for the Family Protective Factor

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Protective Factor</th>
<th>Successful n = 43</th>
<th>Unsuccessful n = 14</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Talking with My Parents</td>
<td>M 2.38</td>
<td>2.14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>SD .75</td>
<td>.80</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The means in both of the categories in Table 7 were below 2.50. These lower mean values indicate that most respondents chose “never” or “sometimes” regarding interacting with their parents about academics. Interaction with parents about academic issues does not appear to be a protective factor for successful or unsuccessful racially and ethnically diverse adolescents with learning disabilities.

**Research Question Three**

To what extent is there a difference in community resilience (protective) factors for academically successful and academically unsuccessful racially and ethnically diverse 9th- through 12th-grade adolescents with learning disabilities?
Community resilience (protective) factors were defined as the degree of involvement of the respondents in the greater community, specifically, the amount of time spent in church, sports, and employment. Study participants selected 0 to 3 hours, 4 to 6 hours, 7 to 10 hours, and 11 or more hours of involvement in each area. Calculations of frequencies and percentages (Table 8) showed that respondents indicated they had a higher degree of involvement in sports, a lesser degree of involvement in employment, and a small degree of involvement in church. Ninety-six percent of the successful study participants selected a small number of hours of church attendance: 0 to 3 hours or 4 to 6 hours. Similarly, 93% of unsuccessful study participants selected a small number of hours of church attendance: 0 to 3 hours or 4 to 6 hours. In the research on developmental assets (protective factors) by Sesma and

Table 8

Frequencies and Percentages of Community Involvement for Successful and Unsuccessful Students

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Community Factors</th>
<th>Church</th>
<th>Sports</th>
<th>Job</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>f</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>f</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Successful (n= 42)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0 to 3</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>90.5</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 to 6</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>9.5</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7 to 10</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11 or more</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Unsuccessful (n=15)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0 to 3</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>86.7</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 to 6</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>6.7</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7 to 10</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11 or more</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Roehlkerpartain (2003), one or more hours per week of religious involvement was determined to be a protective factor. Evidence in the current study is inconclusive as to whether or not religious involvement is a protective factor for students in the current study in that there is no differentiation between students who selected zero hours of church involvement and students who selected 1 to 3 hours of church involvement.

A high percentage of successful study participants spent between 4 and 11 or more hours in sports (45.2%) and a high percentage of unsuccessful study participants spent between 4 and 11 or more hours in sports (50.0%). In the area of employment, 21% of successful respondents spent between 4 and 11 or more hours on a job. Approximately 27% of unsuccessful respondents spent between 4 and 11 or more hours on a job. Most respondents in both groups spent between zero and 3 hours on a job (approximately 79% of successful respondents and approximately 71% of unsuccessful respondents).

When the number of hours of community involvement was collapsed into two values (0 to 3 hours, 4 or more hours), a chi-square calculation resulted in no statistically significant differences in the values for successful and unsuccessful respondents for church, sports, or job involvement.

Research Question Four

To what extent is there a difference in views of intelligence (fixed versus malleable) for academically successful and academically unsuccessful racially and ethnically diverse 9th- through 12th-grade adolescents with learning disabilities?

Study participants’ concepts of their intelligence as either fixed or malleable was surveyed with three questions in the “What I Think” section of the questionnaire.
There were six response choices for the three questions: strongly agree, agree, mostly agree, mostly disagree, disagree, and strongly disagree. Although Dweck (2000) scored responses from one (strongly agree) to six (strongly disagree), the responses on the current survey were scored in the same manner as the responses on the other sections of the questionnaire, from one (strongly disagree) to six (strongly agree) so that strong agreement responses received higher scores and strong disagreement responses received lower scores. Higher scores (3.0 to 6.0) indicated a fixed view of intelligence, and lower scores (1.0 to 2.9) indicated a malleable view of intelligence.

There were no statistically significant mean differences between successful and unsuccessful study participants in the “What I Think” section of the questionnaire. Both means were very similar (Table 9).

Individual scores for the total study sample on the “What I Think” section ranged from 1.0 to 5.7. A frequency breakdown (for both successful and unsuccessful students) showed that approximately 35% of the individual scores were from 1.0 to 2.7, and thus a more malleable view of intelligence was reflected in these scores. Approximately 60% of the individual scores ranged from 3.0 to 5.7, suggesting a more fixed view of intelligence for that percent of the study participants. The 35% of students who subscribed to a more malleable view of intelligence viewed their

Table 9

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Fixed versus Malleable Intelligence</th>
<th>Successful n = 43 M</th>
<th>Successful n = 14 M</th>
<th>t</th>
<th>df</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>What I Think</td>
<td>3.31</td>
<td>3.28</td>
<td>0.09</td>
<td>52</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SD</td>
<td>1.10</td>
<td>1.00</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
intelligence as more fluid and changeable, whereas the 60% of individuals who subscribed to a more fixed view of intelligence viewed their intelligence as fixed and unchangeable.

Survey responses obtained in the area of fixed versus malleable intelligence were separated into responses given by successful students and responses given by unsuccessful students. The successful students were almost evenly split between either a fixed or a malleable view of intelligence (48% fixed, 52% malleable). Unsuccessful students had a slightly lower number of fixed responses (36% fixed, 64% malleable). Thus, both successful and unsuccessful students were almost equally distributed within the frequency breakdown of 35% with a more malleable view (mentioned above) and within the frequency breakdown of 60% with a more fixed view (mentioned above).

Research Question Five

To what extent is there a difference in concepts of racial or ethnic identity among academically successful and academically unsuccessful racially and ethnically diverse 9th- through 12th- grade adolescents with learning disabilities?

Concepts of racial or ethnic identity were measured by responses to the 15 questions in the “Who I Am” section of the questionnaire. The “Who I Am” questions are the same questions on the Multi-group Ethnic Identity Measure (MEIM), a measure of ethnic identity. Examples of some of the statements in the measure are “I have spent time trying to find out more about my ethnic group, such as its history, traditions, and customs,” “I have a clear sense of my ethnic background and what it means for me,” and “I have a lot of pride in my ethnic group.”
Participants chose answers from a 4-point Likert scale: “strongly disagree” (1), “disagree” (2), “agree” (3), or “strongly agree” (4), to the first 12 the statements in the “Who I Am” portion of the questionnaire. Questions 13, 14, and 15 were questions about the ethnic identity of the participant and his or her parents. An overall mean was obtained for the first 12 statements in the “Who I Am” section. Two additional mean scores were obtained, one for ethnic identity search, and the other for belonging and commitment to one’s racial or ethnic group. Roberts et al. (1999) conducted a factor analysis of a large sample of adolescents and found that there were two factors measured by the Multi-group Ethnic Identity Measure MEIM. First was the ethnic identity search factor (a developmental and cognitive component) that measured the degree of information gathering about one’s background and that varied according to the adolescent’s developmental stage. The second factor assessed an affective component. It measured the degree to which the individual had a strong belief in and commitment to his or her racial and ethnic identity. The ethnic-identity-search factor was assessed by MEIM questions 1, 2, 4, 8, and 10 in the “Who I Am” section of the questionnaire. The acknowledgement, belonging, and commitment component was assessed by MEIM questions 3, 5, 6, 7, 9, 11, and 12 in the “Who I Am” section.

**Who I Am Overall**

There were no statistically significant differences in the “Who I Am” overall means for successful and unsuccessful students. The mean for successful students was 3.03 and the mean for unsuccessful students was 3.06 (Table10). Means between 1 and 2.6 indicated a lower sense of ethnic identity and mean values between 2.7 and
4.0 indicated a higher sense of ethnic identity. The means for both successful and unsuccessful students indicated that all of the student respondents had a higher overall sense of ethnic identity.

Table 10

Successful and Unsuccessful Group Means and Standard Deviations by Degree of Success for Concepts of Racial and Ethnic Identity Factor

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Factor</th>
<th>Successful (n = 43)</th>
<th>Unsuccessful (n = 14)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Overall</td>
<td>M 3.03</td>
<td>3.06</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Who I Am Identity Search</td>
<td>SD .46</td>
<td>.54</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Identity Search</td>
<td>M 2.70</td>
<td>2.64</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Belonging and Commitment</td>
<td>SD .51</td>
<td>.52</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Commitment</td>
<td>M 3.25</td>
<td>3.18</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Who I Am Ethnic Identity Search

There was no statistically significant difference between successful and unsuccessful students for the Who I Am Identity Search portion of the Concepts of Racial and Ethnic Identity factor. Both means were similar: 2.70 and 2.64 (Table 10). Additionally, both means were lower than the overall identity means; however, both means were 2.6 or higher. The 2.6 or higher mean values for the Identity Search portion indicate a higher tendency to engage in a process of learning more about one’s individual or ethnic group. Both successful and unsuccessful respondents have spent time trying to find out about their racial and cultural background, they have thought about how their life will be impacted by that membership, they have spoken with others about their racial or ethnic group membership, and they have participated in practices or traditions common to their racial or ethnic group.
Who I Am Belonging and Commitment

There was no statistically significant difference between successful and unsuccessful students for the Who I Am Belonging and Commitment portion of the Concepts of Racial and Ethnic Identity factor (Table 10). Both means are higher than the means for the overall and ethnic identity search portions of the Who I Am section. Higher means indicate that respondents have a clear sense of their racial and ethnic background, they are happy to be a member of and have a strong sense of belonging to their group, they take pride in their group membership, and they feel strongly attached to their group.

Additional Findings

In order to provide additional descriptive data for the adolescents who participated in the current study, means and standard deviations for each of the five research questions were calculated for various groupings. In addition to the calculations made for successful and unsuccessful respondents, scores were calculated for respondents by racial and ethnic background, grade level, and gender.

Racial and Ethnic Background

In the area of individual and family protective factors, the mean values above 2.6 for European American, Hispanic American, and African American respondents were in the areas of relationship with the RSP teacher (My Teacher) and belief in self (Believing in Me). These higher means suggest that the relationship with the RSP teacher and belief in self are protective factors for all three racial or ethnic groups. The mean values in the area of academic independence (Taking Charge) were below 2.6 for European American respondents, and just slightly above 2.6 for Hispanic
American and African American respondents. These lower means suggest that academic independence is not a protective factor that varies by race or ethnicity.

Talking with parents was not a protective factor for European American, Hispanic American, or African American respondents. The mean values in this area were the lowest for African American respondents. The mean for African American respondents was 2.17 compared with 2.50 for European Americans and 2.24 for Hispanic Americans.

In the area of concepts of intelligence (What I Think), scores between 3.0 and 6.0 indicated a fixed view of intelligence, and scores between 1.0 and 2.9 indicated a more malleable view of intelligence. All means in this area were similar across racial and ethnic groups. They were all slightly above 3.0, thus indicating a slight tendency

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Racial and Ethnic Identity</th>
<th>European American n = 16</th>
<th>Hispanic American n = 28</th>
<th>African American n = 10</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Believing in Me</td>
<td>M 3.10</td>
<td>3.00</td>
<td>2.83</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>SD 0.56</td>
<td>0.58</td>
<td>0.29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>My Teacher</td>
<td>M 3.34</td>
<td>3.43</td>
<td>3.07</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>SD 0.69</td>
<td>0.55</td>
<td>0.97</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Taking Charge</td>
<td>M 2.44</td>
<td>2.68</td>
<td>2.63</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>SD 0.60</td>
<td>0.56</td>
<td>0.51</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Talking with My Parents</td>
<td>M 2.50</td>
<td>2.24</td>
<td>2.17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>SD 0.82</td>
<td>0.78</td>
<td>0.65</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What I Think (fixed versus malleable intelligence)</td>
<td>M 3.14</td>
<td>3.44</td>
<td>3.16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>SD 1.20</td>
<td>1.10</td>
<td>1.10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Who I Am Overall</td>
<td>M 2.82</td>
<td>3.15</td>
<td>3.15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>SD 0.60</td>
<td>0.36</td>
<td>0.48</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Who I Am Ethnic Identity</td>
<td>M 2.37</td>
<td>2.86</td>
<td>2.67</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>SD 0.60</td>
<td>0.35</td>
<td>0.45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Who I Am Belonging and Commitment</td>
<td>M 3.11</td>
<td>3.32</td>
<td>3.27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>SD 0.76</td>
<td>0.42</td>
<td>0.45</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
toward the belief that intelligence is fixed and not malleable.

The overall means on the Who I am section for Hispanic American and African American students were higher than the overall mean for European American students. Hispanic American and African American means were 3.15 compared with 2.82 for European Americans. Similarly, the ethnic-identity-search means for Hispanic American and African American respondents (2.86 and 2.67) were higher than the mean for European American students (2.37). There was a much smaller difference in the mean for European American students and Hispanic American and African American students in the belonging-and-commitment section of the Who I Am statements; however, again the means for Hispanic American and African American respondents (3.32 and 3.27) were higher than the mean for European American students (3.11).

The frequencies and percentages of involvement in church, sports, or job activities varied somewhat by racial or ethnic group (Table 12). Of the 57 study participants, 53 completed all of the questions about community involvement. Of those 53, 9% of the students (four Hispanic Americans and one African American) indicated 4 to 6 hours of church involvement. Four of these students were designated as successful students, and their choice of 4 to 6 hours of church involvement suggests that participation in religious activities is a protective factor for those four students.

In the area of employment, 50% of all of the Hispanic American students surveyed indicated they spent between 4 and 11 or more hours in a job. Only one percent of the African Americans surveyed indicated between 4 and 11 or more hours
of involvement in employment. Data suggest that employment is a protective factor for the Hispanic American participants in the current study.

Approximately 44% of European American students, 44% of Hispanic American students, and approximately 55% of African American students spent between 4 and 11 or more hours in sports. The data suggest that sports involvement is a protective factor for both successful and unsuccessful racially and ethnically diverse adolescents with learning disabilities. Additionally, African American study participants spent more time in church activities than in job activities.

**Gender and Grade Level**

An investigation of means and frequencies for protective factors and attributional variables by gender pointed to some slight differences between male and

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Community Factors</th>
<th>Church</th>
<th></th>
<th>Sports</th>
<th></th>
<th>Job</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td># of hours</td>
<td>f</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>f</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>f</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>European American (n=17)</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0 to 3</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>94.1</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>52.9</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>87.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 to 6</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>12.5</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>6.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7 to 10</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>18.8</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>6.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11 or more</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>12.5</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Hispanic American (n=27)</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0 to 3</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>85.2</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>55.6</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>66.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 to 6</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>14.8</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>33.3</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>18.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7 to 10</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>7.4</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11 or more</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3.7</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>11.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>African American (n=9)</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0 to 3</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>88.9</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>44.4</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>88.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 to 6</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>11.1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>22.2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>11.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7 to 10</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>22.2</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11 or more</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>11.1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
female respondents. Means in the area of academic independence (Taking Charge) were slightly higher for females (2.74) than for males (2.54). In the area of Talking with My Parents, the mean for female respondents was slightly lower (2.17) than the mean for males (2.38). In the area of community involvement, males spent more time in sports than in employment, and females spent slightly less time in sports than in employment. Gender means were all 2.6 and above for the ethnic-identity-search factor. Means in other areas of investigation were also similar for males and females.

There were also some differences in means and frequencies when the data were separated by grade level. Although the overall means for belief in self (Believing in Me) indicated that belief in self is a protective factor for successful student respondents, the mean value for ninth graders was lower than that of the other grades. The mean for ninth grade was 2.81, whereas the means for grades 10, 11, and 12 were 3.09, 3.07, and 3.06.

When data were separated by grade level, 12th graders spent slightly more hours in employment than in sports, whereas for other grade levels the reverse was true. Also, 12th graders spent more time in employment than all other grades.

In the area of views of intelligence, means were similar for grades 9, 11, and 12 (3.52, 3.46, and 3.55); however, the mean for grade 10 (2.55) was lower than that of the other grades. Tenth graders possessed a more malleable view of intelligence as compared with students in grades 9, 11, and 12.

In the concepts of racial identity section (Who I Am), means between 1 and 2.6 indicated a lower overall sense of ethnic identity and means between 2.7 and 4.0 indicated a higher overall sense of ethnic identity. The means for the overall score in
the Who I Am section were 2.85 for ninth graders, 3.23 for tenth graders, 3.14 for eleventh graders, and 3.02 for twelfth graders. The means suggest that all grade levels indicated a higher overall sense of ethnic identity, but the mean for 9th graders was the lowest of the four grade levels. The means for the ethnic-identity-search portion of the Who I Am section were above 2.6 except for grade nine. In sum, there were some notable mean and frequency differences when the respondent group was separated by gender or grade level.

The participants in the current study are racially and ethnically diverse adolescents with learning disabilities. Inasmuch as the designation of having a learning disability has been identified in resiliency research as a risk factor (Miller, 1996, Raskind, Raskind, Goldberg, & Herman, 2002, Werner, 1993) of interest in this study were the views held by adolescents on their learning disability status.

Learning Disability Short-Answer Question

Acknowledgement of the presence of a learning disability was one of the themes that emerged from Miller’s (1996) investigation of resilience among college students who were diagnosed as having a learning disability. For the students in Miller’s research, the presence of a learning disability was considered to be a protective factor if there was acceptance of the learning disability by the individual in question. Of interest in the current study was the perspectives held by study participants of their learning disability status. In order to explore the learning disability concept, two questions were included in the questionnaire. First, respondents were asked to check “yes” or “no to the statement “I have a learning disability.” Second, they were asked to write a short answer following the sentence
“This is how I learn differently.” The short answer questions were analyzed to determine common themes. Themes that emerged for those students who responded “yes” to “I have a learning disability” were as follows. Responses contained (a) specific educational strategies, (b) statements referring to a general need for help from the teacher, (c) statements referring to student attitude, and (d) statements further explaining the learning disability.

Of the students who completed the section on the learning disability concept, approximately 75% answered that they did have a learning disability, and they wrote a statement about their learning disability. Responses given by successful or unsuccessful respondents were similar. Approximately 48% of students who said they had a learning disability wrote that they learned differently by using specific educational strategies. They wrote statements such as “I like to use my hands,” “I need quiet,” “I think listening to books on tape help me to read,” “I learn more when things are explained two times,” and so on. Approximately 23% of the same respondents indicated they needed general help from their teachers by making statements such as “My teacher has to explain it carefully” and “I need more help when I am reading.” An additional 23% of the same respondents answered the statement “This is how I learn differently” by further defining the learning disability phenomenon. They made statements such as “I am a slow learner,” “I confused the D with the B,” “I have dyslexia” and so on. Seven percent of the same respondents made statements regarding student attitude such as the following: “I learn by being willing to learn and it has to interest me” and “I sometimes ask questions depending on how comfortable I am with my surroundings and with the person who is teaching.
the lesson.” Of note is that 75% of the respondents acknowledged that they did have a learning disability, and 23% of the respondents mentioned involvement with their teachers to address their learning differences.

Of the total number of respondents who completed the section about learning disabilities, approximately 23% stated that they did not have a learning disability or they were not sure if they had a learning disability. Almost half of these students simply checked “no” without writing any explanation. The remaining students wrote the following types of answers: “I don’t know because most things don’t stick to my brain,” “I don’t believe there is such a thing because in that case everyone in the world has a learning disability,” and “I don’t think I learn differently from other people - I only need a little bit of extra help with Algebra because that’s my weak subject.” Apparently, successful or unsuccessful academic progress as measured by the number of credits earned towards high-school graduation is not necessarily influenced by an adolescent’s acknowledgement of the presence of a learning disability or not.

Summary

With the exception of one of the components of the individual protective factor area, there were no statistically significant differences for any of the five research questions. There were no statistically significant differences in family or community protective factors for academically successful and unsuccessful racially and ethnically diverse adolescents with learning disabilities. There were no statistically significant differences in views of intelligence (fixed versus malleable) or concepts of racial and ethnic identity for the group of students who responded to the
questionnaire for this study. In the area of individual protective factors, there was a statistically significant difference (.05 level) between successful and unsuccessful students in the category having to do with belief in self (Believing in Me). Mean values for successful and unsuccessful respondents indicate that some factors can be considered protective factors for both groups.
CHAPTER V
LIMITATIONS, SUMMARY, DISCUSSIONS, IMPLICATIONS, RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH

The purpose of this study was to contribute to the knowledge regarding resilience and attribution variables that influence academic performance among racially and ethnically diverse high-school students with learning disabilities. Specifically, the first purpose of the study was to explore individual-, family-, and community-resilience factors that influence academic performance among racially and ethnically diverse high-school students with learning disabilities. Fifty-seven racially and ethnically diverse high-school students with learning disabilities who were provided one class period of Resource Specialist Program support (RSP) were surveyed in these three areas. Individual resilience factors were defined as school-work habits, the willingness to ask for help from others, and the adolescent’s relationship with his or her RSP teacher. The family-resilience factor was defined as the degree to which a family member was involved in supporting the adolescent’s academic progress. The community factor was defined as the degree of involvement in the greater community, specifically, the amount of time spent in sports, employment, and church.

The second purpose of this study was to explore the concepts of intelligence held by academically successful and academically unsuccessful racially and ethnically diverse students with learning disabilities. Concepts of intelligence were defined as the adolescent’s perception of possession of fixed or malleable intelligence. The third purpose of study was to investigate concepts of racial identity
among these students. Racial identity was defined as the degree of identification with the social construct of the adolescent’s own racial group, as measured by a standardized instrument.

Data obtained for all areas of investigation were tallied and analyzed using sample frequencies, means and standard deviations. Additionally, independent-sample t tests were used to investigate differences between questionnaire scores of successful and unsuccessful students. Data were presented in the form of tables and figures where appropriate.

Limitations

The findings of this study may not generalize to all racially and ethnically diverse adolescents who have learning disabilities. The sample of students in the study was a convenience sample, and the high-school setting was suburban. Although students who attend the school where the study was conducted came from both ends of the socioeconomic spectrum, the demographics of the sample may not be representative of other suburban high schools, and it may not be representative of students in more urban settings. The questions, specifically in the area of parent involvement, may not take into account the parent’s perspective of their involvement in their adolescent’s education. Also, the questions in the area of parent involvement may not touch on differing parental roles that are related to culture or second-language concerns. Additionally, the Resource Specialist Program (RSP) (study-skills support for regular-education classes and not subject matter taught specifically within the RSP class) may not match the RSP services offered at other suburban schools. The definition of success as the completion of an acceptable number of credits toward
graduation may be too narrow. Finally, although the factors to be investigated have been defined in operational terms, resilience as a construct can only be inferred from student behavior (in this case, completion of the minimum number of acceptable number of credits toward graduation). The presence or absence of the resilience characteristics (protective factors) to be investigated was based on student self-report. Concepts of racial identity also were based on self-report and thus also may only be inferred from student behavior. Most studies of resilience factors are longitudinal. The current study is cross-sectional and does not provide a view of the respondents over time, thus the impact of adolescence as a developmental period of time cannot be investigated.

Comparison of the results of the current study with results from other studies of resilience and attribution variables among racially and ethnically diverse youth with disabilities can be problematic in that the operational definition of resilience differs from study to study. Also, the measures of resilience factors may be different from the measures used in the current study. In this study, the community involvement question about church attendance was problematic in that adolescents who attended 1 to 3 hours of church could not be distinguished from those who did not attend church at all.

Additionally, the attribution variables that are the subject of this study (fixed versus malleable intelligence, and racial or ethnic identity) have not been investigated for youth with learning disabilities. The populations of many attribution studies (Dweck, 2000; Graham, 2001) have been elementary- and middle-school students in regular education.
Summary

Results of data analysis suggest that except in one area there were no statistically significant differences in the mean values for successful and unsuccessful racially and ethnically diverse adolescents with learning disabilities on any of the protective factor and attribution factor categories investigated in this study. The one exception was in the individual protective factor area of belief in self. The mean for successful respondents for the Believing in Me section (3.13) was statistically significantly higher than the mean for unsuccessful respondents (2.64) at the .05 level. Belief in self was a protective factor for successful respondents, and, although the mean value was lower for unsuccessful respondents and for 9th graders, the factor was still in the range that also could be considered protective for all respondents. The higher values for the My Teacher individual protective factor, the sports and job portions in the area of community involvement, and the concepts of racial identity were all in the direction indicating these factors were protective factors in the lives of the adolescents surveyed. The lower values for the individual protective factor of personal independence (Taking Charge) indicated that this area is not a protective factor for student respondents. The findings in the area of church involvement were inconclusive. The scores in the area of fixed versus malleable intelligence indicated that a higher percentage of the student respondents possessed a more fixed view of intelligence.

Discussion

The results in this study are discussed for each research question. The discussion of the results having to do with individual, family, and community factors
is presented first. A discussion of the results regarding concepts of intelligence and concepts of racial and ethnic identity are presented next, followed by a discussion of the results obtained from the learning disability short-answer question.

*Individual, Family, and Community Protective Factors*

Mean values for successful and unsuccessful respondents indicate that some factors can be considered protective factors for both groups. Involvement with the RSP teacher was an individual protective factor for both groups. Doll et al.’s (2007) research of items contained in the ClassMaps Survey (part of which was incorporated into the questionnaire for the current study) found that student-teacher involvement was an essential protective element of an effective classroom. Individual protective factor means in the area of student-teacher relationships for both successful and unsuccessful adolescents in the current study were similar, and the means were usually higher and thus suggestive of the presence of the RSP teacher as a protective factor in the adolescent’s academic environment irrespective of academic success or lack thereof. Perhaps these results point to the supportive nature of the RSP classroom environment in the school in which the study was conducted.

The findings of the importance of teacher involvement were similar to those of Miller (1996) and Raskind et al.(1999). Although the populations in these two studies differed from the population in the current study, the college students in Miller’s (1996) study and the adults with learning disabilities in the Raskind et al. (1999) study identified teachers and other school personnel as reliable supports. Supportive teachers were also a part of the lives of successful Latino undergraduates studied by Ceballo (2004). The positive impact of supportive teachers was noted in
numerous research studies as a key component that served to tip the balance for students from risk to resilience (Moskovitz, 1983; Raskind et al., 1999; Werner & Smith, 1989).

Academic independence (Taking Charge) was not a protective factor. Mean values for the Taking Charge section were 2.6 or below, as compared with the mean of 3.0 obtained in the Doll et al. (2007) study (a study in which mean student ratings were obtained as part of the reliability and factor analysis of the ClassMaps Survey). Doll et al. (2007) found that students who have a sense of academic self-determination (personal initiative) manifest this awareness in an understanding of the importance of learning. A young person who shows initiative has a plan for reaching academic goals, and has identified steps to complete the plan. Doll et al. created the Taking Charge section of the ClassMaps Survey to assess self-determination. The mean she and her colleagues obtained for the Taking Charge portion of the ClassMaps Survey was 3.0 when corrected for scale scoring differences. (Doll et al. scored their survey as 0, 1, 2, and 3, whereas the current survey was scored as 1, 2, 3, and 4.) There were 420 third-, fourth-, and fifth-grade students who completed the survey in the Doll et al. study. The mean for the fifty-seven 9th, 10th, 11th, and 12th grade students in the current study was 2.6 or below.

The lower mean for the adolescents in this area may be attributed to the learning disability status of the students. By definition, students with learning disabilities have not been able to make adequate academic progress in the regular education setting and they often need help with academic self-determination: setting goals, working hard until they figure out their school work, finding and fixing
mistakes before turning in homework, and so on. The fact that Doll et al.’s student population consisted of students in regular education may account for the difference in the means. Another explanation for the lower Taking Charge mean among adolescents in the current study may be that taking charge in high school is a more complex skill than what is required at the elementary-school level (increased numbers of teachers and classes, increased homework load, less monitoring from regular education teachers, and so on). As mentioned previously, involvement with the RSP teacher (a higher mean on the My Teacher section of the survey) is more of a protective factor for the adolescents who are the subject of the current study. The RSP teacher may help to teach self-determination skills such as goal setting and working hard to the adolescent with learning disabilities. It is also likely that the RSP teacher’s involvement with the adolescent with learning disabilities may contribute to the somewhat higher means in the Believing in Me section.

Involvement with parents (Talking with My Parents) was not a protective factor. Ong, Phinney, and Dennis (2006) found from their investigation of the protective influence of family involvement on academic performance for 123 Hispanic American college students that higher parent involvement was related to higher academic achievement. Ong et al. and numerous other researchers have documented the positive influence of parental support, so it is of concern that means for the adolescents in the current study indicated low parent involvement.

The mean ClassMaps survey score for Talking with Parents (Doll et al., 2007) was 2.90 and the means for both successful and unsuccessful respondents were below 2.50. The students surveyed by Doll et al. were elementary-school students in grades
three, four, and five. The mean for the students in the Doll et al. survey were probably higher than the mean for the high-school students in the current study because of developmental differences between elementary- and high-school students. It is common in high-school for adolescents to verbalize less involvement with their parents. Had the parents of the youth involved in this study been surveyed their scores might have differed from their adolescent’s score. The statements on the Talking with My Parents section of the survey addressed specific areas: homework, what the student learned, how to do well in school, and so on. Parents such as those whose first language is not English and parents such as those who may not have not completed high school may talk in more general terms with their adolescent about school. Parents from different racial and ethnic backgrounds may have a cultural view that differs from the European American norm of how a parent should support their child’s education. Those parents may provide moral and emotional support, and this support can be a protective factor. Of the 20 African American students interviewed by Floyd (1996), several mentioned their mother or their father as being a positive influence in the academic arena because, although the parent had not necessarily advanced in education, the parent was admired for modeling personal characteristics such as high expectations, persistence, and positive thinking.

Nonetheless, the finding in this study of a lower mean in the area of parent involvement is of concern. Svetaz, Ireland, and Blum (2000) found that involvement with parents (as well as involvement with school) was strongly associated with decreased violence, decreased suicide attempts, and decreased emotional stress among adolescents with learning disabilities.
Parent involvement is a legally mandated component of an Individual Education Plan (IEP) in special education, thus a further exploration of how parents are involved and how their involvement is perceived may give a broader, more accurate picture of the extent to which this area may or may not be a protective factor for the adolescents studied. Students and parents are present at IEP meetings, but students may not construe their parents’ participation as parental involvement.

Mean values for successful and unsuccessful respondents also indicate that involvement in sports (a community-involvement factor) also can be considered a protective factor. In the research on developmental assets by Sesma and Roehlkerpartain (2003), 3 or more hours per week spent in youth activities such as sports was one of the external assets (protective factor) that promoted resilience. Both successful and unsuccessful study participants in the current study spent more hours in sports. Three or more hours of involvement in sports or other school or community activities was one of the developmental assets (protective factors) listed by the Search Institute as a component of resilience (Benson & Leffert, 2001).

The question regarding church involvement was not specific enough, and thus the collection of data in this area is inconclusive except that it was a protective factor for a small percent of the Hispanic Americans surveyed. Employment was a protective factor for 50% of Hispanic Americans surveyed, and it was a protective factor for all 12th graders. Additionally, sports involvement was a protective factor for both successful and unsuccessful students, and a high percentage of Hispanic Americans (44%) and African Americans (55%) spent 4 to 11 or more hours in sports.
Concepts of Intelligence

The data on concepts of intelligence suggest that a higher percentage of both successful and unsuccessful respondents hold a more fixed view of their intelligence. They are less likely to be motivated in a challenging academic circumstance. They are more likely to put effort into giving the appearance of mastery than to attempt to problem solve when given an academic challenge. In their research on fixed versus malleable views of intelligence, Niiya, Crocker, and Bartmess (2004) and Dweck (2004) found that when students who had a fixed view of their intelligence faced an academic challenge, they tended to spend time trying to prove to others that they were smart, instead of trying to tackle the challenge. Students with a malleable view of intelligence, however, when challenged, tended to work toward increasing their competence by learning new tasks or new skills. Avoiding work and trying to give the appearance of understanding challenging material is a common attribute of students with learning disabilities. It is likely that the 60% in the current study (the 60% includes both successful and unsuccessful students) who subscribed to a more fixed view of intelligence have demonstrated work avoidance and feigned mastery in front of their teachers and peers. Evaluation of which view of intelligence is held by students is valuable information. Self-worth (belief in self) can be improved if a student’s focus can be shifted away from a demonstration of ability (fixed view of intelligence) and toward an emphasis on learning and improving (malleable view of intelligence) (Niiya et al., 2004). A shift toward a more malleable view of intelligence can also improve academic achievement (Blackwell, Dweck, & Trzesniewski, 2002).
Although there were no statistically significant differences between successful and unsuccessful respondents in the area of racial and ethnic identity, the means for Hispanic American and African American students were above 2.6, thus suggesting that an investigation of and identification with ones’ racial or ethnic background may be a protective factor, particularly for racial or ethnic groups who are in the minority in the United States. European Americans in the United States do not attach as much importance to their ethnic background as do members of minority groups in the United States (Roberts et al., 1999), thus the difference in the means of European American and Hispanic and African American students in the current study may be a reflection of this finding. Also, according to identity development theory (Roberts et al., 1999) ethnic identity develops in stages, and thus varies by age. Younger adolescents (9th graders, as an example) would be expected to express a less developed sense of ethnic identity than their older counterparts (10th, 11th, and 12th graders). In the current study, the overall ethnic identity mean for 9th-grade respondents was 2.85 as compared with the overall ethnic means for grades 10, 11, and 12 that ranged from 3.02 to 3.23.

Davis, Aronson, and Salinas (2006) found that students who strongly endorsed their racial identity performed better on standardized tests when stereotype conditions were present. The students in the Davis et al. study were college students, so their findings suggest that further investigation is needed in this area, but at the high-school level. Miller and MacIntosh (1999), however, investigated protective factors that might exist for African American adolescents. They used several measures of racial
and ethnic identity (one measure was the Multi-group Ethnic Identity Measure) and found statistically significant correlations between a positive racial identity and successful school performance (as measured by grade-point-average).

The high-school students in the current study whose means were higher on the investigation of and the endorsement of their own racial and ethnic identity were not questioned about the sources of their perspective. Their high-school does not offer education about Hispanic Americans and African Americans to the entire school population. Their high school has clubs and school activities for different racial and ethnic groups, all students are required to take three semesters of World Studies courses, and elective courses on Hispanic American and African American history are offered at the 12th-grade level, however, there is not a universal exposure to information about the racial and ethnic groups in the school population. It is possible that students who had higher scores in the area of concepts of racial and ethnic identity gained their perspective from family or community experiences.

Learning Disability Short-Answer Question

On the subject of learning disabilities, results from the current study are somewhat contrary to the findings of Werner’s (1993) investigation of youth with learning disabilities. In Werner’s study, when students with learning disabilities were matched with students who did not have learning disabilities, there were fewer protective factors for the students with learning disabilities (lower scores on measures of self-competence and sense of internal control, as examples). Although the students in the current study were not compared with youth who did not have learning disabilities, there was some evidence that self-competence (Believing in Me) for
successful respondents was a protective factor. Additionally, the youth in Werner’s study did not describe interventions by special-education teachers as very helpful; however, in the current study the responses suggested that the special-education teacher (the RSP teacher) was helpful and was a protective factor.

It is of interest that when study participants were asked if they did or did not have a learning disability, 75% answered yes and 23% answered no. The yes or no responses were not specific to either successful or unsuccessful groups of students. Also, of the students who answered yes, however, 48% wrote about using different educational strategies to help them in school.

An assumption that might be made from the results of the current study is that respondents who indicate that they do have a learning disability also may be likely to indicate a belief in a fixed view of intelligence. An analysis of the survey choices made by all students (both successful and unsuccessful) who indicated acknowledgement of a learning disability revealed information that needs further investigation. Of the successful students who acknowledged a learning disability, there was an even split between those with a more fixed view of intelligence and those with a more malleable view of intelligence. Of the successful students who did not acknowledge a learning disability, 60% indicated a more malleable view of intelligence and 40% indicated a more fixed view. Of the unsuccessful respondents who acknowledged a learning disability, almost all indicated a malleable concept of intelligence. Of the unsuccessful students who did not acknowledge a learning disability, all indicated a fixed view of intelligence. Further research is needed to learn more about why successful students are almost evenly split between fixed and
malleable concepts of intelligence. Further research also is needed to learn more about why unsuccessful students who acknowledge a learning disability possess a fixed view of intelligence whereas unsuccessful students who do not acknowledge a learning disability possess the opposite view.

**Implications**

To date, there is a wealth of research regarding overrepresentation and relative lack of benefit from special education for racially and ethnically diverse adolescents. There is, however, a paucity of research that has investigated resiliency protective factors that influence academic performance for this specific population. Resiliency theory and attribution theory are both well-suited to the exploration of differences between academically successful and academically unsuccessful racially and ethnically diverse students with learning disabilities. They provide an empirical framework that has identified at-risk factors that may cause maladjustment (academic failure) and protective factors that can result in academic success. In specific, the factors contained in the ClassMaps Scale (Doll et al., 2007) are protective factors: operational definitions of positive, effective classroom environments. Additionally, the questions regarding views of intelligence (Dweck, 2000) and the questions from the Multi-group Ethnic Identity Measure (Phinney, 1992) provide a baseline of data for educational interventions in these two areas.

An understanding of the protective and attribution factors that contribute to academic resilience among this population of students may provide an empirical base for the creation of specific support programs relevant to this population of students. Each of the protective factors and attributional variables that are the topic of this
study are skills that can be taught. Study and social skills training such as asking for and accepting help, independent management of homework completion and study time, strategies for addressing an academic challenge, and post-high-school planning, can be incorporated into the curriculum of the RSP class. For students in special education, such as the racially and ethnically diverse adolescents who are the subject of this study, RSP teachers and other special educators can translate the survey results into goals and objectives in an Individual Education Plan. Examples of goals might be that (a) two times weekly the student will share information about a classroom assignment with parents (Talking with my Parents), (b) in each class, the student will ask one question about the homework assignment (Taking Charge), (c) the student will participate in a sports activity 2 to 3 hours per week, (community protective factor), and (d) the student will interview a family member about their cultural heritage (concepts of racial identity). RSP teachers, other special educators, and regular-education teachers can assess whether students possess either a fixed or a malleable view of intelligence, and the perspective of malleable intelligence can be taught to both students and their parents. As an example, teachers can use phraseology that encourages a more malleable view. Teachers can use the Individual Education Plan Team process to develop meaningful partnerships with parents so that parents can be involved in their adolescent’s education. Racially and ethnically specific parent-education workshops can be offered to acknowledge and increase parent involvement.
**Recommendations for Further Research**

The current study is an investigation of differences between successful and unsuccessful racially and ethnically diverse adolescents with learning disabilities. There was only a statistically significant difference found for successful and unsuccessful students in the area of belief in self (Believing in Me); however, other means and frequencies were for both successful and unsuccessful students were higher as compared with normative data. Thus, if the presence of protective factors for both successful and unsuccessful students is more a function of the RSP class structure and less an explanation of differences between the two groups of students, the study design needs to be refined. First, there is a need to further determine what differentiates successful from unsuccessful students. Additional academic criteria could be added such as grade-point-average, the number of hours spent on homework (as measured by the RSP teacher), and days of school attendance. A comparison of racially and ethnically diverse adolescents with learning disabilities who are in school (successful definition) with those students who have dropped out of school (unsuccessful definition) could shed light on the differences in protective and attribution factors for both groups. Second, varying special-education classroom structures need to be investigated in order to better describe the role these different structures play in helping students be more successful. Students in the current study were students who received one period of RSP support. The results of the survey may have been different if these students were receiving a different type of special-education support. Thus, protective and attribution factors might be explored in conjunction with other types or special-education support (core RSP classes, Special
Day Class support, and so on) in order to determine how the type of support service interacts with protective and attribution factors. Of additional interest would be comparisons of racially and ethnically diverse adolescents across grade levels, gender, and with and without learning disabilities. Another area of interest would be to examine the relationship between successful and unsuccessful respondents’ concepts of intelligence and their understanding or acknowledgement of their learning disability. A research design could be created to determine if participation in instruction on malleable versus fixed intelligence led to an impact on a measure of students’ academic success (such as increased academic skills, higher standardized test scores, or higher grades).

A current national concern is a focus on improving student academic performance as measured by standardized tests. Several researchers already have shown a correlation between the presence of protective factors, attribution variables, and increased academic test scores. A well-documented relationship between protective and attribution factors and standardized test scores could give data that would clarify and broaden the parameters of national legislation such as No Child Left Behind. As an example, a research design could be created to determine if increased knowledge of the student’s racial and ethnic identity had an impact on academic test scores, even when racial or ethnic stereotype threat was introduced. The same research design could be created to determine if education about the presence of a learning disability and instruction in the concept of malleable intelligence had an impact on academic test scores. A pertinent factor in this research design could be to determine if the phenomenon of stereotype threat applied to stereotypes about special
education and learning disabilities. There are many worthy research possibilities to be conducted with the population specific to this current study.

**Final Comments**

The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) was created to enable students with learning disabilities to achieve academic success. Although there is an overrepresentation of racially and ethnically diverse minorities in special education and high-school graduation rates for students in special-education are lower than graduation rates for students in regular-education, there are some students with learning disabilities who are academically successful. Some of these students are the participants of the current study. Their answers to the survey questions form a preliminary description of the protective and attribution factors specific to this population. In addition, numerous questions about this population remain to be explored. It is by conducting this type of descriptive analysis and by exploring this population in further detail that educators can develop specific research-based interventions to support academic success for racially and ethnically diverse adolescents with learning disabilities.
REFERENCES


APPENDIX A

INTRODUCTORY LETTER

TO RESOURCE SPECIALIST PROGRAM TEACHERS
INTRODUCTORY LETTER
TO RESOURCE SPECIALIST PROGRAM TEACHERS

Dear Special Educator,

I am writing to ask your permission to allow me access to your class for the purpose of inviting RSP students to participate in my research study this 2007-spring semester. My study is about the factors that contribute to success for adolescents who have learning disabilities and who are enrolled in RSP for one period out of their schedule. The purpose of the study is to contribute to the knowledge of how educators can help students with learning disabilities successfully graduate from high school.

The research survey can be completed in approximately 15 minutes. Our principal, [redacted], has given permission for the RSP students in your 3rd or 4th period class to complete the survey during the Sustained Silent Reading time period.

The data collection procedure is as follows. I will give you a packet for each student containing (1) an introductory letter (2) the student’s transcript with the number of completed credits circled, (3) the RSP Survey, and (4) an alternate article about success. In addition, you and your instructional associate will be given a copy of the survey in English, and a copy in Spanish, for both of you to use during the survey administration.

Instructions will be as follows. First, please read the introductory letter out loud to the students. Second, ask students if there is anyone who does not wish to participate in the study. Please inform those students that their alternate activity is to read the article on success. Third, have the survey participants use their transcript to write in the number of credits they have earned in the “Here are a few questions about you” section on page 3 of the RSP Survey. Fourth, instruct your students to complete the survey. Read the questions to them as they complete the survey. Please refer to the Spanish version of the survey to answer any questions your English Language Learner students may have. Last, when students have completed the survey, please collect surveys. Please collect transcripts separately. Students are to keep their introductory letter.

The parents of the students in your classroom have been sent a letter explaining the purpose of the study and that their teenager is being asked to participate. Parents have been asked to return the letter only if they do not give permission for their teenager to participate.

Student participation in the research is voluntary, that is, a student may initially refuse or withdraw from the study at any point. Students who turn in their survey are providing their consent, which is in compliance with the American
Psychological Association (2002) ethical guidelines. Participants remain anonymous because there will be no identifying information on individual surveys.

No direct benefits are provided to the students who participate in this study. It is anticipated that indirect benefits may result from your experience of serving as a research volunteer and from information gained about how students with learning disabilities can be successful in high school.

You will be provided a summary of the survey findings. No costs or expenses will be incurred by you or by the students who participate in this study. Participants will not receive payment or reimbursement for volunteering in this study.

I greatly appreciate your willingness to allow the students in your classroom to participate in this study, as well as your willingness to administer the survey to your students.

I can be reached at [redacted] if you have questions about the study.

If you agree to allow me access to your students please sign below and return one copy to me in the enclosed envelope.

Thank you!

[redacted]

Special Educator’s Signature     Date
APPENDIX B

PARENTAL CONSENT FOR RESEARCH

PARTICIPATION LETTER

ENGLISH
PARENTAL CONSENT FOR RESEARCH PARTICIPATION

Purpose and Background

Karen McGee, doctoral student at the University of San Francisco, is doing a study on what helps students who have learning disabilities be successful in high school. Schools know of many ways to help students reach their goal of high-school graduation, but there is little information available about how to help students who have learning disabilities become as successful as their classmates who do not have learning disabilities. My teenager is being asked to participate in this research because he or she has a learning disability, and is enrolled in the Resource Specialist Program (RSP) at Woodside High School.

Procedures

If I agree to allow my teenager to be in this study, the following will happen:

1. My teenager will complete a questionnaire about what helps him or her make successful progress toward high-school graduation.
2. This questionnaire will take approximately 15 minutes to complete.
3. This questionnaire will be given in at the beginning of the RSP class period during the time usually reserved for Sustained Silent Reading.
4. No additional time will be taken out of the RSP class period for completion of the questionnaire.
5. I understand that students will participate on a voluntary basis, and there will be no penalty for not participating. Teenagers who elect not to participate in the study will be given an article to read on success.

Risks and/or Discomforts

1. It is unlikely that any of the items on the questionnaire will make the students feel uncomfortable, but they are free to decline to answer any question.

2. Participation in research may mean a loss of confidentiality. Study records will be kept as confidential as possible. No individual identities will be used in any reports or publications resulting from the study. Study information will be kept in a locked file at all times. Only the researcher will have access to the file.

Benefits

There will be no direct benefit to me or to my teenager from participating in this study. My teenager may later benefit from this study because teachers will gain a better understanding of what helps teenagers with learning disabilities make successful progress towards high school graduation.
Costs/Financial Considerations

There will be no costs to me or to my teenager as a result of taking part in this study.

Payment/Reimbursement

Neither my teenager nor I will be reimbursed for participation in this study.

Questions

If I have questions or comments about this study I should first talk with the study researcher, [redacted].

Consent

PARTICIPATION IN RESEARCH IS VOLUNTARY. I am free to decline to have my teenager be in this study. My decision as to whether or not to have my teenager participate in this study will have no influence on my teenager's present or future grades at [redacted].

I agree to allow my teenager to participate in this study.

Sign below and return in the envelope provided ONLY if you DO NOT want your teenager to complete the study questionnaire.

NO, I do not want my teenager to complete the study questionnaire.

_________________________________       ___________ _______
Signature of Subject’s Parent/Guardian          Date of Signature

Thank you!

Karen McGee
Woodside High School
650-367-9750 ext.4348
APPENDIX C

PARENTAL CONSENT FOR RESEARCH

PARTICIPATION LETTER

SPANISH
CONSENTIMIENTO DE LOS PADRES PARA LA PARTICIPACION DE ALUMNOS EN UN ESTUDIO DE INVESTIGACION

Propósito y Antecedentes

La Sra. [blank], estudiante de doctorado de la Universidad de San Francisco, está haciendo un estudio sobre qué ayuda a estudiantes con descapacidades de aprendizaje a tener éxito en la escuela secundaria. Las escuelas conocen muchas maneras de ayudar a los estudiantes a conseguir su meta de graduarse de la escuela secundaria, pero hay muy poca información disponible sobre cómo ayudar a alumnos con descapacidades de aprendizaje a ser tan exitosos como sus compañeros que no tienen descapacidades de aprendizaje. A mi hijo/a adolescente se le ofrece la oportunidad de participar en este estudio de investigación porque él o ella tiene una descapacidad de aprendizaje, y está matriculado/a en el Programa de Recursos Especializados (Resource Specialist Program o RSP) de [blank] Woodside High School.

Procedimientos

Si estoy de acuerdo en permitir que mi adolescente participe en este estudio, pasará lo siguiente:

1. Mi adolescente completará un cuestionario sobre lo que le ayuda a hacer exitosos progresos orientados a completar su graduación de la escuela secundaria.
2. Este cuestionario le llevará aproximadamente 15 minutos para completarlo.
3. Este cuestionario se le entregará al principio de la clase de RSP durante el tiempo reservado para Lectura Silenciosa.
4. Ningún otro tiempo adicional se ocupará de la clase de RSP para completar el cuestionario.
5. Entiendo que los alumnos participarán voluntariamente y que no habrá penalidades por no participar. Los alumnos que elijan no participar recibirán un artículo sobre éxito escolar para leer mientras los otros alumnos completan el cuestionario.

Riesgos y/o Molestias

1. Es improbable que algunos de los temas en el cuestionario hagan sentir incómodos a los alumnos, pero todos tendrán la libertad de declinar contestar cualquier pregunta.
2. La participación en la investigación podría significar falta de confidencialidad. Los resultados del estudio se tratarán con la mayor confidencialidad posible. La identidad de ningún individuo será usada en ningún informe o publicación resultante del estudio. La información del estudio estará guardada en archivos bajo llave en todo momento. Solamente el investigador tendrá acceso al archivo.

Beneficios
No habrá beneficios directos para mí ni para mi hijo adolescente por la participación en este estudio. Mi hijo/a podrá tal vez beneficiarse en el futuro porque sus maestros obtendrán un mayor entendimiento de lo que ayuda a los alumnos con discapacidades de aprendizaje a hacer progresos exitosos para completar su graduación de la escuela secundaria.

Costos/ Consideraciones Financieras
No habrá costo alguno ni para mí ni para mi hijo como resultado de participar en este estudio.

Pago/ Reembolso
Ni mi hijo/a ni yo recibiremos reembolso económico por participar en este estudio.

Preguntas
Si tengo preguntas o comentarios sobre este estudio, hablaré primero con la investigadora principal de este estudio, Karen McGee, al teléfono (650) 367-9750 ext, 4348.

Consentimiento
LA PARTICIPACION EN LA INVESTIGACION ES VOLUNTARIA. Tengo la libertad de negarme que mi hijo/a sea parte de este estudio. Mi decisión de permitir o no que mi hijo/a participe de este estudio no tendrá ninguna influencia en las calificaciones presentes o futuras de mi hijo/a en la Escuela Secundaria Woodside.

Estoy de acuerdo en permitir que mi hijo/hija participe de este estudio.

Firme abajo y revuelva esta forma en el sobre que se provee SOLO si usted NO DESEA que su hijo/a complete el cuestionario del estudio.

NO, No deseo que mi hijo/a complete el cuestionario del estudio.

__________________________________                 __________________________
Firma del Padre o Guardián Legal   Fecha de la Firma

Muchas gracias!

Karen McGee
Woodside High School
(650) 367-9750 ext. 4348
APPENDIX D

PARENT LETTER AND RSP SURVEY

SPANISH TRANSLATION

CERTIFICATION
SPANISH TRANSLATION

CERTIFICATION LETTER

Institutional Review Board for the Protection of Human Subjects
University of San Francisco
2130 Fulton Street
San Francisco, CA. 94117

Dear Members of the Committee,

I am a bilingual teacher, and my first language is Spanish. I have taught Spanish to high-school students with disabilities for the past 24 years. I have provided translation services for Woodside High School for the past 24 years. I have translated numerous types of documents, for the benefit of staff, parents, and students. Many of the documents I translated were special education Individual Education Plans.

This letter is to certify that I have translated the parent information letter and the RSP Survey documents in research study. The translations are accurate and reflect the phraseology most commonly understood by Spanish Speakers on the Peninsula in the San Francisco Bay area.

The reading level of the documents is between 4th and 6th grade. This reading level is suitable for the students who are enrolled in the Resource Specialist Program classes at Woodside High School. This reading level is suitable for most Spanish-speaking parents whose teenagers attend Woodside High School.

If you have questions or concerns please feel free to contact me at Woodside High School: (650) 365-9760 ext. 4082.

Sincerely,

Susana Ruspini
Woodside High School
(650) 367-9750 ext. 4082
sruspini@seq.org
RESEARCH SURVEY

You are being asked to fill out this survey so that your school can gain a better understanding of what it’s like to have RSP support in high school. Your school is interested in how you feel about getting RSP support. We also want to know what can be done to improve your experience as an RSP student. We want to know how to help you be a successful student.

Survey Directions:

- All of your answers are CONFIDENTIAL. Do NOT write your name on any page of this survey.

- This survey will take about 15 minutes to complete.

- Part One asks about what you believe about yourself.

- Part Two asks about your RSP teacher.

- Part Three asks about your parents.

- Part Four asks about your racial identity.

- Part Five asks what you do outside of the classroom.

- Please be as honest as you can when you answer the survey questions. Remember, all of your answers are CONFIDENTIAL

Thank you in advance for sharing your ideas about RSP support and your success as a student.
Here are a few questions about you.
(Check one)

Your grade: ___9th ____10th ____11th ____12th
You are: ___male ______female
Your age: ____14 ___15 ____16 ____17 ____18 ____19

___The number of credits you have earned toward graduation.
Part One:

These questions ask what is true about your classes. For each question, circle the choice that is true for you.

Believing in Me

1. I can do my work correctly in my classes.
   (a) Never   (b) Sometimes   (c) Often   (d) Almost Always

2. I can do as well as most kids in my classes.
   (a)   (b)   (c)   (d)

3. I can help other kids understand the work in my classes.
   (a)   (b)   (c)   (d)

4. I can be a very good student in my classes.
   (a)   (b)   (c)   (d)

5. I can do the hard work in my classes.
   (a)   (b)   (c)   (d)

6. I can get good grades when I try hard in my classes.
   (a)   (b)   (c)   (d)

7. I know that I will learn what is taught in my classes.
   (a)   (b)   (c)   (d)

8. I expect to do very well when I work hard in my classes.
   (a)   (b)   (c)   (d)

What I Think

9. You have a certain amount of intelligence, and you really can’t do much to change it.
   (1) strongly disagree  (2) disagree  (3) mostly disagree  (4) mostly agree  (5) agree  (6) strongly agree

10. Your intelligence is something about you that you can’t change very much.
    (1)   (2)   (3)   (4)   (5)   (6)

11. You can learn new things, but you really can’t change your basic intelligence.
    (1)   (2)   (3)   (4)   (5)   (6)
Part Two:

My Teacher

12. My RSP teacher listens carefully to me when I talk.
   (a) Never      (b) Sometimes       (c) Often          (d) Almost Always
13. My RSP teacher helps me when I need help.
   (a)          (b)          (c)          (d)          
14. My RSP teacher respects me.
   (a)          (b)          (c)          (d)          
15. My RSP teacher likes having me in this class.
   (a)          (b)          (c)          (d)          
16. My RSP teacher makes it fun to be in this class.
   (a)          (b)          (c)          (d)          
17. My RSP teacher thinks I do a good job in this class.
   (a)          (b)          (c)          (d)          
18. My RSP teacher is fair to me.
   (a)          (b)          (c)          (d)          

Taking Charge

19. I want to know more about the things we learn in my classes.
   (a) Never      (b) Sometimes       (c) Often          (d) Almost Always
20. In my classes, I can guess what my grade will be when I turn in my work.
   (a)          (b)          (c)          (d)          
21. I work as hard as I can in my classes.
   (a)          (b)          (c)          (d)          
22. I find and fix my mistakes before turning in my work.
   (a)          (b)          (c)          (d)          
23. I learn because I want to and not just because the teachers tell me to.
   (a)          (b)          (c)          (d)          
24. When the work is hard in my classes, I keep trying until I figure it out.
   (a)          (b)          (c)          (d)          
25. I know the things I learn in my classes will help me outside of school.
   (a)          (b)          (c)          (d)          
26. I can tell when I make a mistake on my work in my classes.
   (a)          (b)          (c)          (d)          
Part Three:

Talking With My Parents

27. My parents and I talk about my grades in my classes.

   (a) Never   (b) Sometimes   (c) Often   (d) Almost Always

28. My parents and I talk about what I am learning in my classes.

   (a) (b) (c) (d)

29. My parents and I talk about my homework in my classes.

   (a) (b) (c) (d)

30. My parents help me with homework when I need it.

   (a) (b) (c) (d)

31. My parents and I talk about ways that I can do well in school.

   (a) (b) (c) (d)

32. My parents and I talk about the good things I have done in my classes.

   (a) (b) (c) (d)

33. My parents and I talk about the problems I have in my classes.

   (a) (b) (c) (d)
Part Four:

Who I Am

There are many ways to describe the different countries, cultures, backgrounds or ethnic groups that people come from. Some examples of the names of ethnic groups are Hispanic or Latino, Black or African American, Asian American, Chinese, Filipino, Indian American, Mexican American, Polynesian or Pacific Islander, Caucasian or White, Italian American, and many others. These questions are about your ethnicity or your ethnic group and how you feel about it or react to it.

Please fill in: In terms of ethnic group, I consider myself to be ________________

Circle the letters below to show how much you agree or disagree with each sentence.

1. I have spent time trying to find out more about my ethnic group, such as its history, traditions, and customs.
   (a) Strongly disagree  (b) Disagree  (c) Agree  (d) Strongly Agree

2. I am active in organizations or social groups that include mostly members of my own ethnic group.
   (a) (b) (c) (d)

3. I have a clear sense of my ethnic background and what it means for me.
   (a) (b) (c) (d)

4. I think a lot about how my life will be affected by my ethnic group membership.
   (a) (b) (c) (d)

5. I am happy that I am a member of the group I belong to.
   (a) (b) (c) (d)

6. I have a strong sense of belonging to my own ethnic group.
   (a) (b) (c) (d)

7. I understand pretty well what my ethnic membership means to me.
   (a) (b) (c) (d)

8. In order to learn more about my ethnic background, I have often talked to other people about my ethnic group.
   (a) (b) (c) (d)

9. I have a lot of pride in my ethnic group.
   (a) (b) (c) (d)

10. I participate in cultural practices of my own group, such as special food, music or customs.
    (a) (b) (c) (d)

11. I feel a strong attachment towards my own ethnic group.
    (a) (b) (c) (d)

12. I feel good about my cultural or ethnic background.
    (a) (b) (c) (d)
13. My ethnicity is: (circle one)
   (1) Asian or Asian American, including Chinese, Japanese, and others
   (2) Black or African American
   (3) Hispanic or Latino, including Mexican American, Central American, and others
   (4) White, Caucasian, Anglo, European American; not Hispanic.
   (5) Polynesian or Pacific Islander, including Tongan, Samoan and others.
   (6) American Indian, Native American
   (7) Mixed: Parents are from two or more different groups.
   (8) Other (write in): ________________________________

14. My father’s ethnicity is (use numbers above) ______

15. My mother’s ethnicity is (use numbers above) ______

I have a learning disability ____yes ____no

This is how I learn differently.

I______________________________
___

______________________________
___

______________________________
___

______________________________
___

______________________________
___.
Part Four: Your Activities Outside of Your Classroom

Please place an “X” on the number of hours that apply to you.

I go to church.

__0 to 3 hours/week   __4-6 hours/week __7-10 hours/week ___11 or more hours/week

I play a sport.

__0 to 3 hours/week   __4-6 hours/week __7-10 hours/week ___11 or more hours/week

I have a job.

__0 to 3 hours/week   __4-6 hours/week __7-10 hours/week ___11 or more hours/week

Thank you!
APPENDIX F

RSP SURVEY

SPANISH
ESTUDIO DE INVESTIGACION

Le pedimos que llene este inventario para que su escuela gane conocimiento sobre cómo es recibir soporte de RSP en la escuela secundaria. Su escuela está interesada en conocer cómo se siente sobre recibir soporte de RSP. También queremos saber que puede hacerse para mejorar su experiencia como alumno de RSP. Queremos aprender cómo ayudarlo a ser un estudiante exitoso.

INSTRUCCIONES PARA LLENAR EL INVENTARIO:

- Todas sus respuestas son CONFIDENCIALES. NO escriba su nombre en ninguna página de este inventario.
- Este inventario le llevará aproximadamente 15 minutos para completarlo.
- En la primera parte las preguntas se refieren a lo que usted cree de sí mismo.
- En la segunda parte, las preguntas son sobre su maestro de RSP.
- En la tercera parte, las preguntas son sobre sus padres.
- En la cuarta parte las preguntas son sobre su identidad racial.
- En la quinta parte se le pregunta sobre sus actividades fuera de la clase.
- Por favor sea tan honesto como pueda cuando conteste las preguntas. Recuerde que todas sus respuestas son CONFIDENCIALES.

Muchas gracias, por adelantado, por compartir con nosotros sus ideas sobre el soporte o la ayuda de RSP y su éxito como estudiante.
Cuestionario para el Alumno de RSP

INSTRUCCIONES: ESTE CUESTIONARIO TE PREGUNTARA SOBRE COSAS QUE SON CIERTAS EN TU VIDA, EN TU CLASE DE RSP, EN TU RELACION CON TUS PADRES Y EN TUS ACTIVIDADES. PARA CADA PREGUNTA, DIBUJA UN CIRCULO ALREDEDOR DE LA RESPUESTA QUE SEA MAS APROPIADA PARA TI. NO ESCRIBAS TU NOMBRE EN EL PAPEL. NADIE SABRA CUALES SON TUS RESPUESTAS.

Aquí hay algunas preguntas relacionadas contigo:

Soy un:  □ Chico   □ Chica  Estoy en el ______ grado  Tengo:______años

Escribe el número de créditos que has obtenido ya para tu graduación: _______

Primera Parte:
Estas preguntas son sobre lo que es realidad con respecto a tus clases.

Creyendo en mi

1. Puedo hacer mi trabajo correctamente en esta clase.
   NUNCA  ALGUNAS VECES  A MENUDO  CASI SIEMPRE

2. Puedo trabajar igual de bien que el resto de los estudiantes en esta clase.
   NUNCA  ALGUNAS VECES  A MENUDO  CASI SIEMPRE

3. Puedo ayudar a otros en esta clase a entender el trabajo.
   NUNCA  ALGUNAS VECES  A MENUDO  CASI SIEMPRE

4. Puedo ser un muy buen estudiante en esta clase.
   NUNCA  ALGUNAS VECES  A MENUDO  CASI SIEMPRE

5. Puedo hacer el trabajo dificil en esta clase.
   NUNCA  ALGUNAS VECES  A MENUDO  CASI SIEMPRE

6. Puedo obtener buenas notas cuando me esfuerzo en la clase.
   NUNCA  ALGUNAS VECES  A MENUDO  CASI SIEMPRE

7. Se que aprenderé lo que se enseña en clase.
   NUNCA  ALGUNAS VECES  A MENUDO  CASI SIEMPRE

8. Espero trabajar muy bien en esta clase.
   NUNCA  ALGUNAS VECES  A MENUDO  CASI SIEMPRE
Lo que pienso

(1) Estoy muy en desacuerdo (2) Estoy en desacuerdo (3) Estoy de acuerdo (4) Estoy muy en acuerdo

9. Usted tiene una cierta cantidad de inteligencia y realmente no puede hacer mucho para cambiar.
   1  2  3  4

10. Su inteligencia es algo sobre lo cual no se puede cambiar mucho.
    1  2  3  4

11. Usted puede aprender cosas nuevas pero realmente no puede cambiar su inteligencia básica.
    1  2  3  4

Segunda Parte

Mi Maestro(a) de RSP

12. Mi maestro(a) de RSP escucha cuidadosamente cuando yo hablo.
    NUNCA  ALGUNAS VECES  A MENUDO  CASI SIEMPRE

13. Mi maestro(a) de RSP me ayuda cuando necesito ayuda.
    NUNCA  ALGUNAS VECES  A MENUDO  CASI SIEMPRE

14. Mi maestro(a) de RSP me respeta.
    NUNCA  ALGUNAS VECES  A MENUDO  CASI SIEMPRE

15. A mi maestro(a) de RSP le gusta tenerme en esta clase.
    NUNCA  ALGUNAS VECES  A MENUDO  CASI SIEMPRE

16. Mi maestro(a) de RSP hace estar en clase divertido.
    NUNCA  ALGUNAS VECES  A MENUDO  CASI SIEMPRE

17. Mi maestro(a) de RSP piensa que yo hago un buen trabajo en esta clase.
    NUNCA  ALGUNAS VECES  A MENUDO  CASI SIEMPRE

18. Mi maestro(a) de RSP es justo(a) conmigo.
    NUNCA  ALGUNAS VECES  A MENUDO  CASI SIEMPRE

Haciéndose Cargo

19. Quiero saber más sobre las cosas que aprendemos en esta clase.
    NUNCA  ALGUNAS VECES  A MENUDO  CASI SIEMPRE

20. En esta clase, puedo saber cual va a ser mi nota cuando entrego mi trabajo.
    NUNCA  ALGUNAS VECES  A MENUDO  CASI SIEMPRE

21. Trabajo lo mas duro que puedo en esta clase.
    NUNCA  ALGUNAS VECES  A MENUDO  CASI SIEMPRE

22. Encuentro y arreglo errores antes de entregar mi trabajo.
    NUNCA  ALGUNAS VECES  A MENUDO  CASI SIEMPRE
23. Aprendo porque quiero y no solo porque el profesor me dice que lo haga.
   NUNCA  ALGUNAS VECES  A MENUDO  CASI SIEMPRE
24. Cuando el trabajo es difícil, sigo tratando hasta que lo entiendo.
   NUNCA  ALGUNAS VECES  A MENUDO  CASI SIEMPRE
25. Se que las cosas que aprendo en esta clase me ayudaran afuera de la escuela.
   NUNCA  ALGUNAS VECES  A MENUDO  CASI SIEMPRE
26. Puedo decir cuando hago un error en mi trabajo en esta clase.
   NUNCA  ALGUNAS VECES  A MENUDO  CASI SIEMPRE

Siguiendo las reglas de la clase
27. La mayoría de chicos (as) trabajan de forma silenciosa y tranquila en esta clase.
   NUNCA  ALGUNAS VECES  A MENUDO  CASI SIEMPRE
28. La mayoría de chicos(as) escuchan cuidadosamente cuando el maestro(a) da instrucciones.
   NUNCA  ALGUNAS VECES  A MENUDO  CASI SIEMPRE
29. La mayoría de chicos (as) siguen las reglas en esta clase.
   NUNCA  ALGUNAS VECES  A MENUDO  CASI SIEMPRE
30. La mayoría de chicos (as) prestan atención cuando es requerido en esta clase.
   NUNCA  ALGUNAS VECES  A MENUDO  CASI SIEMPRE
31. La mayoría de chicos (as) hacen su trabajo cuando suponen hacerlo en esta clase.
   NUNCA  ALGUNAS VECES  A MENUDO  CASI SIEMPRE
32. La mayoría de chicos(as) en esta clase se comportan cuando el maestro(a) no esta mirando.
   NUNCA  ALGUNAS VECES  A MENUDO  CASI SIEMPRE

Tercera Parte
Hablando con mis Padres
33. Mis padres y yo hablamos sobre mis notas en esta clase.
   NUNCA  ALGUNAS VECES  A MENUDO  CASI SIEMPRE
34. Mis padres y yo hablamos sobre lo que aprendo en esta clase.
   NUNCA  ALGUNAS VECES  A MENUDO  CASI SIEMPRE
35. Mis padres y yo hablamos sobre mis tareas en esta clase.
   NUNCA  ALGUNAS VECES  A MENUDO  CASI SIEMPRE
36. Mis padres ayudan con mi tarea cuando lo necesito.
   NUNCA  ALGUNAS VECES  A MENUDO  CASI SIEMPRE
37. Mis padres y yo hablamos sobre maneras en que puedo salir bien en la escuela.
   NUNCA  ALGUNAS VECES  A MENUDO  CASI SIEMPRE
38. Mis padres y yo hablamos sobre cosas buenas que he hecho en esta clase.
   NUNCA  ALGUNAS VECES  A MENUDO  CASI SIEMPRE
39. Mis padres y yo hablamos sobre problemas que tengo en esta clase.

<p>| | | | |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>NUNCA</td>
<td>ALGUNAS VECES</td>
<td>A MENUDO</td>
<td>CASI SIEMPRE</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Cuarta Parte

Quién soy yo?
En este país, la gente ha venido de países y culturas diferentes, y hay muchas palabras diferentes para definir raíces o grupos étnicos de donde viene la gente. Algunos ejemplos de nombres de grupos étnicos son hispanos o latinos, negros o africanos americanos, asiáticos americanos, chinos, filipinos, indios americanos, mejicanos americanos, polinesios, o de las islas del Pacífico Sur, caucasiocos o blancos, italianos americanos, y muchos otros. Estas preguntas son sobre su etnicidad o grupo étnico y como se siente usted o como reacciona a ello.

Por favor llene: En término de grupo étnico, yo me considero ser _________________________.

Circule la letra que muestra cuan de acuerdo o desacuerdo está usted con cada manifestación:

(A) Estoy muy en desacuerdo   (B) Estoy en desacuerdo  (C) Estoy de acuerdo  (D) Estoy muy de acuerdo

1  He usado tiempo tratando de encontrar más detalles sobre mi grupo étnico, como por ejemplo su historia, tradiciones, y costumbres.
   A  B  C  D

2  Soy una persona activa en organizaciones o grupos sociales que incluyes en la mayor parte, miembros de mi propio grupo étnico.
   A  B  C  D

3  Tengo un sentido claro de mis raíces étnicas y lo que eso significa para mí,
   A  B  C  D

4  Pienso mucho sobre cómo mi vida será afectada por mi asociación con mi grupo étnico.
   A  B  C  D

5  Estoy contento de ser un miembro del grupo al que pertenezco
   A  B  C  D

6  Tengo un sentido muy profundo de pertenencia a mi propio grupo étnico.
   A  B  C  D

7  Entiendo bastante bien lo que significa para mí mi grupo étnico.
   A  B  C  D

8  Con el propósito de aprender más sobre las raíces de mi grupo étnico, a menudo he hablado con gente sobre mi grupo étnico.
   A  B  C  D

9  Tengo mucho orgullo en mi grupo étnico.
   A  B  C  D

10 Participo en practices culturales de mi propio grupo, tales como comidas especiales, música y tradiciones.
    A  B  C  D
11 Siento un fuerte cariño hacia mi propio grupo étnico.
A  B   C  D

12 Me siento muy bien sobre mis raíces culturales y étnicas.
A  B   C  D

13 Mi etnicidad es: (circule uno)

(1) Asiático o Asiático Americano, incluyendo Chino, Japonés, y otros
(2) Negro o Africano Americano
(3) Hispánico o Latino, incluyendo Mejicano Americano, Centro Americano y otros
(4) Blanco, Caucasiano, Europeo Americano; no Hispánico
(5) Polinesio o de las Islas del Pacífico Sur, incluyendo Tonga, Samoa y otros
(6) Indio Americano o Nativo Americano
(7) Mezcla: Los padres pertenecen a dos o más grupos diferentes
(8) Otro (escríbalo)

14 La etnicidad de mi padre es (use los números de arriba)____________________

15 La etnicidad de mi madre es (use los números de arriba)____________________

Tengo una descapacidad de aprendizaje_______sí_________no

Así es como aprendo diferente:

Yo_________________________________________________ ________
___________________________________________________ _________
__________________

Quinta Parte: Sus Actividades fuera de la Clase

Por favor marque con una “X” el número de horas que son adecuadas para usted

Voy a la iglesia.

_____0 a 3 horas/semana ____4-6 horas/semana ____7-10 horas/semana_____11 o más

Juego un deporte.
Tengo un trabajo.

PARE
MUCHAS GRACIAS
APPENDIX G

STUDENT

RESEARCH PARTICIPATION COVER LETTER
Dear Student:

I am conducting a study of what helps students in the Resource Specialist Program be successful. This study is towards the completion of my doctoral studies in the School of Education Learning and Instruction Program at the University of San Francisco. Your involvement in this study will help educators learn more about how students in RSP can be successful in high school.

Your participation in this study is voluntary. If you choose to participate, please complete the survey handed to you by your RSP teacher. If you choose not to participate, there is an alternate activity for you to do.

The survey will take approximately 15 minutes to complete. The survey will be administered during Sustained Silent Reading so that no time will be taken out of your RSP class period.

You are consenting to serve as a volunteer in this study by completing the survey and turning it in to your RSP teacher at the end of the Sustained Silent Reading period. Your RSP teacher will read the survey questions to you. If you are an English Language Learner and you have questions, your RSP teacher or your instructional associate can translate for you. Your decision to complete the survey will in no way affect your grade in the RSP class.

Your anonymity is assured because none of the information obtained in the survey can be used to identify you. No one will know which survey belongs to you. Potential risks to you as a participant have been minimized. You may withdraw at any time of the study.

There is no direct benefit to you for participating in this study however an indirect benefit is that your participation will help teachers learn more about how to help you be successful in school.

If you have questions you or your parents may contact Karen McGee at (650) 367-9750 extension 4348, or at kmcgee@seq.org.

This form is yours to keep.

Thank you,

Karen McGee
APPENDIX H

TEACHER INSTRUCTIONS

FOR ADMINISTRATION OF THE RSP SURVEY
INSTRUCTIONS FOR ADMINISTRATION OF THE RSP SURVEY

To Resource Specialist Program Teachers and Instructional Associates: Listed below are instructions for administering the RSP survey.

1. Hand each RSP student a packet. The packet contains the student’s school transcript, the introductory letter for students, the RSP Survey, the alternate article on success, and an envelope.

2. Direct the students to follow along while the teacher reads the introductory letter to the class.

3. Inform the students whose parent has returned the letter stating that permission is not given for their teenager to complete the survey that their alternate activity is to read the article on success.

4. Ask if there is any student who does not want to participate in the study. Inform any student who does not want to participate that their alternate activity is to read the article on success.

5. Direct the students to turn to page two of the survey. The teacher reads page two while the students follow along.

6. Inform the students that if translation is needed the teacher or the instructional associate is available to provide the translation.

7. Instruct the students to turn to page 3 of the survey.

8. Instruct the students to write in the number of credits they have earned in the “Here are a few questions about you” section on page three.

9. Instruct the students to complete the survey. The teacher reads each question aloud as the students are filling out the survey.

10. The teacher and the instructional associate walk around the class and help any student who needs clarification.

11. Instruct students to raise their hand when they have completed the survey.

12. Instruct students to place their completed surveys in the envelope provided. Students who did not complete the survey also are instructed to give their envelopes to the teacher.

13. Students keep the introductory letter and the success article.
APPENDIX I

SHORT-ANSWER RESPONSES TO HOW I LEARN DIFFERENTLY
LEARNING DISABILITY QUESTION
Themes of successful and unsuccessful responses to “I have a learning disability (yes, no)” and for responses to “This is how I learn differently.”

“Yes” Responses for Successful Respondents

Theme: specific educational strategies

Yes. I like to use my hands or see a visual thing and to practice a lot.
Yes. I like to ask questions about the books we read in the class.
Yes. I need quite, lots of time, to work I need things to be explained to me.
Yes. I have no special ways of doing my work, when I get home I do my homework and in class I just listen to my teachers and take thorough notes so when I get home I have no questions.
Yes. I have my teacher repeat things to me.
Yes. I learning more disability weat they speaking like two times the same think.
Yes. I confused the D with B. I still do at times.
Yes. I have the teacher explain it to me in a different way or with pictures, since I’m a visual learner.
Yes. I need more help when I’m reading. For example, I need someone to read the book for me sometimes to understand it better.
Yes. I work in quiet places for test and trying not to procrastinate on long term projects.
Yes. I learn by seeing the way things work.
Yes. I learned differently when I understand over the work. But it sometimes confusing over. It’s hard and By I understand By talking in group in class to understand the work.
Yes. I learn more when they explaining two times each think.
Yes. I take more time taking test. Need teachers to re-read problems on test. Someone to read out loud to me.
Yes. I learn differently by needing more time to do math work and sometimes to write a paper and I need to use a calculator for math.
Yes. I can learn better if lessons are more hands on and visual. I have a photo-memory.

Theme: a general need for help from the teacher

Yes. I learn that I know how I have RSP it helps me because if I need help I could get time to make up or do test with another teacher so they could help me.
Yes. I learn differently is by doing work and trying hard in my classes. I learn differently by listening more carefully to my teachers since I wear hearing aids.

Theme: student attitude toward schoolwork

Yes. I learn by catching my attention, no I don really.
Yes. I learn by being willing to learn the subject and it hast to interest me.
Theme: further explanation of the student’s learning disability

Yes. I learn differently because I am a slow learner.
Yes. I have dyslexia.
Yes. Dyslexia.
Yes. I don’t understand as clearly as the smarter students.
Yes. I do not write efficiently when not on a computer, and have Dyslexia, ADD.
I don’t know. Most things don’t stick to my brain.
Yes. Unorganized thoughts.
Yes. I get distracted very easily.
Yes. I can’t understand something when I read. My teacher has to explain it carefully and I get distracted easily. But I feel I have done better at it.

“No” Responses for Successful Students.

No. I learn differently because sometimes don’t understand things right away
No. I need to study for test when they give me one
No. I don’t believe there is such a thing because in that case everyone in the world has a learning disability. We are all different that’s what makes the world what it is; a vast land of different people.
No. I like being active with materials rather than listen to a lecture.
No. I have no clew.
No. I don’t think I learn any differently from other people. I only need a little bit of extra help in Algebra because that’s my weak subject. I don’t appreciate people saying I have a learning disability because I don’t.
No answer. I don’t think I learn differently it sometimes takes me more time to learn something.
No. I don’t learn differently. All I know is study the certain subject, looking up info and that’s about it. I don’t believe I have a learning disability so give me a break.

“Yes” Responses for Unsuccessful Respondents

Theme: specific educational strategies

Yes. I think listening to books on tape help me read because it helps me stay on track.
Yes. I look, hear and write things for me to understand and I also need someone to explain it well differently to me.

Theme: a general need for help from the teacher

Yes. I learned differently by doing my work and I pay attention to the teacher. And asking for support.
Yes. I learn differently when the teacher tells me what I learn. I have to take notes of the work.
Theme: student attitude toward schoolwork

None

Theme: further explanation of the student’s learning disability

Yes. I am a slow learner but I get help and they explain it to me more than once I start to get the work.
Yes. I am often a very good listener when spoken to and I sometimes get confused when the teacher goes through the session that we are learning to quickly.
Yes. I sometimes learn better when I listed the things but I like better when I see the things and listen it.

“No” Responses for Unsuccessful Students

No. I read to myself and I sometimes ask questions depending on how comfortable I am with my surroundings and with the person that is teaching the lesson.
No. No written answer.
APPENDIX J

PERMISSION FOR USE OF SURVEY QUESTIONS
Permission for Use of Survey Questions

Karen:
Congratulations. Yes, you have my permission to include a copy of the ClassMaps Survey in your appendices - just footnote it ‘with permission of the author’ and you can keep this email as your documentation in the event that the Graduate College were to ask for it - ours would ask. I deliberately hung onto the copyright for the ClassMaps when I've published the different sources, for just this occasion. And yes, I'd love a copy of the dissertation. Electronically would be ok - I know how expensive copy costs can be.

Beth Doll
Professor and Director, School Psychology Program
University of Nebraska Lincoln
228 Teachers College Hall
Lincoln, NE 68588-0345
PH 402 472 2238
FAX 402 472 8319

Dear Karen,
You most certainly have my permission to include the three items from my scale as part of your appendixes. I would be delighted to receive a copy of your dissertation. Just send it to me at:

Department of Psychology
Stanford University
Jordan Hall, Bldg. 420
Stanford, CA 94305

Happy holidays!

Sincerely,
Carol Dweck
Dear Karen,

You have my permission to include the MEIM in your dissertation. All that is necessary is to cite your source for the MEIM in the method section and give the complete reference in the reference list (i.e., the original 1992 article, or the revision in the 1999 article).

Regards,
Jean Phinney