How Families and Schools Together (FAST) Shape Career Development, Reading, and Behavior of African American Elementary Students

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ABSTRACT

It is vital that students develop the skills necessary to compete in today's global economy. Career education, as a joint venture between home and school, is in its infancy. Schools are exploring the potential to enhance career awareness. How to tap the full potential of the family, community, and the school in a collaborative learning environment and what critical factors affect career development are issues that need to be addressed. However, there has been little research conducted thus far on family and school collaborative programs, or how families can enhance career awareness at the elementary level.

As interaction is seen as the core of improving the quality of family cohesion, one program, Families and Schools Together (FAST) strives to promote and facilitate family bonding. This quantitative study explored how parents vary in their approach to career awareness, career development and career education with their elementary age children. Questionnaires, reading levels, and discipline referrals were the major sources of data. The research explored the participants' perspectives and attitudes toward career education. The results are consistent with theories supporting family cohesion to reduce violence, increase resiliency and foster academic success. This study adds to the literature regarding the influence of families on career development and possibly provides a foundation for future studies in the realm of elementary career education.

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Wisdom is the principal thing, therefore get wisdom: and with all thy getting get understanding. Proverbs 4:7

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Chapter I

INTRODUCTION

In the classic work that contributed to the formation of the field of counseling and what would eventually become school counseling, Frank Parsons (1909), concluded that throughout secondary school, we coddle students and then send them into the world to fend for themselves. The benefits of career guidance are not only evident after school, but also during school. Career guidance assists students in choosing a career, preparing for it and developing and maintaining proficiency. Career guidance also teaches decision-making skills, responsibility and teamwork. Unfortunately, high school students receive minimal career guidance and elementary students are likely to receive even less assistance than secondary students (U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, 2003).

A career is a reflection of an individual's beliefs and, consequently his or her identity (Bardick, Bernes, Magnusson, & Witko, 2005). The careers and career choices of today's students are drastically different from that of their predecessors. The process of choosing a career is a lifelong process, and does not end with the selection of one's first job (Perrone & Perrone, 2000; Perrone, Webb, & Jackson, 2007). For this reason, school counselors' career development curricula should include activities that focus on connecting school to the real world and preparing students to build a satisfying life (Bardick, et al., 2005).

The nature of school counselors' roles, definitions of career development, and range of possible intervention strategies are being transformed as the result of diversity, curriculum changes, technological advances and the global economy. The diverse populations being served in any one school or school district demands more than a one size fits all career development curriculum (Davis & Humphrey, 2000). Considering the student population's diverse make up is just one challenge to developing a career development curriculum (Patton & McMahon, 1999; Savikas & Lent, 1994), traditional career theories are also being reviewed as to their applicability to diverse groups. Specifically, the effect of discrimination's on career development highlights the importance and need for subjective contextual career constructs such as self-efficacy and self-observation (Lent, Brown, & Hackett, 1996).

When school counselors, school personnel, families, and community members work together in their students' education, achieving lifelong success is more plausible (Bardick, et al., 2005). This collaborative effort allows for the implementation of various individual, family, and community supportive and empowering interventions. "Strengths-based partnerships utilize the assets found in schools, families, and communities to create strengths-enhancing environments, promote caring and positive adult-child relationships, strengthen children's social support networks, foster academic success, and empower children with a sense of purpose" (Bryan & Henry, 2008, p. 149). An example of a school-family-community partnership is Families and Schools Together (FAST) (McDonald & Frey, 1999).

Families and Schools Together (FAST) is a school-based program designed to foster and build relationships between schools and families and develop support networks

for families and their children. The program also strives to increase family involvement with children at home and at school. FAST also promotes learning by building students' resiliency, increasing students' focus and establishing a positive interaction between the school and home. The school-family-student partnership that is created is a result of the research-based structured activities of the FAST program (McDonald & Frey, 1999). The highly organized FAST curriculum is outlined to support parent-child interactions, empower parents and guardians and create a network of resources and support systems for families. Working collaboratively as a family unit the families design and create their own unique family flag. The children demonstrate an understanding and acceptance of parental authority when rules are clear. The parents model maintaining focus and persistence until the job is done. School and community team members model respect for the parents and their responsibility for their children.

The FAST program was developed to address the needs of the increasing number of schools with increasing numbers of students in the low achievement category. The program was planned utilizing research that indicates that a strong, positive school-home relationship is helpful in preventing low school-related performance and behavioral problems of lower achieving students (McDonald & Frey, 1999). The program was developed in 1988 by Dr. Lyn McDonald. The FAST program began in the Madison, Wisconsin School District with support from Family Service America, a national organization whose membership includes a large number of community-based counseling and family support agencies. As of 2013 FAST has been implemented in 46 states and 13 countries to include, North America, South America, Asia, Europe and Australia (Families and Schools Together, Inc., 2013). The program can be found in a variety of

socially diverse school settings, and is successful in both urban, inner city school environments and rural school environments. To offer the FAST program, a school must secure two community-based partner agencies, such as a mental health agency and a substance abuse agency, who agree to work with the school and the FAST program. Next, the team, a minimum of one school professional, and one from each of the partner agencies, is identified and trained. Training is provided through the Family Services America National Replication Center, which was established to assist communities offering effective FAST programs. The FAST program consists of eight weekly sessions that occur at the school. Participating children and their families gather at the school to take part in the activities, which include sharing a meal as a family. The families that attend a minimum of six sessions will graduate at the end of the eighth session. After graduating, families participate in FASTWORKS a regularly, scheduled monthly family support meetings with activities like cookouts, sporting events, amusement parks, and a variety of other activities planned to maintain the working social network created between the participating families.

The school principal, with the local site based management team, makes a decision to bring the FAST program to their school. Decisions are made about how students will be invited to participate. The screening process is up to the school and usually involves the teacher or counselor identifying students with behavior and academic issues. Once the students have been identified, parents are informed of the concern with the students' behavior. The parents are then invited to participate in FAST through a friendly home visit by a trained, sensitive, recruiter. To encourage attendance, FAST offers the intangible incentives of respect, social support and fun as well as

tangible incentives such as transportation, a hot meal, and child care for toddlers and infants at no charge to the participating families. In addition, each family member wins a gift sometime during the 8-week session. The number of students and families that can be served during each 8-week FAST cycle depends on the size of the FAST team. Typically, a school has a FAST cycle in the fall and spring, however, a school can sponsor up to four cycles per school year. Families who have graduated from FAST often play important roles in facilitating and coaching subsequent FAST cycles at their students' school. Families gather with the other participating families for eight sessions at the FAST students' school. Meetings follow a structured, uniform agenda that includes standard opening and closing ceremonies, structured family activities, parent mutual support time, and parent-child play therapy. The activities are led by a trained team that includes the parent, the school professional, usually a school social worker, and representatives from the two community agencies. The activities at each session are engaging and exciting and create a family bond (McDonald & Frey, 1999). They include preparing and eating a meal together, designing a family flag, singing, engaging exercises in communication and identifying feelings. The parent-child play therapy, called "Special Play" is at the core of the FAST program. The fifteen minutes of uninterrupted quality time, is for one parent, chosen by the FAST child, to play one-on-one with the child in ways that build the child's self-esteem and enhance family communication (McDonald & Frey, 1999). The parents are instructed to focus on child-initiated play without directing or criticizing. Parents are encouraged to continue "Special Play" between FAST sessions and throughout the child's life. The multi-family sessions also include time for the children to play together while adult family members discuss common interests and

concerns. During this time, the FAST students participate in structured recreational activities to include making gifts for each family member. Parents are also given an opportunity to network and gather information for themselves to help each other discover solutions to parenting and family concerns. At the end of each eight week FAST cycle, a graduation is held in which the contributions and participation of all participants is celebrated. Invitations are sent and certificates are presented by the school principal. Families pride themselves on being "FAST graduates" (McDonald & Frey, 1999).

The total cost for implementing a FAST program and running subsequent cycles can vary from school to school. Based on 2008 figures, the typical cost for the initial training for the school and its FAST team is $3,900. The average cost of supplies per cycle was $1,500. Salaries for community partners were $1,500 each per cycle, and each participating parent-partner was paid $800 per cycle unless they volunteer. The school-based member of the FAST team may also require compensation unless this is considered a part of that person's regular workday. Some sites and schools may also have to pay for childcare. Schools usually fund the program with funds from Title I or other Federal or local sources that target schools with significant populations of disadvantaged and low achieving students (McDonald & Frey, 1999).

The majority of teacher assessments of the FAST program reveal extremely positive results for the students who graduate from the program (McDonald & Frey, 1999). In addition, the FAST evaluations report improved student behavior both at home and at school for FAST graduates. Similar evaluations of the FASTWORKS program provide corroborating evidence that the positive behaviors of FAST students continues long after they graduate from FAST. In addition, FAST graduates become more

involved in school and extracurricular activities (McDonald & Frey, 1999).

Currently the FAST program has been implemented all across the United States to include remote rural areas of northern California, northern Wisconsin and Iowa, as well as inner city neighborhoods in Chicago, New Orleans, Los Angeles, and Washington, DC. FAST is also operating in school communities with families whose first language is other than English. In addition, some FAST programs serve entire Vietnamese families, Native American families, Hispanic families and African-American families.

Statement of the Problem

During 2007-2009, the recession negatively impacted most Americans. However, it was disastrous for some African Americans who have long dealt with unemployment rates twice that of their white counterparts. Even more pertinent than the unemployment rate was the employment population ratio. The employment population ratio shows the employment percentage rate for a specific age group versus the total population. In 2003 in New York City, the unemployment figure for African American males ages 16-65 was 75.7%; in contrast, the unemployment figure for white males was 51.8% (Unheard Third, 2010). There were a multitude of reasons that could account for the non-employment including: school attendance, incarceration, disability, or retirement. If all variables were equal than the same would be applicable to whites. Therein lies the problem--all variables were not equal--especially concerning race, education, and employment.

The American Society for Training and Development (ASTD) consulted with more than 50,000 human resource development specialists to develop the required skills needed to be successful in the workplace. They identified the following categories of skills which included a foundation of learning how to learn; basic competencies in

reading, writing and arithmetic; communication, problem solving, creative thinking skills and self-esteem; motivation and goal setting; and planning for career development (Pace, 2011). Reading skills were associated with a number of important outcomes including school success and the ability to secure employment. Gaining basic skills, training, and postsecondary education to be successful were the responsibility of the worker. Employees were expected to be sufficiently skilled in oral and written communication, math, technology, and self-management, problem-solving, and decision-making skills (Feller, 2003). Elementary students' reading skills were an important predictor of academic success (Denton, West, & Walston, 2003).

In an effort to meet the changing needs of today's students, many school districts employed counselors that follow the American School Counselor Association (ASCA) guidelines for implementing a comprehensive school counseling program, which includes a career development component. The ASCA National Standards for career development guide school counseling programs to provide the foundation for the acquisition of skills, attitudes, and knowledge that enable students to make a successful transition from school to the world of work, and from job to job across their life spans (American School Counselor Association, 2004). This single resource was often not enough for all students (Love, 2009). Many students often need additional assistance in connecting school to the world of work.

To help students better prepare and plan for their futures, it was important to clearly identify the differences between a job and a career. Integrating the curriculum and providing students with numerous opportunities to link various disciplines to one another in the context of one subject area not only allows students the opportunity to

develop new interests, but also relate their interests to possible careers. Many of the new curricula offer a variety of engaging and practical techniques for incorporating core academic subjects with other disciplines to create a multidiscipline learning environment. The school counseling curriculum also offers an opportunity to create a multidisciplinary learning environment both at the school and at home as the school counselor has been an important resource to link families with schools. Collaborative efforts among several disciplines (e.g., CTE programs, schools, businesses) and curricula benefit students, parents, teachers, administrators, and community. These programs along with family involvement were an integral part of students' daily educational environment, in which the school, community, and family partner in student achievement (Ramsey, Ricketts, Moore & Igo, 2008).

The quality of career education is a critical issue for educators and has become the central core for improving the quality of today's education (Fennessy, 2008; Henderson & Berla, 1994; Trainor, Lindstorm, Simon-Burroughs, Martin, & Sorrells, 2008). The rapid development of career curriculum products has been beneficial to school personnel providing various tools to facilitate integrating the real-world into the academic curriculum. However, educators and parents are still facing challenges with how to effectively meet the demands of the changing job market and capture and maintain the interest of today's youth (Ames, 1993; Fennessy, 2008). The number of actively engaged parents, especially in minority and lower socio-economic environments is still small (Weisberg, Kumpfer, & Seligman, 2003). It is this small number of involved parents on whom this study will focus in an effort to present new literature on how parental involvement impacts student learning via career development.

Conceptual Framework

Life span theories set the foundation for the examination of elementary career development (Palladino-Schultheiss, 2008). Ginzberg, Ginsburg, Axelrad and Herma (1951) theorized that career development is a process that is guided by four facts: reality, education, emotions and individual values. Sex, ethnicity, and social class also greatly impact a person's occupational choice (Niles & Harris-Bowlsbey, 2005; Ng & Feldman, 2007). Super (1983) purports that career decisions occur throughout a person's life. This theory, however, omits research concerning women, minorities and those in lower income brackets. Despite the omission, this theory is widely used throughout the professional workforce; however, his greatest contribution to the area of career development is his recognition of the important role of self-concept in the career development process (Savikas & Lent, 1994; Stitt-Gohdes, 1997). John Holland's (1985, 1997) theory proposes that people are attracted to certain jobs based on their individual needs and job satisfaction. Holland's Career Typology is based on four premises: culture, environment, attitudes and values, and behavior. An offshoot of Albert Bandura's social cognitive theory is the Social Cognition Career Theory (SCCT) (Lent, Brown & Hackett, 1987). The SCCT endeavors to take into consideration the role of culture, sex, DNA, social class and life events that may over-ride career-related choices (Lent, Brown, & Hackett, 1996; Savikas & Lent, 1994; Stitt-Gohdes, 1997).

Families and schools need to understand the many contexts in which elementary career development exists including: career awareness, decision making, goal setting, self-awareness, and self-esteem. Students benefited from career development that was an integrated part of the school curriculum beginning in elementary school (Downing &

D'Andrea, 1996). Helping students connect school work and other educational activities ultimately helped students learn more effectively (Downing & D'Andrea, 1996).

Students view the benefit of schoolwork differently. These differences helped to shape their long-term personal, academic and career objectives (Bembenutty, 2010; Husman & Lens, 1999; Simons, Simons, Conger, & Brody, 2004). The impact of a students' future perceptions had often impacted the students' present behavior (Husman & Lens, 1999). Students' academic performance reflects their perception of the importance of the academic assignments and their correlation to particular careers (Bembenutty, 2010; Bandura, Caprara, Barbaranelli, Regalia, & Scabini, 2011). Based on research findings students who are able to identify the purpose of their current academic tasks were better at developing learning strategies, maintaining cognitions, and sustaining behaviors and positive attitude (Bembenutty, 2010). Students with healthy academic insights were focused towards goals and viewed as successful self-regulated learners. The ability of students to see themselves in relation to the world around them and make the connection from academic achievement to career success is fundamental. The goal of an elementary career education program is to help students make this connection via career awareness programs and families play a vital role in assisting. As students learn about themselves and the various career opportunities available they begin to develop interests that can be enhanced.

Students with strong, positive family support and guidance developed the aptitudes and master skills necessary to pursue infinite career opportunities (Hall, 2003). Conversely, students with weak, negative family support and who lacked guidance struggled with self-efficacy issues and had limited career opportunities. As educators and

families worked together to prevent students from just falling into jobs as oppose to choosing career paths it was necessary to guide them along a career development path that starts early (Hall, 2003). School counselors must involve families, literally or figuratively to help ensure this process was successful (Hall, 2003). It was imperative that school counselors were aware of familial resources and influences in order to operate within a family systems framework while providing counseling services to the students they service. Families' beliefs determine acceptable academic and career decisions (Berger & Luckmann, 1966). The beliefs about academic performance and acceptable career choices were forged within the family context and school counselors should be aware of these beliefs so they can work at least "indirectly" with parents.

Purpose of the Study

The intent of the study was to learn about familial influences in career development and to determine if there were differences in the level of involvement in the area of career development at the elementary level among families who participated in the FAST program verses those families who did not. In addition, this study examined the reading skills and behavior habits of students who were FAST graduates compared to non-FAST graduates. This study was an extension of previous research (Love, 2009) that examined the family's influence on career education and career awareness of African American students in grades K-3. The study was extended by examining the impact FAST had on family's influence on career education and career awareness. This study examined various career development theories to include: Ginzberg, Ginsburg, Axelrad, Herma Theory, (1951); Super's Theory of Vocational Choice, (1983); Holland's Career Typology, (1985); and Lent, Brown & Hackett's Social Cognitive Career Theory, (1996).

Between 2001-2008, there was a trend towards involving families in their students' education process, to include validating the contribution of the students' family, considering the home environment, and recognizing the individual's learning needs (Wood & Kaszubowsky, 2008; Hall, 2003; Paisley & McMahon, 2001). This study reviewed the FAST program, an intervention which integrates various family involvement strategies, to determine the impact FAST had on career development.

Method

Participants

The participants for this study were elementary students at a west central Georgia elementary school with approximately 300 students in an urban school district and their parents or guardians. Approximately one half of the participants participated and graduated from at least one of the FAST cycles held each fall and spring at the elementary school since 2008.

Instrumentation

Three instruments were used to gather data for this study. These instruments were 1) the family career development questionnaire (Sparks, 2012), 2) the Developmental Reading Assessment Second edition (DRA2) (Beaver, 2006) and 3) the elementary school's code of conduct and team intervention form (Leadership Team, 2007). The researcher developed the questionnaire for the purpose of this study. The content and structure of each instrument is described below. Family Career Development Questionnaire (see Appendix A). The questionnaire was reviewed by a panel of experts in the area of career development, career education, and workforce development. The panel consisted of a university professor, a workforce development specialist and a

district director of guidance. In an effort to determine the perceived level of parental involvement on elementary students' career development the researcher created a questionnaire utilizing skills and competencies deemed necessary and or important to career development according to a 1992 Secretary's Commission on Achieving Necessary Skills (SCANS) report. "The report identified five competencies and outlined a three-part foundation that is known as the SCANS skills. The primary objective of the SCANS skills was to help educators develop curricula and instructional activities that enabled students to acquire those "high performance skills needed to succeed in the high performance workplace" (Taken from: What Work Requires of Schools: A SCANS Report for America 2000. The Secretary's Commission on Achieving Necessary Skills, a publication of the U. S. Department of Labor, June 1991).

In the initial report, the requirements for a high-performance workplace were outlined. One of these requirements was a strong basic literacy foundation. In addition to basic academic skills high-performance, workplaces also require among other attributes, the ability to work amicably and productively with others (U. S. Department of Labor, 1991).

Developmental Reading Assessment 2nd edition**.** The DRA2 is a research-based reading evaluation for kindergarten through eighth grade (Rathvon, 2006). The assessment tool helps identify students' literacy competencies. The assessment has appraisal components for fluency, phonological awareness, metalanguage, letter and word recognition, phonics, and structural analysis and syllabication (Rathvon, 2006).

Elementary School Code of Conduct and Team Intervention Form. The school discipline plan exists because students' appropriate behavior was an essential aspect of

learning. A disciplined environment was necessary for teachers to teach and students to learn. In addition, it was important for students to recognize that all behavior had consequences. The consistent guarantee that these consequences would occur assisted students in choosing appropriate behaviors. By implementing this discipline plan the school was attempting to create a safe atmosphere in which learners can be taught, feel appreciated and develop accountability for their own behaviors and academic success. The discipline plan provided immediate and consistent consequences for inappropriate behavior. The Discipline Plan outlined specific, reasonable rules of expected conduct along with logical and realistic consequences for both positive and negative behaviors. The plan outlined the actions to be taken for the first through eleventh offense. Each student had their own conduct form to keep track of offenses each school year. The data for discipline referrals were obtained from the students' individual conduct form.

Design and Procedures

The Family Career Development Questionnaire (see Appendix A) was changed prior to the pilot test. The vocabulary was changed to accommodate a broad spectrum of reading levels. Also some questions were removed and/or combined. The questionnaire was then pilot tested by 26 volunteers and reliability determined.

The setting for this study was a small elementary school in the southeastern part of the United States. Research was approved by the Institutional Review Board for Research Involving Human Subjects at Valdosta State University and Muscogee County School District (see Appendices B & C). The researcher also received permission from the Director of the Families and Schools Together, Inc. (see Appendix D). One hundred survey packets were prepared for distribution. Included in each survey packet were: (a)

an information letter explaining the research study and any possible risks to the participants and their rights (see Appendix E), and (b) the questionnaire instrument (Appendix A). The FAST participants received green copies of the questionnaire and non-FAST participants received white copies of the questionnaire.

The packets were distributed by the researcher at the beginning of a FASTWORKS event to each potential participant. Participation in the research project was on a voluntary basis. Those who chose to participate completed the questionnaire and placed the questionnaire back in the envelope to and returned it to the researcher before leaving the event. Those who did not participate also turned in an envelope at the end of the meeting; however, it contained an incomplete questionnaire or a partially completed questionnaire. All information obtained for this study was recorded in such a manner that participants were not identified directly or through identifiers linked to the subjects. All the packets and their contents were numbered and participants were instructed not to write their name on any items to ensure confidentiality.

The packets were also distributed by the researcher at the beginning of a school Parent Teacher Student Association (PTSA) meeting to each potential participant. The matched sample of non-FAST participants were parents of students currently enrolled at the elementary school. To differentiate between FAST and non-FAST parents, FAST participants were given envelopes with green numbers and their surveys were also green. Non-FAST participants had white surveys and the numbers on their envelopes were marked in black ink. Participation in the research project was on a voluntary basis. Those who chose to participate completed the questionnaire and placed it back in the envelope and returned the envelope to the researcher at the end of the meeting. Those who did not

participate also turned in an envelope at the end of the meeting; however, it contained an incomplete questionnaire. Only one envelope contained an unanswered questionnaire. All information obtained for this study was recorded in such a manner that participants were not identified directly or through identifiers linked to the subjects. All the packets and their contents were numbered and the participants were instructed to not write their name on any items to ensure complete anonymity and confidentiality.

During non-school hours, an administrator was asked to provide the researcher with the Developmental Reading Assessment, Second Edition (DRA2) levels and the number of discipline referrals for all FAST students. The same information was collected for a matched sample of non-FAST students based on grade, age, and sex of non-FAST students. The information provided only represented a summary of the assessment, which was the students' current reading level. In regards to the discipline referrals, only the numerical value for the total amount of discipline referrals was provided for the two month period following the FAST graduation. No information on the type of infraction or the punitive consequences was collected. The administrator provided the reading levels and number of discipline referrals for FAST and non-FAST students respectively. No names or any other identifiable information was provided and all data remained confidential and anonymous.

Measures to ensure content validity for the questionnaire were conducted. All questions from the questionnaire were distributed to three experts in the field of workforce and career development. All three experts had at least a master's degree from an accredited university and at least 12 years of experience or more conducting research and teaching about career development or providing families with services regarding

career development. The reviewers were asked to score each question according to the extent it measured career development using a 3-point scale to avoid having neutral and ambivalent midpoint. The item relevance continuum used was 1= agree, 2 = somewhat agree, 3 = disagree. Then for each item, the item-level content validity index (I-CVI) was computed as the number of experts giving a rating of 2 or 3 (thus dichotomizing the ordinal scale into agree and disagree), divided by the total number of experts (Lynn, 1986). The I-CVI for the questionnaire items was calculated as 1.00 for career development which means all three experts agreed the content of each question measured career development.

The Developmental Reading Assessment, Second Edition (DRA2) for grades K-8 measures accuracy, comprehension and fluency (Williams, 1999). Inter-rater reliability between three raters was .74, and .80 between two raters. Cronbach's alpha reliability was used to measure consistency of the comprehension items and found the measure of reliability to be greater than 75%. Taking into account the small set of items, (either 6 or 7 depending on the text) this represents adequate reliability (Williams, 1999). Item separation reliability using Cronbach's alpha was .98 while test separation was .97 (Rathvon, 2006). Williams (1999) also believes that because the DRA was strongly correlated to the Iowa Test of Basic Skills, and strength was added to the case for DRA as a valid measure to assess students' ability to decode and comprehend text. A sample of urban 2nd grade students (n = 2470) had DRA levels at the end of the school year that showed a close correlation to their 3rd grade normal curve equivalent (NCE) scores on the Iowa Test of Basic Skills Vocabulary and Reading Comprehension subtests and for Total Reading (rs = .68, .68, and .71, respectively) (Williams, 1999).

Hypotheses

Parents act as the primary influence on their children's educational and career choices (Bardick, et al., 2004; Kniveton, 2004). Research conducted with finalists in a Teacher of the Year competition revealed that their parents fostered a desire and respect for education (Duemer, Benitez, Hurst, Juarez-Torrez, Teague-Smith, Collins, & Powers, 2002). Positive family support outweighs socioeconomic status, familial educational attainment and culture (Bokhorst-Heng, 2008). The purpose of this study was to determine the impact FAST has on African American families in regards to elementary students' career development. Based on the literature review and the need for further research, the following hypotheses are proposed:

a. Adults participating in FAST will have significantly higher rates of assisting their children with career development than a matched sample of non-FAST participants as measured on the Family Career Development Questionnaire.
b. Students participating in FAST will have significantly higher reading levels than a matched sample of non-FAST students as measured by the DRA reading assessment.
c. Students participating in FAST will have significantly lower discipline referrals for negative behavior issues than a matched sample of non-FAST students.

This study utilized a field experimental research design which was ideal for investigating critical questions that seek to determine whether a cause-and-effect relationship exists among two or more variables in a real world setting. In this study, the

FAST program represented the cause or independent variable. The responses, achievement, and behavior (the expected effect) of the school's families and students either as FAST or non-FAST participants were evaluated to determine the impact the FAST program had on the families career development beliefs and actions.

Definitions

For this study there were seven terms that need to be defined:

FAST: Families and Schools Together is school and community family strengthening program initiated to combat the negative effects of violence (McDonald, Coe-Braddish, Billingham, Dibble, & Rice, 1991).

Engaged Parent: a parent who had completed the eight week Families and Schools Together (FAST) program thus showing a commitment to his/her students' education.

Career: "The sequence of major positions occupied by a person throughout preoccupational, occupational, and postoccupational life; includes work related roles such as those as student, employee, and pensioner, together with complementary vocational, familial, and civic roles" (Super, 1983, p. 20).

Career Awareness: the initial phase of career development in which one develops an appreciation and understanding of a variety of careers" (ASCA, 2004). Students were introduced to opportunities, options and roles that interest them in their communities, family and the world of work. They use adult role models and other resources to learn more about different occupations and gain awareness of the importance of personal responsibility and good work habits. Students developed an understanding of how people work together and depend on each other to accomplish work in their community.

Career Development: the lifelong process of making career decisions based on the

individual's experiences and interactions (Ginzberg, Ginsburg, Axelrad, & Herma, 1951).

Career Education: an all-inclusive informative program that focused on individual career development, beginning in elementary school or earlier and continuing through the adult years (ASCA, 2004).

Career Preparation: "Core activities that helped youth become prepared for a successful future in careers or post-secondary education institutions including career awareness activities that exposed young people to information about the job market, job related skills, the wide variety of jobs that exist and the education and training they required, as well as the work environment where they are performed" (National Consortium on Leadership and Disability for Youth, 2011).

Chapter II

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

This review of the literature highlights career development, family involvement, student achievement and family interventions. Each element was an important ingredient to understand research regarding an individual's self-awareness and the impact a family has on the career development process. This review focused first on career development theories to build a basic understanding of career awareness. Second, this review focused on career development interventions to gain knowledge of how career awareness is fostered. Third, the review involved the intricacies of family involvement and collaboration with other entities (i.e., school and community) to understand how they impact student achievement and an individual's perception of career awareness and the options one believes are available for him or her. Next, family functioning was examined to determine how family experiences influence the dynamics which affects the career choices an individual makes. Then, family intervention programs were reviewed to understand how positive behavior changes that influence career awareness were made through the strengthening of the family unit. Finally, the literature was narrowed to a specific family program called Families and Schools Together (FAST). FAST provides family strengthening and influences positive family functioning that can increase a child's career awareness before or during the time period a child may display behavioral signs of the effects of negative family influences. FAST increases families' involvement

with the child through collaboration with the school and family, and improves family functioning, therefore providing one with more career options and better career choices.

Career Development Theories

Career development was credited along with other factors for the economic growth the United States experienced in the 20th century. In recent years however, school counseling practices involving career counseling have been under scrutiny. Understandably so, since career development had long term and inestimable consequences on students. The Trait Factor Theory concluded that career development molds an individual's vocational identity (Holland, 1997). Vocational identity was seen as one's identity. In the western culture you are measured by your occupation and more frequently than not asked, "What do you do?" as opposed to "Who are you?" That it is why career development is so vital for young people. The choices that students make today will determine the outcomes of their lives.

Career guidance provides a fundamental means of promoting equal opportunity and educational equity (Palladino-Schultheiss, 2008; Palladino-Schultheiss, et al., 2005). It can apply to any student and helps encompass an emphasis on career development within the general classroom (Barker, 2000). Unfortunately, most students from grades kindergarten through five demonstrate little understanding of how school relates to the real world and have little awareness of the skills needed for future success (Barker, 2000).

The goal of career development theories was to assist in organizing life experiences into meaningful and useful information. A theory is a reasonable set of beliefs or hypotheses that help to explain the past and predict the future (Abernathy,

2000; McMahon & Watson, 2009). Utilizing this definition, theories established a need for additional research and as theories were studied and supported, the theories were believed to increase our understanding (Abernathy, 2000; McMahon & Watson, 2009). Career developmental theories helped to ascertain the selection process people used to make their career choices. This knowledge was helpful for those assisting others with career planning. Through the years many career development theories and theorists have emerged, this discussion focused on the more prominent ones as evidenced by tenure and references in literature. They were Ginzberg, Ginsburg, Axelrad and Herma Theory (1951), Super's Theory of Vocational Choice (1983), Holland's Career Typology (1985), and Lent, Brown and Hackett's Social Cognitive Career Theory (1996).

Ginzberg, et al. (1951) used the premise that career choice was influenced by four postulates: the reality factor, the educational process, the emotional factor and individual values concluded that career selection was the end result of a development journey. The theory viewed vocational development in three major stages, fantasy, tentative, which was further subdivided into 4 stages, interest, capacity, value and transition; and realistic, which was subdivided into 3 stages, exploration, crystallization, and specification. These stages occur over a 10-15 year span beginning in the pre-adolescent years through young adulthood.

During the fantasy stage the child was free to pursue any career of his or her choosing. This identifies the child's preferences. During the tentative stage, the child who has become a teen analyzes his/her likes and dislikes, aptitudes and abilities and their job values culminating with the young person embarking on the career choice path. The final stage, realistic has three substages: exploration, where occupations were

rejected based on the young adult's interests and capacity; crystallization, where a job selection was made; and specification, the pursuit of educational requirements to achieve the desired career goal.

The theory once viewed vocational choice as irreversible, however in 1972 Ginzberg refined the theory consenting that as opposed to being sequential the stages were more fluid. Another flaw that was not as easily remedied were the issues of sex, culture, and socioeconomic status that include or exclude career choices for certain populations.

Super (1983) said that career development takes place across a person's life span which changes in relation to their "self-concepts." Super divides this developmental life span into five different stages (Palladino-Schultheiss, 2008; Palladino-Schultheiss, et al., 2005). The stages were as follows: Growth, Exploration, Establishment, Maintenance, and Disengagement. The growth stage which occurred through mid-adolescence was a theoretical model of career development that was a time when an individual's self-concept developed through identification with key figures in the family and school. It involved a person's first introduction to the world of occupations. This growth stage consisted of nine concepts that contributed to career awareness and decision making (Palladino-Schultheiss, et al., 2005). The nine concepts were as follows:

1. curiosity - a need leading to inquisitive behavior.

2. exploration - searching or examining activities that elicit information about an individual or an individual's environment in an attempt to meet curiosity needs.

3. information - an awareness of the importance or use of occupational information and how one acquires it.

4. key figures - role models who have played a meaningful role in an individual's life.

5. interests - an awareness of one's likes and dislikes.

6. locus of control - the degree to which an individual feels in control of his/her present and future.

7. time perspective - an awareness of how the past, present, and future can be used to plan future events.

8. self-concept - dimensions of the self in some role, situation, or position performing some set of functions or in some web of relationships.

9. planfulness - an awareness of the importance of planning.

The exploration stage that followed and persists through the mid-twenties allowed for exploration of career roles through work to include school and jobs as well as play to include hobbies and other recreational activities. In the mid-20s which begins the establishment stage workers settled in a career and worked towards advancing their skills and increasing their levels of responsibility. In the maintenance stage beginning in the mid-40s and lasting into the mid-60s, workers focused on job security and stabilization. The decline stage follows, where workers are approaching retirement and productivity begins to decrease.

Super also believed the change people experienced with time could be further organized into five vocational development stages: crystallization, specification, implementation, stabilization, and consolidation. Career patterns can be set for many long before they reach employment age as these patterns are strongly influenced by mental and physical abilities, personalities, personal experiences and seriocomic factors. Workers equated job satisfaction with employment opportunities that allowed them to shape and develop their own self-concepts. With self-concept as the underlying catalyst in Super's model: "...vocational self-concept develops through physical and mental

growth, observations of work, identification with working adults, general environment, and general experiences....As experiences become broader in relation to awareness of world of work, the more sophisticated vocational self-concept is formed" (Zunker, 1998, p. 30). The major concept of Super's theory is career maturity. Accordingly, career maturity is defined as the successful matriculation of age and stage developmental tasks across the life span. While Super originally presented these stages as sequential, he later acknowledged that workers often vacillate between the stages as life and work environments change (Super, 1983). As people change with time and experience, and progress through life so do their career philosophies and goals. As a result, Super categorized the life span from the ages of 14 to 65 and higher into six specific vocational. The tasks were as follows: Crystallization is defined as a developmental process of developing a basic vocational goal. This is accomplished through networking, planning, and identifying interests and values. Specification is the stage where one moves from possible career preferences towards solidifying a career choice. The phase involving job training and entering the work force is referred to as implementation. Stabilization is the process of confirming one's career choice as appropriate as evidenced by job satisfaction. Consolidation is the time for promotions, prestige and increased responsibility. This is followed by the final stage, readiness for the retirement, which was added later. Table 1 summarizes Supers' developmental stages and Table 2 summarizes Super's vocational stages.

Table 1

Super's Developmental Stages

Stage	Ages	Characteristics
Growth	Birth to 14 or 15	Development of self-concept, capacity, attitudes, interests, needs, general understanding of the world of work
Exploratory	15-24	"Trying out" through classes, work experience, hobbies. Tentative choice and related skill development
Establishment	25-44	Entry-level skill building and stabilization through work experience
Maintenance	45-64	Continual adjustment process to improve position
Decline	65+	Reduced output, prepare for retirement

Table 2

Super's Vocational Stages

Vocational Stage	Age	Tasks
Crystallization	14-18	Develop and plan tentative vocational goals
Specification	18-21	Firming the vocational goal
Implementation	21-24	Training for and obtaining employment
Stabilization	24-35	Working and confirming career choice
Consolidation	35	Advancement in career
Readiness for retirement	55+	

Structural theories began with Frank Parsons at the beginning of the 20th century with his Trait and Factor theory. Often referred to as the father of career development, Parsons (1909) suggested that career choice depends on: knowing yourself, knowing the

job duties and responsibilities, and finally having the ability to correctly match the two. He concluded that in choosing a vocation wisely three factors should be considered (Parsons, 1909). The first factor is the person's self-efficacy to include their aptitudes, abilities, interests, ambitions, resources, and limitations. Next, a thorough knowledge of the expectations and conditions of success, advantages and disadvantages, compensation, opportunities, and prospects in different lines of work should be understood. Finally, an honest assessment on how these two groups of factors interact (Parsons, 1909). The Trait and Factor theory makes two major assumptions: individuals and job traits can be matched, and close matches are positively correlated with job success and satisfaction.

Holland (1985) suggested that career goals begin to form towards the end of adolescence and were personalized by life, career exploration, and career counseling. Holland stressed the idea of "modal personal orientation" to explain the phenomenon by which genetics and individual's responses to their surroundings encourage beliefs, aspirations and behaviors, and character traits that guide career choice. This type of theory categorized the massive amount of data about people in various employment sectors and the data about different employment environments, to identify how career choices were made to help understand how job satisfaction and career achievement happen.

Holland (1997) suggested that "people can function and develop best and find job satisfaction in work environments that are compatible with their personalities." Holland (1985) classified these personality types and work environments into six types which he defined realistic, investigative, artistic, social, enterprising, and conventional (often

referred to by the acronym RIASEC). A very brief overview of the six personality types, six work-related activities, and sample occupations is in Table 3.

Table 3

Holland's typography

TYPE	ACTIVITIES	OCCUPATIONS
Realistic	Working with things, i.e. tools and machines	Farmer Carpenter Mechanical Engineer
Investigative	Working with information i.e. abstract ideas and theories	Chemist
Artistic	Creating things	Painter Writer
Social	Helping people	Social Worker Counselor
Enterprising	Leading others	Sales Representative Entrepreneur
Conventional	Organizing data	Night Auditor Secretary

Holland suggested that the closer the match of personality to job, the greater the satisfaction. All types were part of each of us. However, one type is usually evidenced most strongly.

Cognitive theories of career development were developed to focus on how individuals receive, utilize, and respond to information. The ways in which individuals received information was determined by their cognitive structures. These structures influenced how individuals viewed themselves, others, and the environment. Cognitive theories described ways to help clients build or refine a hierarchy of thinking and decision-making skills that influenced career development. There is still disagreement on what separates social cognitive theory from the more general social learning theory; however social cognitive theory is defined by the following four principles: people learn both vicariously and via direct experiences; people applied what they have learned based on perceived or actual consequences of behavior; people were more likely to associate with people they identified with and the learning was enhanced proportionately based on the perceived emotional attachment; learning was directly related to the individual's degree of self-efficacy (belief in self). In general, social cognitive theorist, Krumboltz (1998, 2011) suggested that what an individual learned and imitated from the environment will impact their personal development. Individuals identified career paths according to their social, environmental and hereditary influences. Also impacting these choices were their perceptions on how certain actions were rewarded, reinforced or punished. Peer pressure, an example of social cognition, is prevalent at the elementary level. An offshoot of social cognitive theory is Social Cognition Career Theory, or SCCT. Derived from Albert Bandura's social cognitive theory SCCT emphasizes self-efficacy, outcome expectations and personal goals. The key constructs for the theory are: attitudes and values, race and gender, interest development model, choice model, and performance model (Bandura, et al., 2011).

Attitudes and values speak to self-efficacy and outcome expectations, while race and gender create experiences that impact self-efficacy and outcome expectations. The interest development model functioned on the basis that we were attracted to tasks that we were familiar with and or comfortable performing. The choice model outlined the steps to utilize in making a career choice. First, identify and set a goal. Then analyze the steps needed to achieve the goal. Last, determine the direction for future career progression. The performance model was concerned with the repetition and perseverance of the behavior. Brown and Lent (2000) suggested that some careers were eliminated based on incorrect self-efficacy or expectations. If perceived barriers were overwhelming, people were less likely to pursue that career path. In order to provide individuals with broader career paths, corrections must be made to their self-efficacy and outcome expectations.

Career Development Interventions

Halpern (1991) stated that career education was the totality of experiences through which an individual learned to live a meaningful life. Research that examined the conceptual knowledge of career development is needed to inform career interventions and help youth develop a meaningful understanding of the relevance of school-based learning to their future career (Palladino-Schultheiss, 2008; Palladino-Schultheiss, et al., 2005). An individual's perceived barriers to attaining employment or postsecondary education played a critical role in individuals' decisions about their future (Fouad & Byars-Winston, 2005). Giannantonio and Hurley-Hanson (2006) stated that image norms influenced the career decisions an individual makes. An image norm is a belief that a person must present or possess that is consistent with occupational, organizational, or

industry standards to have success. They explained that a person developed three separate sets of image perceptions (Giannantonia, Hurley-Hanson, 2006). The first involved occupational stereotypes. The second involved a person's self-image, and the third involved the relationship between the person's image and the organization's image. These image norms shaped and influenced career decisions.

Self-determination is tied to an individual's image norms and career development is self-determination. Self-determination is the process of an individual defining and directing one's own life (Brugnaro & Timmons, 2007). It is a significant component to success for students (Bremer, Kachgal, & Schoeller, 2003). Students who have self-determination skills have a stronger chance of being successful in making the transition to adulthood, including employment and independence (Brugnaro & Timmons, 2007; Madaus, Gerber, & Price, 2008; Wehmeyer, Abery, Zhang, Ward,Willis, Hossain, & Walker, 2011). Self-determination is a skill that should be taught starting in elementary school, yet students have limited opportunities to make choices and act independently. In addition, many educators are unaware of how to help students develop such a vital skill (Roy & Casper, 2006). Izzo and Lamb (2003) examined the relationship of self-determination to career development. The authors reviewed transition programs that promoted self-determination and career development skills. It was recommended that teachers integrate self- determination and career development into educational programs. Wehemyer, et al. (2011) investigated a program that incorporated problem solving skills to set career goals. A self-determined person is the primary person responsible for their life choices. Self-determined people operated with little or no undue external influence or interference (Wehmeyer, et al., 2011). When a person is confident and self-assured

they become internally motivated to succeed personally and professionally. This awareness along with other abilities was necessary for the development of self-determination.

While using an ecological framework to understand the systems that influence education to post school outcomes, career interventions can be developed that promote exploration and self-concept. Such interventions promoted exploration of new ideas and abilities that a) broaden students' informational knowledge, and exposure to diverse occupations; b) linked academic subjects with various occupations; c) explored conceptions of work, counter career myths or unrealistic expectations; d) nurtured support networks, and e) a students' greater sense of control over their future (Palladino-Schultheiss, et al., 2005).

Hershenson (2005) explained that there will never be a single unified, comprehensive intervention for career development because the process was too complex. Instead, he described the INCOME framework in which a model exists for organizing and implementing concepts from career theories and intervention practices. The framework consisted of six statuses. A status is defined as a mutually interactive process by which someone's behavior can be explained. The six statuses were imaging, informing, choosing, obtaining, maintaining, and exiting. Career education can directly impact the first four statuses since students encounter these phases during their public education experience.

The imagining status is when a person becomes aware of work, occupations and jobs were present that the individual may not have been aware existed. This status included three types of imagining: awareness, fantasy imagining, and reality based

imagining. Awareness is realizing that there is such a thing as work and that it has a direct relevance to the individual. Fantasy imagining is pretending or daydreaming about being in an occupation. Reality based imagining is limiting one's imagining to the occupations that are possible based on capacities, resources, and opportunities (Hershenson, 2005).

The informing status included the student achieving a clear understanding. This encompasses an understanding of aptitudes, abilities, interests, ambitions, resources and limitations. This status also entails the knowledge of the requirements and conditions of success, advantages and disadvantages, compensation, opportunities, and prospects in different lines of work. The third status in the INCOME framework is the choosing status. This is when the individual will integrate information about themself and about the world of work and makes a selection of an occupation, job, or postsecondary educational program. It is important to note that the congruence of the student and the work environment influenced the career choice the student made (Hershenson, 2005).

It is possible that elementary and middle school teachers may be more reluctant to spend time on an intensive career education framework. However, using ideas from career and technical education (CTE) there might be a way to integrate career education and academics. CTE serves an important role in preparing students for employment. It provided occupation-specific training that contributed to an individual's knowledge base, problem solving skills, and higher order thinking skills (Barker, 2000). One approach that CTE used for instruction is problem-based learning. Ramsey et al., (2008) explain that problem-based learning has been an instructional tool that was used in medical training for decades. Problem-based learning required people to collectively experience

relevant problems and create meaningful solutions. The teacher acted as a facilitator and learning was primarily constructed by students who problem solve. Problem-based learning required individuals to learn in groups which provided the learners opportunities to test and articulate with each other their own understandings. The problem based learning method was very effective because it required students to identify what they knew and do not know, and find resources to gain knowledge (Ramsey et al., 2008). Brendon, conveyed the effectiveness of this teaching strategy when he stated, "many of the students have grown and matured, learning how to better cope with problems, and gaining leadership and teamwork experience." (Fennessy, 2008, p. 48).

For older students, the Choices in Transition provided a method for career development. The purpose of the model was to support individuals in the process of transition to improve educational and vocational success (Balcazar et al., 2006). This framework provided a basis in which teachers of foster independence and self-advocacy skills. Choices in Transition holistically focused on individual student goals. The seven components of the Choices in Transition method include: a) goal-driven case management, b) interactive goal setting, action-planning, and help-recruiting social skills curriculum; c) direct and authentic instruction, d) parent education and support, e) mentoring, f) interagency collaboration, and g) outcomes-based evaluation.

Each component of Choices in Transition can be explained within the public school setting and a practical example of the component is provided. Goal-driven case management means the teacher was assigned to the student and worked with the student to identify educational goals. The primary task of the teacher was to support the goal directed behavior, and self-advocacy within the school setting. For example, a teacher

may have the student go to various teachers and explain classroom needs or accommodations.

The interactive goal setting, action-planning, and help-recruiting social skills curriculum promoted self-advocacy and empowerment. The curriculum taught people to set clear and attainable goals, and access resources to achieve those goals. Informed individuals of legislation and services, and provided activities to learn about self-advocacy. A counselor could easily counsel a student on self-worth, just as the counselor discussed self-esteem issues during parent conferences.

Direct and authentic instruction was another component of the Choices in transition model. This component encouraged students to find jobs. The employment experience developed confidence in one's ability to perform in a job setting (Balcazar et al., 2006). High school individuals enrolled in vocational training or college preparation while younger individuals managed a school store.

The parent education and support component was a critical feature of the Choices in Transition method. This component helps parents consider the long term benefits of their child having independence and self-sufficiency. In addition, parents offered each other support. An example of putting the parent support component into practice was a teacher discussing the benefits of a youth developing independence every chance possible, and steering the parents toward support groups.

The mentoring component of the Choices in Transition model encouraged students to recruit their own mentors and receive support. The premise of the framework was that youth were capable of choosing their mentors instead of having an adult chose

their mentor for them. One example of this component was to provide school wide peer tutoring and allow the student, to pick an academic tutor.

The next component, interagency collaboration, utilized many different agencies to meet the individual needs of a particular youth. This could be as simple as coordinating between elementary and middle school or as complex as coordinating between vocational rehabilitation, career counselors, and the public school system. The more unified each agency was in working with an individual the more likely that individual will have success (Balcazar et al., 2006).

Finally, the outcomes-based evaluation component used quantitative and qualitative measures to examine progress in the Choices in Transition model. Quantitative measures included self-determination surveys, academic tests, adaptive scales, etc. that measured progress while qualitative scales were interviews given to students. The outcomes-based evaluation captures the complexity of the students' efforts (Balcazar et al., 2006). The Choices in Transition program, a goal driven model that enabled students to move from dependence to independence. The Choices in Transition program is a practical means of building a foundation for a child to develop skills necessary for living as an independent adult, and even gain competitive employment in the future (Balcazar, Ostrander, & Garate, 2006).

Family Involvement and Student Outcomes

The National Education Association (2010) reported that regardless of socioeconomic status, race, or educational attainment students with involved families had fewer absences from school, fewer discipline referrals and increased positive educational outcomes. Similarly, Henderson and Mapp (2002) credited parent participation with

increasing student achievement and improving students' positive social skills. Students with families who were engaged in their child's education were also likely to enroll in advance classes and continue their education after high school. A child's self-esteem and motivation positively impacted family involvement. Positive school outcomes, academic success, and high self- esteem were important factors because the career selection process was linked to one's self- image (Hershenson, 2005).

Poor reading skills upon entering elementary school have been linked to an increased risk of conduct problems years later (Bennett et al., 2003). Low reading levels and inappropriate behaviors continued to show a correlational relationship after controlling for socioeconomic status, sex, and family functioning (Bennett et al., 2003; Hinshaw, 1992; and Maughan, Pickles, Hagell, Rutter, & Yule, 1996). Hinshaw (1992) also concluded that in the absence of conduct problems, elementary reading failure was a predictor of adolescent delinquency. Maughan et al. (1996) warned against making this prediction and suggested that deficient reading skills and future conduct problems may be linked to the students' sex and developmental age.

Bennett et al. (2003) discovered that reading intervention programs were more effective in preventing conduct problems for low-risk students. However they stressed the importance of recognizing that programs focusing on one single factor usually have a small impact on overall success. Multi-element, universal prevention programs for elementary age students that included literacy strategies were believed to have a greater impact on reducing future behavior problems (Bennett et al., 2003).

Equally as important as participating at school was family involvement with a child at home. Families played a major role in helping students to link academic content

to their future options (Bennett et al., 2003). Regardless of age every child benefited when parents and/or respected adults showed interest in the child including school work and successes. By setting schedules for studying, ensuring the child understood expectations and providing the child with suitable opportunities to study and complete homework, families demonstrated that school was important and success matters (Alexander & Parsons, 1982). While the family's role changes as the child matures, the family's involvement in helping the child develop organizational skills, insuring the child has their school supplies, homework, etc., and encouraging punctuality through getting the child to school on time, set a foundation that will lead to skill sets necessary for career success (Alexander & Parson, 1982; Alexander, Pugh Parsons, Sexton, 2000). Of course, as children get older, they require less direct involvement, but the family always communicates the link of success at school and influences the child's career selection process through their engagement on some level.

Multicultural issues in education should be considered ecologically to better understand and improve the marginalized school and post school outcomes experienced by students (Trainor et al., 2008). This required looking at social interconnections in a child's environment and how it influenced career awareness.

Positive social skills was but one of the many skills that students needed to learn to acquire a future career. For this reason the family served a vital role to social functioning. In some instances the family served as the only support system for critical resources to include: "emotional support, learning opportunities, career awareness, moral guidance, self-esteem, and physical necessities." Kumpfer and Alvardo (2003) advised that when these responsibilities go unfulfilled the consequences for the children can be

dire. Family dysfunction (e.g., family history of violence, favorable attitudes toward problem behaviors, poor socialization, poor supervision, poor discipline, family disorganization, family isolation, or family disruptions) was an important influence on future delinquent and antisocial behavior (Kumpfer & Alvardo, 2003). Family dysfunction provided children with models and opportunities to engage in problem behavior. For example, family drug use was consistently linked to adolescent drug use (Newcomb & Bentler, 1986); children living in homes in which the marital relationship was disrupted by divorce or separation were likely to display problem behaviors (Wells & Rankin, 1991), particularly depending on how much satisfaction they derived from their relationship with the parents (Videon, 2002); and family management practices, such as failure to set clear expectations for children's behavior, poor monitoring and supervision, and severe and inconsistent discipline, consistently predicted later delinquency and substance abuse (Capaldi & Patterson, 1996; Hawkins, Catalano, & Arthur, 1995).

The family wielded tremendous influence on an adolescent's risk for delinquency because it was the primary socialization context for children (Simons et al., 2004; Patterson, & Kirkland, 2007). The theoretical foundation for this relationship was generally grounded in theories of social control believing that delinquent acts were more likely to occur when an individual's bond to society was weak or broken (Hirschi, 2010). Under this perspective, the family acts as a socializing agent by introducing and endearing children to conventional norms and values. Theories of social control argued that a strong affectionate tie between child and parent was one of the fundamental means for establishing this societal bond and thus for insulating adolescents from delinquency

and other problem behaviors (Brook, & Whiteman, 1997). Hess and Holloway (1984) studied elementary and middle school students and identified five processes linking family and school success (1) verbal interaction between adult and child, (2) expectation of parents for success, (3) positive affective relationships between parents and children, (4) parental beliefs and attributions about the child, and (5) discipline and control strategies.

Consequently, it was imperative that delinquency prevention programs reinforce the parent– child bond as a means of preventing delinquent behavior. One way of reinforcing the parent–child relationship was to decrease risk factors and increase protective factors for delinquent behavior through parent training and family strengthening programs. These programs addressed important family protective factors such as parental supervision, attachment to parents, and consistency of discipline (Huizinga, Loeber, & Thornberry, 1995). Delinquency prevention programs also addressed some of the most important family risk factors such as poor supervision, excessive family conflict, family isolation, sibling drug use, and poor socialization (Kumpfer & Alvarado, 2003). Thus it was important to include families in prevention research to increase the number of children and youth who succeed and contribute in school and life.

Family, Community, and School Collaboration

Students who had high self-esteem and families that supported their efforts in and out of school were more inclined to plan for their future careers, and be confident that they have a variety of career options (Ames, 1993). Unfortunately, some students had trouble seeing the relationship between their school outcomes and behaviors, and their

future careers. Research consistently showed that when families participate in their students' educational process the students did better in school and in life. In addition, "No Child Left Behind" (2001) defined requirements for family participation which mandated notification and involvement in their students' education. School counselors and family therapy programs played an invaluable role in developing and maintaining strong collaborative efforts between families and schools.

While it was difficult to consider adding to the already demanding work loads of school counselors, Epstein and Van Voorhis (2010) proposed that counselors spend 20% of their time building a strong foundation for partnerships by networking with other educators, parents, and community partners to devise, incorporate and analyze the objectives for their school's collaborative effort. This new task was likely to yield many benefits, to include improving the quality of communication between the participants and improved involvement activities.

In the study, Epstein, Galindo, and Sheldon, (2011) identified six types of involvement practices for parents, teachers, students and community partners. They were parenting, communicating, volunteering, learning at home, decision making, and collaborating with the community. Palladino-Schultheiss et al., (2005) found that childhood exploration encompassed both self- initiated and guided exploration that was introduced by important people such as a family member or teacher. Interactions with such people strongly influenced youth's perceptions of image requirements of certain jobs and had long lasting effects on occupational choice (Palladino-Schultheiss et al., 2005). Messages about occupations were sent to students through social network expressing beliefs and opinions about the students' likelihood of success.

Similarly, Chavkin and Garza-Lubeck (1990) agree that children performed better in school and in life when families were involved in the learning process. However, Chavkin and Garza-Lubeck (1990) believed many educators needed training to work with diverse families. When identifying diverse characteristics the list can seem endless, however, main characteristics included social economic status, languages, and cultures and these were the same characteristics most often associated with high risk and low achieving students (Chavkin & Garza-Lubeck 1990). Interestingly, the research for parental involvement in predominantly white schools showed no significant impact (Brookover, 1979; Chavkin & Garza-Lubeck 1990). However, while the participation in predominantly black schools was lower, there were correlations, between high levels of parental involvement and student achievement (Brookover, 1979; Chavkin & Garza-Lubeck 1990). Regardless, *The No Child Left Behind Act of 2001* outlined responsibilities for family involvement that must be adhered for school districts to receive funding. These requirements for parents ranged from notification to participation in their children's education. Notification refers to a parent's right to participate in their child's education by informing the parent of meetings, activities, etc. Participation allows the parents to attend meetings and help develop and/or alter educational plans that will be used for their student.

Family Functioning

A number of theories linked career choice with early family experiences. Ketterson and Blustein (1997) suggested that family experiences of taking care of others influenced professional choice and professional roles. The authors stated, "one's choice of social work as a career may be an attempt to deal with an earlier imbalance of

parentication/infantilization" (Ketterson & Blustein,1997, p. 315). Other theories described a desire to help others who were less fortunate and previous experience with social service systems inspired individuals to pursue careers in the helping professions. Ketterson and Blustein (1997) added that one appeal of social work may be its focus on relieving stressful situations.

Family cohesion, behavioral issues, school success, peer relations and subsequent delinquency have all been associated to some degree with family functioning (Henggeler, 1999; Loeber & Dishion, 1983; Patterson & Stouthamer–Loeber, 1984; Snyder, 2007). Unfortunately, poor family functioning or nontraditional family structures decreased the development of parental attachment and thus broke the bond with society, leaving individuals without the internal controls that discourage criminal behavior. This increased the probability of delinquency, and in turn decreased employment opportunities later in life. It was argued that as a result of inept parenting some adolescents tended to be impulsive, defiant, physical, and risk-taking (Hirschi, Niles, & Akos, 2011). Engagement in adolescent career preparation via social support, and the development of choice decidedness and congruence was helpful for adolescents forging their way through an academic and career maze (Snyder, 2007). A reformation of Baumrind's typology showed that both authoritarian and permissive parenting styles were negatively associated with achievement (Dornbusch, Ritter, Leiderman, Roberts, & Fraleigh, 1987). Such youths were more strongly attracted to delinquent acts than were those who had been reared via authoritative parenting styles which showed a positive association with grades across gender, age, parental education, ethnic, and family structure categories. However, ineffective parenting was seen as a result of two factors (Thornberry, 1994; Simons et al.,

2004). First, parents and children tended to be similar in their temperament, personality, and cognitive abilities (Plomin, Chipuer, & Loehlin, 1990). Thus, there was a tendency for impulsive, aggressive children to have parents who also possessed these characteristics, and these characteristics tended to interfere with effective parenting. Second, research indicated that parent–child interaction was a reciprocal process. Ineffective parenting increased the probability of child conduct disorders, and also hostile, obstinate child behavior often elicited negative parenting behavior—resulting in a reduction in effective parenting (Patterson & Kirkland, 2007). Thus the personal characteristics of the parents combined with the difficult behavior of the child created a volatile mixture of antagonistic relationships. This led to the development of poor social skills and self-awareness that negatively impacted future outcomes.

Improving family functioning reduced problem behaviors, therefore increasing an environment conducive to fostering career awareness and success (Patterson & Kirkland, 2007). There were several major categories of interventions designed to strengthen family functioning and thus prevent future problem behaviors. These family strengthening interventions included family skills training, family education, family therapy, family services, and family preservation programs (Patterson & Kirkland, 2007).

Family Therapy Interventions

Family strengthening programs concentrated on changing the maladaptive patterns of interaction and communication in families in which youths already exhibited behavioral problems. In addition, some family strengthening programs used multicomponent interventions, including behavioral parent training, child social skills training, and family therapy. These multicomponent programs were known as family

skills training (Kumpfer, 1999). Family strengthening programs typically were implemented with youths diagnosed with mild emotional and behavioral problems such as conduct disorder, depression, and school or social problems. The program was usually conducted by trained therapists in clinical settings with the parents and child. Kumpfer (1999) identified several types of family strengthening techniques. They included the following:

1. Structural family therapy (Minuchin, 1985; Szapocznik, Kurtines, Foote, Perez-Vidal, & Hervis, 1983; Powell & Dosser, 1992) stressed families' coping skills and strategies as well as learning new ways to respond.

2. Strategic family therapy (Haley, 1963; Szapocznik & Kurtines, 1989) was pragmatic and goal oriented.

3. Structured–strategic family therapy (Stanton & Todd, 1982), as the name implies, combines a concentration on patterns of family interactions with goal-specific approaches.

4. Behavioral family therapy programs (those with a therapist working with one family) or behavior family training (those with a therapist working with several families in a group) contained separate skill-building training for parents and children during part of the session (Rosenthal and Bandura, 1978). The family was then brought together for activities during the last part of the therapy session.

5. Functional family therapy (Alexander & Parsons, 1982) was a short-term approach designed to engage and motivate youths and families to change negative affect (Alexander et al., 2000).

6. Multisystemic family therapy addressed delinquent youth behavior within the context of the family, school, and community. Interventions were goal oriented and emphasized development of family strengths (Henggeler,1999).

According to Howell (1995), who looked at several meta-analyses and evaluations of various therapy models, early research indicated that family therapy was effective in reducing family conflict and children's antisocial behavior. For example, Functional Family Therapy (FFT) was geared to help youths ages 11–18 who were at risk for, or were engaging in, delinquent behavior such as violence and substance abuse or

who had been diagnosed with conduct disorder, appositional defiant disorder, or disruptive behavior disorder. The intervention consisted of 8–12 hours of direct service for mild cases (26–30 hours for serious cases) and was delivered in several phases. Eleven matched or randomly assigned control/comparison group studies were conducted between 1973 and 1997, with follow-ups at 1, 2, 3, and 5 years. The model had been applied to populations in urban and rural settings and among many racial and ethnic groups. Based on these results it was plausible that FFT had produced reductions in recidivism, out-of-home placements, or subsequent sibling referrals of at least 25% and as much as 55% (Alexander et al., 2000).

Another effective family-focused intervention, Multisystemic Therapy (MST), which targeted chronic, violent, or substance-abusing juvenile offenders (ages 12–17) who were at risk for out-of-home placement (as are their families). MST services were delivered in the home, school, and community rather than in a clinic or residential treatment setting. Emphasis was placed on promoting behavior change in the youth's own environment. Services were more intensive than traditional family therapies and included several hours of treatment per week rather than the traditional 50 minutes. The emphasis was on developing an indigenous support network for the family in which the family was empowered to handle difficulties with the offending youth, and the youth was empowered to cope with family, peer, school, and neighborhood problems. Four randomized clinical trials compared the effectiveness of MST with usual community treatment for juvenile offenders and their families. Offenders in the MST group showed reductions in re-arrest rates between 25% and 70%. There were reductions in out-of-home placements between 47% and 64% in the three studies where data were obtained.

Drug-related arrests decreased in three sites where researchers gather data for this outcome. One site showed decreased aggression; in the other two sites there was no difference (Henggeler & Sheidow, 2003).

The Strengthening Families Program, a family-focused intervention, consisted, of seven consecutive weekly skill-building sessions (Kumpfer, Alvarado, Tait, Whiteside, 2007). Parents and children worked separately in training sessions and then participated together in sessions to practice the skills they have learned. The program was evaluated in three longitudinal studies. They first evaluated the Iowa Strengthening Family Program between 1986 and 1998, with a sample of families of sixth graders. At 4 years following the pre-test, the experimental group showed positive effects on parenting behaviors targeted by the intervention through the 8th grade follow-up; improvement in peer resistance skills and reduction in affiliations with antisocial peers at 7th, 8th, and 10th grade follow-up; lower probabilities of alcohol, tobacco, and marijuana use; lower rates of alcohol initiation through the 10th grade follow-up; and lower past-month cigarette use in the 10th grade (Molgaard, Spoth, & Redmond, 2000).

Multidimensional Treatment Foster Care (MTFC), a family therapy program, for children and adolescents ages 11–18 that had histories of chronic and severe criminal behavior and are at risk for incarceration (Westermark, Hansson, & Olsson, 2011). Community foster families were recruited and trained to provide out-of-home placements for juvenile offenders or children at risk for detention. These families were paid a stipend, and placements were usually for 6 to 9 months. The families were contacted daily by a case manager and were supported through weekly meetings. Youth received individual therapy, and biological (or adoptive) families received weekly family therapy. There was

frequent contact, including home visits, between the youths and their biological (or adoptive) families. Emphasis was placed on teaching youth interpersonal skills and on increasing participation in positive social activities, including sports and hobbies. In a randomized treatment/control evaluation, 79 boys ages 12–17 who were mandated into out-of-home care by the juvenile court were assigned to placement in MTFC or regular group care. After 1 year from exit, the MTFC group had fewer than half as many arrests as those in group care (2.6 offenses versus 5.4). Nearly three times as many participants in group care ran away or were expelled, compared with the MTFC group (Chamberlain, Price, Reid, & Landsverk, 2008; Chamberlain, Leve, & Degarmo, 2007).

Families and School's Together Program

Families and Schools Together (FAST), a nationally acclaimed after-school intervention program, was credited for positively impacting families, schools and communities. The program was first introduced by its creator Dr. Lynn McDonald in 1990 and was credited with reshaping the definition of family involvement because family involvement takes place at both the school and at home. The overall goal of the various programs was to keep children safe, smart and able to meet life's obstacles. There were many components to the FAST model which all support family, school and community collaboration. The five FAST programs were developed with each age group in mind and therefore can be used across the school age continuum as a preventative measure or an intervention. The programs focus on developing, building and maintaining a collaborative relationship between families and schools and communities, encouraging volunteer efforts, helping parents to develop positive skill sets in their children, and empowering parents as the primary caregiver responsible for the safety and well-being of

their children. Through various school-focused, extracurricular parental involvement activities families grow and develop new attitudes about how the family should and can operate to produce successful outcomes. The FAST program continuously strived to improve in its goal to assist parents to develop happy, healthy children with bright futures (McDonald, Billingham, Conrad, Morgan, Nancy, & Payton, 1997).

The five FAST programs included: Baby FAST, Pre K FAST, Kid FAST, Middle School FAST and Teen FAST. Baby FAST, group intervention for infants and toddlers up to age three, targeted first time mothers, teen mothers, single-parent families, isolated families and environments with high risk factors; however, Baby FAST had been successful across the United States with families from varied and diverse backgrounds. Baby FAST was operational in some schools and preschool programs to help parents prepare their children for learning (McDonald et al., 1997).

Pre K FAST served children ages 3-6 and focused on equipping children with the skills needed for a positive formal learning experience. Experts agreed that an abundance of academic intellect was good, but having self-confidence, demonstrating acceptable behavior and the ability to express needs were greater predictors of success at the preschool level (McDonald et al., 1997). Having success early in school created a foundation for continued success across the life span. The Pre K FAST program accomplished this by engaging willing parents to improve their family dynamics with a program that does not duplicate what schools were doing, but provided opportunities for personal growth and development for parents as well as an increased awareness of their relationship with their child (McDonald et al., 1997).

Kid FAST, an eight-week model designed for kindergarten through fifth grade students had the goal of developing positive self- esteem and positive character traits while simultaneously striving to prevent obstacles that prevented and or inhibited student achievement. The model was flexible and adaptable for both school and community settings and offered various options for delivery to include K-3rd grade students and 4th/5th grade students. However, any trained team could implement any option. The program had a proven track record with families from all walks of life, promoted leadership and scholastic success, and assisted them to make positive choices at school and in life (McDonald et al., 1997).

Families with preteens and teens can participate in the ten-week Middle School FAST program. As with all FAST programs the middle school model linked children and parents while helping with the transition as their children move towards making decisions that would impact their future. Communication between parent and child was increased as the parents became consciously aware of the various roles they played in their child's life to include mentor, counselor, and role model. This increased accountability strengthened the family and its capacity to function in the role of helping kids avoid bad habits and explore positive activities.

An 8-week course for high school-aged students called Teen FAST, provided students with the option to select a parent or other adult mentor. The goal was to create a community network of support for the student. This objective was fostered by the two year community support that continued after the participants graduated.

The comprehensive aim of the FAST program was to intercede sooner rather than later to help students with fewer advantages succeed in all areas of their lives by avoiding

the ills of society like drugs, violence, and poor academic performance. The FAST program strived to build and enhanced strengths already present in the family, school and community and made them better. The FAST process provided students an opportunity to develop social skills through relationship-building activities with their family, peers, and community and school personnel.

FAST promoted and encouraged the development of long-term relationships to provide students a "social safety net" of defense resources to persevere through life's tough spots. McDonald et al., (1997) had shown that certain facets of the FAST program prevent common forms of delinquent behavior because:

1. Increased multiple levels of social bonding reduced juvenile violence/crime.

2. Increased connections, rituals, and resilience reduced alcohol and drug abuse.

3. Reduced isolation and promoting family strength reduced child abuse and neglect.

4. Promoting parent involvement for school success reduced school failure (Alexander & Parsons, 1982; Minuchin, P. 1985; Minuchin, S., 2007; Solomon & Serres, 1999; & Webster-Stratton, Reid, & Stoolmiller, 2008).

Preventing and eliminating delinquent behavior and promoting academic excellence were essential to building a solid foundation for career development. A study of 6th graders between the ages of 11-13 from inner city Chicago schools showed that negative family bonds to include violence and abuse negatively impacted both student behavior and academic achievement (Thompson & Massat, 2005). Mo and Singh (2008) examined the impact of parental involvement on students' academic engagement and school performance revealed similar results. Mo and Singh (2008) considered both the indirect impact and the direct impact of parental involvement on school achievement and found

that both parents' relationship and involvement, and students' school engagement had significant effects on students' school performance. The more involved parents encouraged their students to be more serious about their learning and this produced higher academic scores for those students. These results highlighted the important role parents play in their students' education (Mo & Singh, 2008).

Despite the positive impact parental involvement had on increasing student achievement, reducing problem behaviors, and creating a positive sense of self-efficacy for achieving in school-related tasks (Epstein & Sheldon, 2002; Hoover-Dempsey & Sandler, 1995), parental involvement tended to be absent in many schools (Deplanty, Coulter-Kern, & Duchane, 2007; Stevenson & Baker, 1987). Numerous reasons were responsible for the lack parental involvement. Parental involvement was minimal when there are no or few social networks for parents (Sheldon, 2002). Eccles and Harold (1993) found that parents were less involved when they were uncomfortable with their own knowledge level. This was further exacerbated by their frustration and inability to understand their students' assignments.

FAST was applicable to all cultures, ethnicities, religions, and educational backgrounds because the program respected how each family operates, and placed no restrictions on admission into the program. Of the thousands of families who had started the FAST program, more than 80% had graduated from the 8-week program. These results were consistent across all of the diverse setting in which FAST operated. In addition, 2 years after graduating, 75% of FAST graduates maintained close relationships with their students' schools and 86% maintained some or all of the relationships created at FAST (McDonald et al., 1997). The FAST model had been used for over 24 years and

was found in 48 states and 8 countries. The program and its creator, McDonald have received many accolades and countless recognition for the program's success to include a SAMHSA model program in 2002 being named the Office of Juvenile Justice OJJDP exemplary program in 2006. In addition, FAST had consistently demonstrated its effectiveness across a broad spectrum of diverse heritages, languages, educational and economic backgrounds.

Conclusion

In summary, African American students and non-African American students had very similar post school goals of continuing education, gaining employment, and increasing independence (Davis & Humphrey, 2000). Unfortunately, African American students did not achieve these goals as often as others (Davis & Humphrey, 2000). Statistics showed that career education practices had created different outcomes by gender, race, and socioeconomic status classifications (Trainor et al., 2008). Career development was a way of promoting equal opportunity and educational equity, however, students demonstrated little knowledge of how school related to the real world (Palladino-Schultheiss et al., 2005). Career development provided a foundation for students to understand themselves, make school a meaningful experience, and tie academics to real world experiences (Pace, 2011). While using an ecological framework, career interventions were developed that promote exploration and self-concept. Such interventions promoted exploration of new ideas and abilities that broadened students' informational knowledge and exposure to diverse occupations, linked academic subjects with various occupations, explore conceptions of work, counter career myths, nurture support networks, and gave students a greater sense of control over their future. Through

career interventions a youth became more self-aware, develops independence, and examined what they wanted for their future. This increased the likelihood of a child being adequately prepared for postsecondary education, employment, and independent living. Therefore, career education programs provided African American students a means to attaining equity and made positive post school outcomes and career goals a reality.

Positive student outcomes increased with families who were involved in their child's educational experiences (Kumpfer & Alvardo 2003). This sets the groundwork for a child's career options that were available to them. Additionally, family functioning was shown to influence a child's behavior and the career choice a child made (Stouthamer-Loeber, Wei, Homish, & Loeber, 2002). Family interventions strengthened family functioning which in turn promoted positive behavior change which impacted the career options and choices of an individual (Kumpfer, 1999). FAST was one such family strengthening program that collaborated with the family and school, and was available to children as early as the infant and toddler stage of development (McDonald, Moberg, Brown, Rodriguez-Espiricueta, Flores, Burke, & Coover, 2006). This in turn would help families from the onset become more involved with their children, increased positive outcomes, strengthened family functioning, and increased children's career opportunities a promising impact on society.

Chapter III

METHODOLOGY

Education professionals were now faced with the challenge of making sure that minority students were able to secure and maintain employment. The charge of ensuring that students of color and from lower income producing families were successful in this endeavor was not that of schools alone. Families were just as responsible, if not more responsible for making sure that their students were successful in school and in life. The current federal educational mandate, No Child Left Behind (NCLB) of 2001, has forced schools to encourage parents to take a more active role in the education of students; however, it did not appear that low-income families were as prepared or qualified to help their students as moderate and high income families in their new roles and responsibilities (U.S. Department of Education, 2008).

Traditionally, parental involvement was a direct result of the parent-teacher and or parent–school relationship. When the relationship was negative, a split was likely to occur causing two separate entities. This separation caused a major disconnect and hindered the students' academic progress. In a majority of programs designed to promote parental involvement, the activities generally focused on a singular event and did not do much to encourage continued educational support in populations that already were disenfranchised with schools. This feeling did not encourage families to participate or seek assistance from schools. Some families had limited knowledge about school and

teaching practices, while many educators remained equally uninformed about diverse cultures. The traditional way of involving parents in education may no longer be the best way.

The demands on families made it even more difficult to raise children successfully (Brown, 2008). McDonald and Frey (1999) found that FAST increased parent chances to combat the risks facing students. Families participating in FAST showed an increase in parental involvement especially amongst stressed and isolated families. The programs initial home visit followed by 8 weekly school activities and FAST works helped to build and promote support systems and networks for parents. Two years after graduating from the FAST program, 75% of the families were still actively involved with their students' schools and their academic progress (McDonald et al., 1997). Schools and educators were constantly looking for ways to actively involve parents, especially those of low performing students.

Families and Schools Together (FAST), a nationally acclaimed prevention program (McDonald et al., 2006), was listed by the National Dropout Prevention Center/Network as a model program for the National Dropout Prevention Network (Layzer, Goodson, Creps, Werner, Bernstein, 2001). FAST was credited for positively impacting families, schools and communities (Crozier, Rokutani, Russett, Godwin, and Banks, 2010). The overall goal of the various programs was to keep children safe, smart and able to meet life's obstacles. There were many components to the FAST model which all support family, school and community collaboration. The five FAST programs were developed with each age group in mind and therefore can be used across the school age continuum as a preventative measure or an intervention. The programs focused on

developing, building and maintaining a collaborative relationship between families and schools and communities, encouraging volunteer efforts, helping parents to develop positive skill sets in their children, and empowering parents as the primary caregiver responsible for the safety and well-being of their children (McDonald et al., 1997; McDonald et al., 1991). Through various school- focused, extracurricular parental involvement activities families developed new attitudes about how the family should and can operate to produce successful outcomes (Crozier et al., 2010).

Statement of the Research Problem

Students need continual exploration in the domain of career awareness (American Counseling Association, 2007). Ketterson & Blustein (1997) believed that while young people may resist the structure and guidance parents provide in these mystifying times, the career education and guidance provided by parents greatly reduced student stress and anxiety in addition to improving students' future outcomes. High school graduation rates and post school employment outcomes for African American youth vary by socioeconomic status, gender, and family involvement (Gordon, 1999). Families significantly impacted the career development of their children (Penick & Jepsen, 1992; Whiston & Keller, 2004). There was a limited amount of research regarding the familial influence on career development for elementary students. This study added to the body of research in this area specifically focusing on the collaboration between the school and family utilizing the intervention program known as FAST.

Families and Schools Together

FAST, an 8-week program, involved families thru opportunities to meet at the school and engage in precise, enjoyable, and research-based activities. The weekly

organized, give-and-take, multi-family group activities were executed in a manner aimed to empower parents. Every FAST exercise and program component was developed from a distinct research result in family systems theories. FASTWORKS promoted the development of social and support systems by providing FAST graduates with opportunities to partake in monthly family-focused activities. The FASTWORKS program was totally run by FAST parent graduates.

The FAST and FASTWORKS programs include four major objectives:

1. To increase children's feelings of affiliation toward their schools and families.

2. To increase parents' feelings of control over their homes, children, and life circumstances.

3. To increase positive and responsive interactions within families and toward children.

4. To increase support networks of families of high-risk students in relationship to the school.

These four objectives added to the overall program goal of promoting a sense of belonging, respect, and cooperation among the various players in the students' family, school, and community environments (Hernandez, 2000; McDonald & Frey, 1999).

After the decision was made to implement a FAST program the school counselor, teacher or the principal's designee recommended students to participate or families volunteered on their own. After students were recommended for participation, the FAST program coordinator made contact with the students' family, explained the FAST program in detail and to conducted a home visit if the family was interested in participating. Everyone in the students' household was encouraged to participate. Typically each FAST cycle accommodated up to 10 families depending on the size of each family and the size of the FAST team (Hernandez, 2000; McDonald & Frey, 1999).

Each FAST session followed a fixed agenda that included an organized and consistent opening and closing ceremony, ordered family activities, student group time, parent and adult family group time, sibling group time, and parent-child play time (also called "special play"). Trained FAST team members guided each activity, however no school team member was allowed to participate in or guide the parent and adult family group (Hernandez, 2000; McDonald & Frey, 1999).

The engaging and exciting activities were designed to develop family cohesion. Each night one or more families won the lottery. The winning family in addition to receiving a gift for each member of their family was also given funds to prepare the meal for the next FAST session. Enjoying this meal as a family where the student serves the family was just one of the many activities. Another involved making a family flag. The first night each family worked on designing their family flag that was used as their centerpiece each session until graduation when they got to take their flag home. Learning to communicate and sharing feelings were promoted by other activities that were used to reinforce caring attitudes such as sharing and listening. Team members which were comprised of school volunteers and community partners supported parents and shared in activities, but allowed parents to be in charge (Hernandez, 2000; McDonald & Frey, 1999).

FASTWORKS was designed to maintain the support system developed during FAST. It consisted of regularly scheduled meetings with activities for the entire family. The FASTWORKS program operated under the supervision of a parent board comprised of FAST graduates. The goal was for the parents' ownership to continually increase over time until they were in complete control of the program. The FASTWORKS program

was given funds to implement entertaining, school, and community-related events for FAST graduates. As a community support group with similar concerns and issues, FASTWORKS operated as a resource to inspire once uninvolved parents to become actively involved in school activities and to become more hands on in their students' development (Hernandez, 2000; McDonald & Frey, 1999).

As school districts struggled to deal with decreasing budgets and increasing demands and expectations, it was imperative that educators became both effective and efficient in their mission to educate students and enable them to enter the work force. Research-based interventions with successful records should be utilized whenever possible. Crozier, et al., (2010) confirmed the success of the Family and Schools Together (FAST) model across cultures, languages, socioeconomic and educational backgrounds with respect to academic achievement and decreasing negative behaviors. However, as is the case with elementary career awareness, there have been few studies examining the context of elementary career development. Webb, (2001) examined the correlation of family involvement on student achievement. Ketterson & Blustein (1997) established that the earlier the connection was made between school and the world of work the greater the chance for positive outcomes. While a great amount of time and money had been invested into the FAST program it, was advantageous to discover other possible benefits. Linking school to work provided elementary students with a firm career development foundation.

Method

This is a quantitative, non-experimental research study. In quantitative research, an investigator relies on numerical data (Mertler & Vannatta, 2005). The researcher

reviewed theories on parental involvement, reading achievement and student behavior and developed three hypotheses to determine the relationship between Families and Schools Together (FAST) and familial attitudes on career development, and student's reading levels and school behavior.

Participants

An equal number of non-FAST parents were recruited on a volunteer basis from families with students enrolled at the elementary school. A matched sample of non-FAST students was selected by the administrator based on grade, age, sex, and race utilizing a random stratified sampling technique. The study had 26 FAST participants and 26 non-FAST participants. To ensure anonymity and confidentiality for all participants no names or other identifiable information was collected for any adult or student participants. Each participant represents a family, a parent or guardian who completed the questionnaire and the child whose DRA 2 level and Elementary School Code of Conduct and Team Intervention Form were examined.

The setting for the study was a small (300-325 students) elementary school with grades Pre-kindergarten through 5th grade that first opened in 1961 in what was a predominantly affluent African American neighborhood. This school was in a small city next to a large military installation. The 44 member faculty and staff consisted of a principal, academic coach, parent coordinator, school counselor, secretary, clinic worker, two focus reading specialists, and three custodians. The school had one paraprofessional and two teachers for the special education students in grades K-5, and one paraprofessional and one teacher at the pre-school level. Three paraprofessionals and three teachers were at the kindergarten level, one paraprofessional and three teachers

worked at the 1st grade level, three teachers at the 2nd ,3rd, and 4th, grades and two teachers at the 5th grade level. The school was also supported with the following itinerants two music teachers, one art teacher, one paraprofessional and one physical education teacher, one social worker, one school psychologist, and five cafeteria workers. The school had a variety of programs to introduce students to careers from pre-kindergarten to fifth grade to include career education guidance activities. The Elementary Family and Schools Together (FAST) program debuted at the school in the Fall of 2008.

The school's FAST team had achieved an exemplary model rating for fidelity to the model by scoring 10 out of 10 points. Fidelity was the accuracy with which the FAST model was reproduced in a community. Families And Schools Together, Inc. rated each team's fidelity to the FAST model for the current cycle based on the following ten criteria:

1. A fully trained team
2. A complete team
3. Representation from two different community based organizations
4. Ethnic matching between team members and families
5. Weekly inclusion of all core program components: (1) a meal shared as a family unit; (2) family communication games played at a family table; (3) time for couples or buddies; (4) a self-help parent group; (5) one-on-one parent-child time; and (6) a fixed lottery that lets every family win once followed by a closing ritual
6. Parent empowerment

7. Successful resolution of team conflict, if any

8. A minimum of five graduating families

9. Complete data from at least five of the graduate families

10. Active and ongoing FASTWORKS program

Teams were awarded one point for each met criteria and no partial points were awarded. The fidelity rating was based on total points as follows:

1-3 points = Promising

4-5 points = Effective

6-8 points = Model

9-10 points = Exemplary Model

The school was approximately 95% African American, 3% Caucasian and 1% Hispanic and 1% Bi-racial. Approximately 85% of the students received free and reduced meals. Approximately 10% of the students were in some type of foster care situation. Another 10% were military families. The school did not have a Parent Teacher Student Association (PTSA) for approximately 2 years due to lack of parent volunteers. Volunteers were also needed to assist with the clothing bank, fall festival and other activities.

Since the inception of the FAST program at the elementary school in October 2008 33 families had participated and graduated by attending a minimum of 6 weeks during the 8 week program. The study will focused on FAST graduate parents and their students enrolled in grades kindergarten through 3rd grade at the elementary school. Participation in the study was completely voluntary.

Instrumentation

Three instruments were used to complete this study. 1) The Family Career Development Questionnaire (FCDC), 2) the Developmental Reading Assessment 2 (DRA2) and 3) the Elementary School Code of Conduct and Team Intervention Form. The 37 statement Family Career Development Questionnaire (FCDC) (see Appendix A) was created using information from a 1992 SCANS report. The instrument was pilot tested to determine reliability and validity. Reliability was determined via the test-retest methodology through a pilot study. Reliability using Cronbach's Alpha Coefficient was .93.

The instrument, the "Family Career Development Questionnaire" was reviewed by three career and workforce development experts: a university professor; a workforce development specialist, and a district director of guidance to confirm the content validity of the instrument. The panel reviewed the standards as well as the questionnaire items and confirmed that the instrument demonstrated content validity as evidenced by the item-level content validity index (I-CVI) which was 1.00 (Lynn, 1986). The "Family Career Development Questionnaire" was also pilot tested through a test and retest method with community volunteers to confirm reliability. The cronbach alpha statistical test showed the family career development questionnaire to have a .93 reliability rate.

The Person Developmental Reading Assessment 2nd edition (DRA2) (See Appendix J) was used to identify each students' reading level (Rathvon, 2006). The DRA2, a K-6 reading assessment determined the students' independent reading level, supports guided reading, and informed instruction. Development of the DRA2 was based on what educators and the existing research literature identified as being key

characteristics and behaviors of good readers (Rathvon, 2006). The DRA2 assessment was based upon a number of premises which were drawn from a variety of sources including the research literature concerning reading development and instruction.

Multiple forms of reliability analyses were conducted and triangulation results showed the DRA2 was a reliable measure in that it produces stable consistent results over time, different raters, and different samples of work or content (Williams, 1999). Specifically, it demonstrates moderate to high internal consistency reliability (see Table 4), parallel equivalency reliability (see Table 5), test-retest reliability with a range of correlation coefficients from .93-.99; and inter-rater reliability of .80. Internal consistency data collected during the Williams (1999) study with 306 students in kindergarten through Grade 3 (ns of 33 to 125) reading on levels from A to 44 (pre-primer to Grade 5) indicated high levels of consistency for accuracy, comprehension, reading stage, phrasing and reading rate (Cronbach's alpha = .98) and for DRA 2 texts (Cronbach's alpha = .97) (Rathvon, 2006).

Table 4

DRA2: Cronbach's Alpha

Level	Oral Fluency	Comprehension
4	.784	.818
6	.849	.805
8	.680	.778
10	.736	.825
12	.758	.853
14	.542	.779
16	.731	.583
18	.614	.816
20	.725	.739
24	.725	.710
28	.788	.693
30	.778	717

Table 5

Oral Fluency and Reading Comprehension Within-Level Equivalency: MANOVA

	Oral Fluency				Comprehension			
DRA2 Text Level	Intercept	p-value	Passage	p-value	Intercept	p-value	Passage	p-value
4	12406.10	0.000	93.06	0.001*	39091.95	0.000	0.06	0.952
6	7975.32	0.000	0.71	0.790	22487.56	0.000	6.86	0.478
8	5658.13	0.000	0.06	0.929	21636.63	0.000	42.40	0.065
10	5050.21	0.000	1.84	0.535	15112.01	0.000	5.03	0.506
12	11351.86	0.000	0.01	0.972	31742.08	0.000	2.81	0.632
14	12128.27	0.000	2.134	0.377	35944.22	0.000	0.03	0.954
16	11888.10	0.000	16.07	0.169	34584.14	0.000	22.75	0.152
18	14601.79	0.000	0.91	0.616	46086.55	0.000	0.96	0.767
20	16378.00	0.000	4.64	0.341	53068.30	0.000	3.41	0.544
24	14718.22	0.000	6.46	0.255	47792.38	0.000	0.26	0.851
28	15309.83	0.000	13.61	0.080	41166.79	0.000	1.95	0.784
30	11650.05	0.000	2.11	0.515	35072.31	0.000	0.21	0.876

DRA2 has been shown to be a valid measurement of oral, fluency, and reading comprehension. The findings presented on content-related validity, criterion-related validity, and construct validity provided support for the validity of the DRA2.

Specifically, the DRA2 subtests measured those constructs they were designed to measure: oral fluency and reading comprehension. Results showed a moderate correlation between the two subtests as expected since fluency and comprehension were related.

The school's students were expected to demonstrate good citizenship and appropriate social behavior at all times. Behavior was never to infringe upon the rights of other students or adults, thereby disrupting the learning process or school environment. A teacher or supervising adult may remove a student from the classroom, cafeteria or playground area when the student deliberately causes a discipline offense that violates the safety or civil respect of others. The elementary school discipline policy handles infractions as follows:

1. Fill out School Code of Conduct Teacher Interventions form. (See Appendix F)

2. Place the Elementary School Code of Conduct Teacher Interventions form in the students' class folder. Non-classroom staff will give the form to the classroom teacher.

3. The Elementary School Code of Conduct Teacher Interventions forms were collected weekly by the detention team and the data was entered into the discipline system.

4. The leadership team met monthly to discuss the data and then presented it to staff.

Procedures

To date, 33 families have graduated from the school's Kid FAST program since its inception in October 2008. The Family Career Development Questionnaires were distributed by the researcher in the form of a packet that contained the Family Career Development questionnaire and an informational letter (Appendix E) to families who

graduated from the FAST program as well as families who did not participate in the FAST program. The 26 participants volunteered for the study and the researcher provided a letter explaining the risks to the participants as well as their rights and who to contact regarding any questions or concerns (see Appendix E for the letter that detailed the study's risks and rights of the participants). The families who volunteered completed the packet which contained an information letter (see Appendix E) and the Family Career Development Questionnaire (see Appendix A) at a FAST Works event at the school in the guidance office. Packets were handed out to all the parents at one time. Participants chose to complete or not to complete the packet. All participants that received a survey packet returned a packet by placing it on the table near the door as they exited. All data collected remained confidential. The packets were numbered and the volunteers were instructed to remember their number in the event they wanted to withdraw from the study at any time for any reason.

The research site for this study was an elementary school with a Kid FAST program in Georgia. Prior to data collection, approval to conduct the study was granted by the Institutional Review Board for Research Involving Human Subjects at Valdosta State University, Muscogee County School District, and Families And Schools Together, Inc. and (see Appendices B, C, & D). The researcher requested permission from the FAST team coordinator to attend a FASTWORKS event. One hundred survey packets were prepared for distribution, 50 FAST packets and 50 non-FAST packets. Enclosed in each survey packet was: (a) an information letter explaining the research study and any possible risk to the participants and their rights (see Appendix E) and (b) the Family Career Development questionnaire instrument (see Appendix A).

The survey packets were distributed by the researcher at the beginning of a FASTWORKS event to each potential participant. Those who chose not to participate also turned in an envelope however; it contained an uncompleted questionnaire. All information obtained for this study was recorded in such a manner that participants cannot be identified directly or through identifiers linked to the subjects. All packets were numbered and participants were instructed not write their name on any items to ensure both confidentiality and anonymity.

Design of the Study

This study compared FAST family graduates' perceptions of their level of career development to those families that have not participated in FAST based on the Family Career Development Questionnaire. The research also compared student achievement as evident by reading levels and discipline referrals of FAST student graduates to non-FAST students in an effort to show the impact FAST has on shaping families' influence on elementary student career development. During non-school hours, an administrator provided the researcher with the Developmental Reading Assessment, Second Edition (DRA2) levels and the number of discipline referrals for all FAST students. The same information was collected for a matched sample of non-FAST students based on grade, age, and sex of non-FAST students. The information provided only represented a summary of the assessment, which was the students' current reading level. In regards to the discipline referrals, only the numerical value for the total amount of discipline referrals was provided for the two month period following the FAST graduation. No information on the type of infraction or the punitive consequences was collected. The administrator provided forms (Appendices H & I) to record the reading levels and

number of discipline referrals for FAST and non-FAST students respectively. No names or any other identifiable information was provided and all data remained confidential and anonymous.

Office disciplinary referrals for misconduct were also examined because of the correlation shown in research between discipline and school achievement. A major criticism of school reform has been its lack of emphasis on social-behavioral standards that correlate to student achievement and post-secondary goals and objectives (Downing & D'Andrea, 1996; Epstein, Galindo, & Sheldon, 2011; Epstein & Sheldon, 2000; Epstein & Voorhis, 2010). In addition to developing self-supporting, positive contributing members of society, other benefits include "crime prevention, social cohesion, technological innovations, intergenerational benefits (i.e., the benefits parents derive from their own education and transmit to their children), and overall performance of the economy" (Haveman & Wolfe, 1984; Sturm, 1993). A decrease in discipline referrals not only equates to an increase in instructional time (Utley & Sailor, 2002; Warren, Edmonson, Griggs, Lassen, McCart, Turnbull, & Sailor, 2003), but also hopefully in the area of social integration and behavior which will carry over into the home and work environments.

The "Family Career Development Questionnaire" was used to ascertain the extent to which families are involved in their students' career development. The "Family Career Development Questionnaire" (Sparks, 2011) consisted of 33 statements designed to determine the amount of deliberate and focused attention given to career development skills in the home. The validity of the "Family Career Development Questionnaire (Sparks, 2011) was determined by a panel of career and workforce development experts.

The reading levels and discipline records of FAST participants and a matched sample of non- FAST participants were obtained from the school administrator during non-contract hours. Administrators have different work schedules and all of information provided was collected during the administrator's personal time. The information obtained for this study does not contain any identifiable or demographic information; only numerical data to include the current mean DRA2 reading level and the numerical mean of discipline referrals for the two month period following the FAST graduation.

External validity referred to the generalizability of the results of a study. This study was an inaugural study to see how FAST impacts families' perceptions of career awareness. External validity was dependent on the adequacy of the sample. Matched samples of non-FAST students insured the distribution of control variables by matching pairs of subjects in the different groups. For this study subjects were matched to FAST participants on the following control variables: grade, age, sex, and race. Using matched samples was a good option when the sample population was small, as is the case with this study due to the limited number of FAST graduates. Matched sample sizes of 20 subjects per group are minimally sufficient (Marion, 2004). Using nearest-neighbor matching, the mean squared error of the estimated treatment effect was minimized in 67.7% of the scenarios when 1:1 matching was used (Austin, 2010).

Hypotheses

The influence of parents on the career decisions of their children was often recognized as an important contributing factor (Bardick et al., 2005; Kniveton, 2004). Research conducted with finalists in a Teacher of the Year competition revealed that their parents fostered a desire and respect for education (Duemer et al., 2002). A supportive

family was more significant to improving student achievement than income, education or culture (Bokhorst-Heng, 2008). Research regarding family systems and the family's influence on student achievement and thus career development the following hypotheses were proposed:

a. Adults participating in FAST would have significantly higher rates of assisting their children with career development than a matched sample of non-FAST participants as measured on the Family Career Development Questionnaire (FCDQ).

b. Students participating in FAST would have significantly higher reading levels than a matched sample of non-FAST students as measured by the Developmental Reading Assessment 2nd edition (DRA2) reading assessment.

c. Students participating in FAST would have significantly lower discipline referrals for negative behavior issues than a matched sample of non-FAST students as measured by the Elementary School Code of Conduct and Team Intervention Form.

Chapter IV

RESULTS

A MANOVA determined the extent of differences in the perceptions of the level of support families provided in nurturing the skills critical to an individual's career development, and student achievement tied to career development among FAST family graduates' and families who have not participated in FAST. Particularly, the following questions were addressed:

(a) To what extent were there differences in the level of support regarding the skills critical to career development among families who had participated in FAST and families who had not participated in FAST.

(b) To what extent are there differences in students' reading levels among families who had participated in FAST and families who had not participated in FAST.

(c) To what extent are there differences in student behavior among families who had participated in FAST and families who had not participated in FAST.

Data Analysis

The impact FAST has on elementary students career development was analyzed using a multivariate analysis of variance (MANOVA). A MANOVA test for differences between groups as defined by one independent categorical variable. A MANOVA is

used to simultaneously test two or more dependent variables while controlling for the correlations among the dependent variables (Mertler & Vannatta, 2005). Because this study examined differences among three dependent variables defined by the categorical independent variable, a MANOVA was best suited to analyze the data.

In this study, FAST and non-FAST participants were the independent variables. Those who participated in FAST were in the FAST condition, while those who did not participate in the FAST program were in the non- FAST condition. Both groups completed the Family Career Development Questionnaire to determine their level of involvement with their elementary student in regards to career awareness. The reading levels and discipline referrals of students from both groups were analyzed. The DRA 2 K-5 reading levels ranged from A – 50. For this study level A will = a level of "0". A table identifying the DRA2 reading levels and their grade level equivalents is located in Appendix G. While the elementary school was a needs improvement school, many of the FAST participants read on or above grade level.

Descriptive statistics were calculated to examine the frequency of responses for the FAST and non-FAST participants' responses to questions on the Family Career Development questionnaire. Descriptive statistics were also calculated to examine the minimums, maximums, means and standard deviations of FAST and non-FAST participant reading levels and discipline referrals.

The first hypothesis was: Adults participating in FAST would have significantly higher rates of assisting their children with career development than a matched sample of non-FAST participants as measured on the Family Career Development Questionnaire. The mean for FAST families was 98 compared to 97 for non-FAST families. There were

no statistically significant differences found among perceptions of parental support regarding career awareness according to the Family Career Development Questionnaire. This implies that both groups perceive they were providing guidance in the area of career development to their elementary students. This perception of guidance indicates that both FAST and non-FAST families may be able to successfully work with elementary students in the area of career education.

The frequency results for the Family Career Development questionnaire were as follows and are also listed in Table 6. Question number one stated: "I read to my child." Twenty-seven of the 52 participants responded 0-2 times a week. This is 52% of the participants. Thirty-three percent responded 3 to 4 times a week and the remaining 15% stated they read to their children 5 to 7 times a week. Twenty-one percent of the respondents reported listening to their child read 0 to 2 times per week, 40% selected 3 to 4 times a week and 38% selected 5 to 7 times a week for question two, "I listen to my child read." The third question in this section dealt with homework and 6% reported helping their children with homework 0-2 times per week, 42%, 3-4 times a week, and 52%, 5-7 times a week.

Table 6

Family Career Development Questionnaire Frequency Results for FAST Participants

Statements	**0-2 times per week**	**3-4 times per week**	**5-7 times per week**
I read to my child.	13	7	6
I listen to my child read.	4	13	9
I help my child with homework.	1	10	15
	Never	**Sometimes**	**Always**
I get help for my child with homework I do not understand.	2	7	17
I use correct grammar when talking to my child.	2	7	17
I correct my child's grammar.	1	6	19
I encourage my child to answer questions using words instead of gestures.	1	3	22
I model appropriate listening skills for my child.	1	7	18
I correct my child's listening (lack of attention/focus) as needed.	0	3	23
I know how my child dominant learning style.	1	8	17
I discuss my child's learning style with their teacher(s).	2	12	12
I model decision making strategies for my child.	2	11	13
I encourage my child to make appropriate decisions independently.	0	4	22
I model problem solving strategies for my child.	0	7	19
I encourage my child to solve appropriate problems independently.	0	3	23
I model creativity for my child.	1	6	19
I encourage my child to be creative.	0	3	23
I model appropriate reasoning skills for my child.	2	6	18
I model responsibility in my daily life for my child.	1	2	23
I use daily living activities to teach my child responsibility.	0	5	21
I consciously make the effort to develop my child's self-esteem.	0	2	24
I model appropriate communication techniques for my child.	1	5	20
I correct my child's communication techniques as needed.	0	10	16
I model appropriate time management skills for my child.	0	10	16
I encourage my child to assist with scheduling their activities.	1	11	14
I model cooperating with others for my child.	0	4	22
I encourage my child to work cooperatively with others.	0	6	20
I model self-control for my child.	0	6	20
I teach self-control strategies to my child.	1	5	20
I model the importance of telling the truth for my child.	1	2	23
I utilize appropriate discipline strategies to reinforce the importance of telling the truth.	0	3	23
I model leadership characteristics for my child.	0	8	18
I teach leadership skills to my child.	0	8	18
I encourage my child to seize opportunities to demonstrate their leadership abilities.	1	9	16
I model appropriate organizational skills for my child.	0	9	17
I teach my child organizational skills.	0	8	18
I correct my child's organizational skills as needed.	0	11	15

Table 7

Family Career Development Questionnaire Frequency Results for Non-FAST Participants

Statements	**0-2 times per week**	**3-4 times per week**	**5-7 times per week**
I read to my child.	14	10	2
I listen to my child read.	7	8	11
I help my child with homework.	2	12	12
	Never	**Sometimes**	**Always**
I get help for my child with homework I do not understand.	6	8	12
I use correct grammar when talking to my child.	0	12	14
I correct my child's grammar.	0	11	15
I encourage my child to answer questions using words instead of gestures.	0	6	20
I model appropriate listening skills for my child.	0	12	14
I correct my child's listening (lack of attention/focus) as needed.	0	3	23
I know how my child dominant learning style.	0	16	10
I discuss my child's learning style with their teacher(s).	5	13	8
I model decision making strategies for my child.	0	13	13
I encourage my child to make appropriate decisions independently.	0	5	21
I model problem solving strategies for my child.	2	8	16
I encourage my child to solve appropriate problems independently.	0	5	21
I model creativity for my child.	0	8	18
I encourage my child to be creative.	2	2	22
I model appropriate reasoning skills for my child.	0	6	20
I model responsibility in my daily life for my child.	0	4	22
I use daily living activities to teach my child responsibility.	0	4	22
I consciously make the effort to develop my child's self-esteem.	0	2	24
I model appropriate communication techniques for my child.	0	9	17
I correct my child's communication techniques as needed.	0	10	16
I model appropriate time management skills for my child.	0	12	14
I encourage my child to assist with scheduling their activities.	1	13	12
I model cooperating with others for my child.	0	9	17
I encourage my child to work cooperatively with others.	0	4	22
I model self-control for my child.	0	7	19
I teach self-control strategies to my child.	0	5	21
I model the importance of telling the truth for my child.	0	2	24
I utilize appropriate discipline strategies to reinforce the importance of telling the truth.	0	2	24
I model leadership characteristics for my child.	0	4	22
I teach leadership skills to my child.	0	6	20
I encourage my child to seize opportunities to demonstrate their leadership abilities.	0	7	19
I model appropriate organizational skills for my child.	0	8	18
I teach my child organizational skills.	0	11	15
I correct my child's organizational skills as needed.	0	9	17

The remaining questions on the questionnaire required specific responses of "never," "sometimes," or "always." Questions number 23, 24, 26-28, and 31-33 had received no "never" responses from either group. Questions 5-8, 10, 12, 14, 16-19, and 22 had less than 4% from either group selecting "never." Only question number 11 "I discuss my child's learning style with their teacher(s)" received less than 50% (38.5%) for "always" from both groups.

The second hypothesis was: Students participating in FAST would have significantly higher reading levels than a matched sample of non-FAST students as measured by the DRA reading assessment. MANOVA results revealed significant differences among participants who graduated from the FAST program versus those who did not, Wilk's $\Lambda = .567$, $F(3, 48) = 12.2$, $p = .000$. Specifically, univariate ANOVA results indicated that there were statistically significant differences in the reading levels of students whose families participated in FAST versus those who did not $F(1, 50) = 26.1$, $p = .000$. Several factors accounted for the difference to include different academic instruction; however care was taken to match teachers whenever possible. When given the list of FAST students the school administrator was able to select a matched sample non-FAST participant based on age and gender from the same class with one exception due to race. Table 8 shows the minimum, maximum, mean scores and standard deviations for FAST and non-FAST participant's DRA2 reading levels.

Table 8

Minimums, Maximums, Means and Standard Deviations of Reading Levels

	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Standard Deviation
FAST	4	38	24	9
Non-FAST	1	28	11	8

The third hypothesis was: Students participating in FAST would have significantly lower discipline referrals for negative behavior issues than a matched sample of non-FAST students. Again the MANOVA showed there were statistically significant differences between FAST and Non-FAST participants ($F (3, 48) = 5.75$, $p = .020$). The ANOVA showed there was a significant difference in the amount of discipline referrals of students whose families participated in FAST verses those who did not $F (1, 50) = 5.75$, $p = .020$. Again teacher subjectivity could account for some difference, but the matched samples included an 88% teacher match also. Table 9 shows the minimum, maximum, mean scores and standard deviations for FAST and non-FAST participant's discipline referrals.

Table 9

Means and Standard Deviations of Discipline Referrals

	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Standard Deviation
FAST	0	3	1	1
Non-FAST	0	10	2	3

Chapter V

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The purpose of this study was to determine the impact Family and Schools Together (FAST) had on reading achievement and discipline referrals for elementary students. Various education reform efforts and the recent economic crisis have led to changes in career education curriculums. In addition to the changes at the middle and high school levels, educators recognized the need to begin career activities with elementary students. Many skill sets were identified as important for school and work success. The specific academic skills included a foundation in reading, writing and arithmetic (Pace, 2011). Previous research has shown a positive correlation between elementary reading skills and academic success (Denton, West, & Walston, 2003). Parental influence on their children's career choices was also an important contributing factor to future success (Bardick et al., 2005; Kniveton, 2004). Inappropriate parental skills have been identified as the cause of children being involved in several social vices and criminal activities. Most youth detention program report the youth offenders are products of uninvolved parents and broken homes (Kumpfer & Alvardo, 2003; Newcomb & Bentler, 1986; Videon, 2002).

Research supported that parents influence their children's views of education (Duemer et al., 2002). Positive parental involvement was linked to improving student achievement despite family income, education or culture (Bokhorst-Heng, 2008). The

goal of having all students being employable upon graduation would be greatly enhanced by an elementary curriculum that addresses basic academic skills and family involvement in its career education curriculum.

It was hypothesized that adults participating in FAST would have significantly higher rates of assisting their children with career development than a matched sample of non-FAST participants as measured on the Family Career Development Questionnaire. However, both FAST and non-FAST families equally perceived themselves as assisting their children with career development as there was no statistically significant different in the results. Both groups believed they were providing guidance in the area of career development to their elementary students. This perception of guidance indicates that both FAST and non-FAST families may be able to successfully work with elementary students in the area of career education. However, even though there were no significant differences, 23% of families who participated in FAST reported reading to their children 5-7 times per week compared to only 7% of families who did not participate in FAST. The following two tables show all the response percentages for FAST and Non-FAST participants.

Table 10

Family Career Development Questionnaire Percentage Results for FAST Participants

Statements FAST	**0-2 times per week**	**3-4 times per week**	**5-7 times per week**
I read to my child.	50%	27%	23%
I listen to my child read.	15%	50%	35%
I help my child with homework.	4%	38%	58%
	Never	**Sometimes**	**Always**
I get help for my child with homework I do not understand.	8%	27%	65%
I use correct grammar when talking to my child.	8%	27%	65%
I correct my child's grammar.	4%	23%	73%
I encourage my child to answer questions using words instead of gestures.	4%	12%	85%
I model appropriate listening skills for my child.	4%	27%	69%
I correct my child's listening (lack of attention/focus) as needed.	0%	12%	88%
I know how my child dominant learning style.	4%	31%	65%
I discuss my child's learning style with their teacher(s).	8%	46%	46%
I model decision making strategies for my child.	8%	42%	50%
I encourage my child to make appropriate decisions independently.	0%	15%	85%
I model problem solving strategies for my child.	0%	27%	73%
I encourage my child to solve appropriate problems independently.	0%	12%	88%
I model creativity for my child.	4%	23%	73%
I encourage my child to be creative.	0%	12%	88%
I model appropriate reasoning skills for my child.	8%	23%	69%
I model responsibility in my daily life for my child.	4%	8%	88%
I use daily living activities to teach my child responsibility.	0%	19%	81%
I consciously make the effort to develop my child's self-esteem.	0%	8%	92%
I model appropriate communication techniques for my child.	4%	19%	77%
I correct my child's communication techniques as needed.	0%	38%	62%
I model appropriate time management skills for my child.	0%	38%	62%
I encourage my child to assist with scheduling their activities.	4%	42%	54%
I model cooperating with others for my child.	0%	15%	85%
I encourage my child to work cooperatively with others.	0%	23%	77%
I model self-control for my child.	0%	23%	77%
I teach self-control strategies to my child.	4%	19%	77%
I model the importance of telling the truth for my child.	4%	8%	88%
I utilize appropriate discipline strategies to reinforce the importance of telling the truth.	0%	12%	88%
I model leadership characteristics for my child.	0%	31%	69%
I teach leadership skills to my child.	0%	31%	69%
I encourage my child to seize opportunities to demonstrate their leadership abilities.	4%	35%	62%
I model appropriate organizational skills for my child.	0%	35%	65%
I teach my child organizational skills.	0%	31%	69%
I correct my child's organizational skills as needed.	0%	42%	58%

Table 11

Family Career Development Questionnaire Frequency Results for Non-FAST Participants

Statements Non-FAST	**0-2 times per week**	**3-4 times per week**	**5-7 times per week**
I read to my child.	54%	38%	8%
I listen to my child read.	27%	31%	42%
I help my child with homework.	8%	46%	46%
	Never	**Sometimes**	**Always**
I get help for my child with homework I do not understand.	23%	31%	46%
I use correct grammar when talking to my child.	0%	46%	54%
I correct my child's grammar.	0%	42%	58%
I encourage my child to answer questions using words instead of gestures.	0%	23%	77%
I model appropriate listening skills for my child.	0%	46%	54%
I correct my child's listening (lack of attention/focus) as needed.	0%	12%	88%
I know how my child dominant learning style.	0%	62%	38%
I discuss my child's learning style with their teacher(s).	19%	50%	31%
I model decision making strategies for my child.	0%	50%	50%
I encourage my child to make appropriate decisions independently.	0%	19%	81%
I model problem solving strategies for my child.	8%	31%	62%
I encourage my child to solve appropriate problems independently.	0%	19%	81%
I model creativity for my child.	0%	31%	69%
I encourage my child to be creative.	8%	8%	85%
I model appropriate reasoning skills for my child.	0%	23%	77%
I model responsibility in my daily life for my child.	0%	15%	85%
I use daily living activities to teach my child responsibility.	0%	15%	85%
I consciously make the effort to develop my child's self-esteem.	0%	8%	92%
I model appropriate communication techniques for my child.	0%	35%	65%
I correct my child's communication techniques as needed.	0%	38%	62%
I model appropriate time management skills for my child.	0%	46%	54%
I encourage my child to assist with scheduling their activities.	4%	50%	46%
I model cooperating with others for my child.	0%	35%	65%
I encourage my child to work cooperatively with others.	0%	15%	85%
I model self-control for my child.	0%	27%	73%
I teach self-control strategies to my child.	0%	19%	81%
I model the importance of telling the truth for my child.	0%	8%	92%
I utilize appropriate discipline strategies to reinforce the importance of telling the truth.	0%	8%	92%
I model leadership characteristics for my child.	0%	15%	85%
I teach leadership skills to my child.	0%	23%	77%
I encourage my child to seize opportunities to demonstrate their leadership abilities.	0%	27%	73%
I model appropriate organizational skills for my child.	0%	31%	69%
I teach my child organizational skills.	0%	42%	58%
I correct my child's organizational skills as needed.	0%	35%	65%

Perhaps if participants had been given a 4 or 5 point likert scale a better understanding of the families' perceived behaviors could have been gleaned. Also, the wording of the statements may have produced more socially desirable responses as families did not want to be seen in a negative manner. For example, only a small percentage of both FAST and Non-FAST participants answered 'Never.' FAST participants had 'Never' responses to 15 of the 34 statements and Non-FAST participants only had 'Never' responses to 5 of the 34 statements. A minimum of 50% of the FAST participants responded 'Always' to 33 of the 34 statements and a minimum of 50% of the Non-FAST participants responded 'Always' to 30 of the 34 statements.

Ginzberg, et al., (1951) identified three stages in their vocational development model: fantasy, tentative and realistic. Elementary students fall in the fantasy range of the model. At this level students were free to choose careers based on their personal preferences, influences (familial) and interests. Recognizing that vocational choice is influenced by four facts: the reality factor, the influence of the educational process, the emotional factor and individual values; the theory proposed that career development is a path that leads to career choice (Ginzberg et al., 1951). Most parents want the best for their children. As evidenced by the Family Career Development Questionnaire the process of assisting children with career development is not an easy task. Both FAST participant and non-FAST participants indicated a high level of support for their children's academic, personal, and social behavior development.

Donald Super divides his developmental life span into five different stages (Palladino-Schultheiss et al., 2005). The stages are Growth, Exploration, Establishment, Maintenance, and Disengagement. The Growth Stage which occurred during elementary

school was the state when a person's self-concept was formed as a result of relationships with persons in their family and school. In Super's growth stage the nine concepts (curiosity, exploration, information, key figures, interests, locus of control, time perspective, and self-concept) that contribute to career awareness are influenced by parents (Palladino-Schultheiss et al., 2005). The findings for Hypothesis 1 showed no significant difference between FAST and Non-FAST families which suggests that both groups assist their children with career awareness as a result of influencing the nine concepts outlined in Super's growth stage.

Holland (1985) supported the idea of "modal personal orientation" where genetics and individual's responses to their environment influence beliefs, goals, actions, and character traits that steer career choice. Lent, Brown, and Hackett's Social Cognitive Career Theory (1996) believed individuals selected career goals according to their social, environmental and familial influences. As identified in Parson's Trait and Factor theory it is necessary for the individuals to have a clear understanding of self, aptitudes, abilities, interests, resources, limitations, and other qualities (Parsons, 1909). This is true for parents also if they are to be effective in providing guidance for their children. Equally important is the parent's knowledge of requirements and conditions of success, advantages and disadvantages, compensation, opportunities, and prospects in different lines of work (Hoover-Dempsey & Sandler, 1995). The common theme amongst these theories was influence whether at home, at school or in the community and how those influences impact one's beliefs about self, aptitude and ability. The results for Hypothesis 1 suggests that both FAST and Non-FAST families will provide appropriate academic and career guidance for the children since there was no significant difference

between the two groups.

However, there are striking individual differences in the extent to which parents perceive the instrumentality or utility of their involvement as a channel to enact long-term personal, academic, and career goals (Bembenutty, 2010; Husman & Lens, 1999). Parental engagement depends on how instrumental tasks are perceived and how useful tasks are viewed to prepare their children for a particular type of professional life in the future. This study supports the premise that parents who are able to recognize the instrumentality of their current endeavors stand a greater chance than others of developing learning strategies, sustaining cognitions, and maintaining behaviors and positive affect. Parents who understand the benefits of reading to young children and the need for early and consistent rules and consequences are oriented toward goal attainment and their children typically outperform children that do not receive an equal level of parental support (Bembenutty, 2010; Husman & Lens, 1999). The overall results of the Family Career Development Questionnaire did not show a significant difference between the FAST and Non-FAST participants; however there were some statements that produced interesting results. For example, The response to "I get help for my child with homework I do not understand," yielded the following results: FAST families reported: 'Always' – 65%, 'Sometimes' – 27% and 'Never' – 8% while Non-FAST families reported: 'Always' – 46%, 'Sometimes' – 31% and 'Never' – 23%. FAST families' response to "I discuss my child's learning style with their teacher(s), " was 'Always' – 46%, 'Sometimes' – 46%, and 'Never' – 8%. The Non-FAST families reported 'Always' – 31%, 'Sometimes' – 50%, and 'Never' – 19%. The FAST families may have been more inclined to seek help for their students as a result of participating in the FAST

program and building a network of support between the school, community and other parents.

The second hypothesis was: Students participating in FAST will have significantly higher reading levels than a matched sample of non-FAST students as measured by the DRA2 reading assessment. The hypothesis examined reading achievement of students whose families participated in FAST compared to students who did not. The self-determination theory (Izzo & Lamb, 2003), dealt with developing student motivation and sparking an interest in learning; when students value education and have confidence in their abilities the end result would be high-quality learning (Wehmeyer et al., 2011). The study results show FAST students have higher reading scores than non-FAST students. The school has struggled with improving reading scores for years and last year was a needs improvement school. One of the major concerns was the lack of practice the students received at home. To assist in this area, older and more fluent readers were used as peer tutors to assist students struggling with reading during the school day. However, this peer assistance still does not provide the supportive home environment Bennett, Brown, Boyle, Racine, & Offord (2003) suggested was needed to promote learning. The results for Hypothesis 2 are consistent with Izzo and Lamb's (2003) self-determination theory which deals with encouraging students to be self-starters. The FAST students significantly outperformed their Non-FAST counterparts on the DRA2 reading assessment.

Holland (1985) supported the idea of "modal personal orientation" where genetics and individual's responses to their environment influence beliefs, goals, actions, and character traits that steer career choice. Lent, Brown, and Hackett's Social Cognitive

Career Theory (1996) believed individuals selected career goals according to their social, environmental and familial influences. As identified in Parson's Trait and Factor theory it is necessary for the individuals to have a clear understanding of self, aptitudes, abilities, interests, resources, limitations, and other qualities (Parsons, 1909). This is true for parents also if they are to be effective in providing guidance for their children. Equally important is the parent's knowledge of requirements and conditions of success, advantages and disadvantages, compensation, opportunities, and prospects in different lines of work (Hoover-Dempsey & Sandler, 1995). Each theory placed emphasis on the influences at home, at school or in the community and how those influences impact one's beliefs about self, aptitude and ability. The Family and Schools Together (FAST) program focuses on the same influences, home, school and community. The FAST students DRA2 scores compared to Non-FAST students' scores were significantly higher. These results are consistent with the above mentioned theories and the FAST program which all promote the importance of the environment whether at home or at school and having a clear understanding of self.

According to Ginzberg et al., (1951) career decision-making occurs in three phases: Fantasy, Tentative, and Realistic. The Fantasy phase takes place until about the age of eleven. Children role play and imagine themselves in various work situations. During this phase, children begin to think about which careers they might like to do in the future. This phase occurs during elementary school and the successes and failures that occur at this level impact the career development process.

Reading, a basic skill taught at the elementary level, also impacts this phase. Because skills beget skills, students with higher levels of reading achievement typically

out pace students with lower reading levels and these early achievement gaps tend to persist over time (Denton et al., 2003; Pace, 2011). Early interventions for students help to build the early academic skills needed for long-term school success. Additionally research shows that high-quality, early interventions may provide students with an early academic boost that influences their learning through fifth grade (Denton et al., 2003; Hall, 2003). The results for the second hypothesis are consistent with this research. FAST strives to provide families with protective factors that promote resiliency such as the motivation to learn and acquire basic reading skills.

With raising doubts about workforce readiness, reading has become a high priority for educators. Many programs from the national Reading Excellence Act to the Center for the Improvement of Early Reading Achievement (CIERA) are targeting elementary students, between kindergarten and third grade, to teach how to read (Hall, 2003). Learning to read is incredibly important. The lack of this basic skill, can lead to social and financial struggles (Denton, West, Walston, 2003; Hall, 2003). The results of this study show the FAST program is a positive intervention as evidenced by the FAST students having significantly higher DRA2 reading levels than non-FAST students.

The third hypothesis was: Students participating in FAST will have significantly lower discipline referrals for negative behavior issues than a matched sample of non-FAST students. The hypothesis examined discipline referrals of students whose families participated in FAST compared to students who did not. While FAST does not claim to be a career program, it was developed to promote partnerships between families, schools and communities to help develop resilient children (McDonald et al., 1997). Components such as family meals, parent time, and special play lend themselves to building strong

families ties which research (Bandura et al., 2011; Bryan, & Henry, 2008; Henggeler & Sheidow, 2003) has shown significantly decreases delinquent behavior. Positive engagement with the school and the community could have also contributed to the significant difference. Teacher subjectivity may account for some difference, but the matched samples included an 88% teacher match.

The relationships developed foster not only a sense of belonging, but also promote and build self-pride and self-esteem. Fouad and Byars-Winston (2005) believed personal perceptions played a major role in determining career outcomes. Giannantonio and Hurley-Hanson (2006) attributed career progress or lack of progress to image norms. The FAST program at this particular school focuses on gang prevention. Both parents and students get information and statistics about the gang prevalence in their community. They were also given preventative measures to keeps their families safe. One of the tips families were given was to make sure their children have positive self- esteem. Research supported that self- esteem and self- image were not only gang deterrent traits, but also beneficial in motivating students and deterring inappropriate behavior (Hershenson, 2005).

Ginzberg et. al., (1951) observed that young children, up to about age 11, live in a fantasy stage, where they believe they can do just about anything. They frequently say, "I'm gonna be a "a professional athlete" without considering skill sets, education and training requirements, or the economy. Students with poor discipline records are not afforded the opportunity to participate in school athletics or many other extracurricular activities. For the students with behavior issues that are afforded the opportunity to participate in community organized athletics and activities, the parents often report the experience was not positive largely due to the students' inappropriate behavior. So

students with discipline issues typically do not have the same opportunities as students without discipline issues. Thus these students do not develop certain skills and attributes as a result of their limited experiences and exposure.

Super's "...vocational self-concept develops through physical and mental growth, observations of work, identification with working adults, general environment, and general experiences....As experiences become broader in relation to awareness of the world of work, the more sophisticated vocational self-concept is formed" (Zunker, 1994, p .30). Students with behavior problems often miss opportunities for exposure not only via field trips, extracurricular activities and other various venues, but in the classroom. When a student is sent to the hall, the counselor, the principal, another room or suspended; they miss valuable instructional time. Many elementary students are unable to link school to work and life and so they view these opportunities out of the class as fun and a way to avoid work. Student that are labeled as chronic behavior problems often do not have positive role models or many positive influences in their life. As a result their vocational concept is uncultivated.

Holland suggested that "people can function and develop best and find job satisfaction in work environments that are compatible with their personalities" (Zunker, 1994, p. 44). Holland based his theory of personality types on several assumptions. People tend to choose a career that is reflective of their personality. Because people tend to be attracted to certain jobs, the environment then reflects this personality. He classified these personality types and work environments into six types which he labeled realistic, investigative, artistic, social, enterprising, and conventional (often referred to by the acronym RIASEC). He suggests that the closer the match of personality to job, the

greater the satisfaction.

Both people and environments have varying degrees of flexibility necessary for adjustment to one another. If one cannot adapt to the constraints of a rigid environment or the environment cannot be changed, there are likely to be serious adjustment problems (Zunker, 1994). Whether the environment is work, school, or family, when systems begin to malfunction and relationships subsequently deteriorate, bad things happen to personal growth. When the environment is extremely specific, little deviation from the person is acceptable. Therefore, as the environment changes, the person must stay in correspondence with it (Zunker, 1994). A classic example is the magical thinking of a parent believing their child's behavior will improve with a different teacher or school.

Hypothesis 3 compared the amount of discipline referrals both FAST and non-FAST participants received. Bennett, Brown, Boyle, Racine, & Offord (2003) warned against expecting behavior to improve because academic invention programs were implemented. The best results for improving behavior occur when academic interventions were implemented at school and parental support and reinforcement was available at home. A major component of the FAST program, fifteen minutes of special play that occurred each week with the FAST child and the parent or adult family member of their choice. Families were strongly encouraged to continue the ritual with each child in the household during FAST and upon graduation.

A model that looked at the total student to include both home and school environments help to develop more appropriate interventions would have a more positive impact on post school outcomes. Career interventions that promoted exploration and self-concept foster the exploration of new ideas and abilities that a) increase students'

learning, and exposure to various jobs; b) connect academic subjects with diverse careers; c) explore ideas of work, debunk career myths or unrealistic goals; d) encourage support systems, and e) gave students a greater feeling of control over their future (Palladino-Schultheiss et al., 2005). The Families and Schools Together (FAST) model combined the students' home and school environment and had garnered national success in helping families and schools create safe and thriving learning communities. While the FAST program was not designed to function as a career intervention, its focus is in line with the ideals of productive career interventions which include increasing student knowledge, nurturing the development of support systems and providing students and families with a sense of empowerment.

Significance of the Study

This study would contribute to the literature on family involvement, family therapy, and elementary career education. While the study did not reveal any significant difference between the FAST and Non-FAST families in the area of assisting their children with career development it did show that both groups perceive they are providing appropriate career development guidance. Therefore it is important to ensure that families are aware of and possess the knowledge and skills to provide adequate career guidance. The study did reveal significant results for reading levels between FAST and Non-FAST students assessed by the DRA2. Future research can be conducted to encompass other academic areas such as math, language and the arts. The research can be further extended to compare students' area(s) of academic strength with their career interests. The results for Hypothesis 3 were also significant. FAST students had significantly lower discipline referrals than Non-FAST students as assessed by the

school's Code of Conduct Team Intervention form. As behavior issues continues to plague schools information from this study can be used to develop programs and or ideas to help students, staff and families with discipline concerns.

Additionally, previous research (Bembenutty, 2010; Berger & Luckmann, 1966; Husman & Lens, 1999; Simons et al.,, 2004) on the parents' attitude toward career education at the elementary level would provide law makers, curriculum specialists, administrators, educators, and parents a better understanding of the impact of families on career development and how to best use this resource to improve the quality of career education through collaborative programs. It would serve as a feedback to the decision makers and help them make better decisions on developing, implementing, and influencing resources for career educational purposes. Therefore, discoveries gleaned from this study could be used to inform practices for school and family joint programs, and in turn have positive effects for elementary students. In addition, it could precipitate reforming collaborative programs and career-based pedagogy.

Limitations

The study was a preliminary examination of Kids FAST and career awareness. It only investigated family involvement and career awareness at the elementary level. The study involved subjects at a Georgia elementary school and is therefore limited to the elementary grades and one geographical region. The demographic characteristics of the population were limited in its diversity as the school is a Title I school with 85% of its students receiving free or reduced lunch. A major limitation that should be considered when interpreting the results is the study is not generalizable. The ethnic background of all the participants is the same, African American. As a result, the racial, gender,

economic, and ethnicity composite may not match that of the national census. Another limitation was that the instrument used in this study was a self-report measure. The data collection of self-report measures depends on the ability and willingness of the participants to provide accurate and honest input to the questions. For that reason, it was possible that participants could have responded to questions in a manner that reflected socially acceptable answers which could be different from what they actually believe and or do. Another limitation was that the questionnaires were completed during a PTA event in the evening after many parents had already endured a long work day. During this meeting participants were also watching the Black History program. The time and location chosen to conduct the questionnaire, may have affected the participant's responses in that it was a school setting and their desire to present themselves as involved and responsible parents may have led them to report their intent versus their actual practices.

Internal validity refers to the accuracy of measuring cause and effect relationships. Threats or limitations that could possibly harm the internal validity of this research project include maturation, confounding variables, mortality, selection bias, and instrumentation (Campbell & Stanley, 1963). Maturation is unavoidable as the students in this study are in elementary school during their participation in the FAST program. All children will have physical and mental change due to growth. To control for this threat, there will be a matched sample of non-FAST students that will be compared to the sample who participated in FAST, each group will experience physical and mental change throughout the school year. Confounding variables is another limit present in the study primarily due to the school setting. Because all of the students receive instruction

in reading and the school district handbook, changes in the students' reading achievement and behavior could possibly be attributed to variables other than FAST. Similar to addressing the maturation threat, there will be a control group who will receive the same reading instruction as those students who received services from FAST.

Mortality is another issue threatening the validity of the study. FAST graduates that no longer attend our school due to graduating or moving will not be included in the study. If needed the participants that fall into this category will be reported in the results section. Selection bias will be handled by conducting a modified double-blind study. The researcher will know which families and students participate in the FAST program. However, the researcher will not administer the reading level assessments, or have any influence on the discipline referral system, or have knowledge of participants' reading scores and discipline referrals. Furthermore, an off duty administrator created a matched sample control group through random stratified sampling. Instrumentation, another limitation in which a result was derived through the implementation of the questionnaire, is another possible threat to the internal validity of the study.

Future Research

As education reforms continue, it is imperative that new curricula being adopted and implemented address elementary career education and the role the family plays in establishing a foundation for school and work success. Thus additional research should consider comparing data amongst families based on education, work history and careers. Additionally, longitudinal studies should be implemented to follow students throughout their elementary, middle and high school years. Additionally, future research should use larger populations and have larger sample sizes and also utilize self-reports of career awareness of students in grades K-3.

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APPENDIX A

Family Career Development Questionnaire

Please check ✔ the most correct response for each statement.

Statements	0-2 times per week	3-4 times per week	5-7 times per week
I read to my child.			
I listen to my child read.			
I help my child with homework.			
	Never	**Sometimes**	**Always**
I get help for my child with homework I do not understand.			
I use correct grammar when talking to my child.			
I correct my child's grammar.			
I encourage my child to answer questions using words instead of gestures.			
I model appropriate listening skills for my child.			
I correct my child's listening (lack of attention/focus) as needed.			
I know how my child dominant learning style.			
I discuss my child's learning style with their teacher(s).			
I model decision making strategies for my child.			
I encourage my child to make appropriate decisions independently.			
I model problem solving strategies for my child.			
I encourage my child to solve appropriate problems independently.			
I model creativity for my child.			
I encourage my child to be creative.			
I model appropriate reasoning skills for my child.			
I model responsibility in my daily life for my child.			
I use daily living activities to teach my child responsibility.			
I consciously make the effort to develop my child's self-esteem.			
I model appropriate communication techniques for my child.			
I correct my child's communication techniques as needed.			
I model appropriate time management skills for my child.			
I encourage my child to assist with scheduling their activities.			
I model cooperating with others for my child.			
I encourage my child to work cooperatively with others.			
I model self-control for my child.			
I teach self-control strategies to my child.			
I model the importance of telling the truth for my child.			
I utilize appropriate discipline strategies to reinforce the importance of telling the truth.			
I model leadership characteristics for my child.			
I teach leadership skills to my child.			
I encourage my child to seize opportunities to demonstrate their leadership abilities.			
I model appropriate organizational skills for my child.			
I teach my child organizational skills.			
I correct my child's organizational skills as needed.			

APPENDIX B

Valdosta State University Institutional Review Board

Institutional Review Board (IRB)
for the Protection of Human Research Participants

PROTOCOL EXEMPTION REPORT

IMBER: IRB-02788-2012 **R:** Monica Sparks

: How Families and Schools Together (FAST) Shape African American Families Perspectives on Elementary Studen

DETERMINATION:

☑ This research protocol is exempt from Institutional Review Board oversight under Exemption Category(ies) 2. You may begin your study immediately. If the nature of the research project changes such that exemption criteria may no longer apply, please consult with the IRB Administrator (irb@valdosta.edu) before continuing your research.

☐ Exemption of this research protocol from Institutional Review Board oversight is pending. You may **not** begin your research until you have addressed the following concerns/questions and the IRB has formally notified you of exemption. You may send your responses to irb@valdosta.edu.

ADDITIONAL COMMENTS/SUGGESTIONS:

Although not a requirement for exemption, the following suggestions are offered by the IRB Administrator to enhance the protection of participants and/or strengthen the research proposal. If you make any of these suggested changes to your protocol, please submit revisions so that IRB has a complete protocol on file.

Barbara H. Gray Date: 5/26/13

Barbara H. Gray, IRB Administrator

Thank you for submitting an IRB application.
Please direct questions to irb@valdosta.edu or 229-259-5045.

cc: Dr. Robert Bauer (Dept. Head)
Dr. James Reffel (Advisor)

Form Revised: 09.02.2009

APPENDIX C

Muscogee County School District Institutional Review Board

Muscogee County School District
Columbus, Georgia

Carol C. Bradshaw, Ph.D.
Director
•
Office of Research,
Accountability, and Assessment

February 14, 2012

TO: Susan C. Andrews, Ed.D.
Superintendent of Education

FROM: Carol C. Bradshaw, Ph.D.

RE: Request to Conduct Research

Monica Sparks, a counselor at Dawson Elementary School and doctoral candidate at Valdosta State University, has requested permission to conduct a research study that seeks to determine if the families of the FAST program graduates have a different perception of the students career development than non-FAST participants. She will also compare the reading levels and discipline reports of the students. The principal has given her assurance that this research is needed, and she will assure that no individual student or parent data leaves the school.

I recommend that the study be approved.

This research request has been APPROVED / DISAPPROVED .

Susan C. Andrews, Ed.D.

Post Office Box 2427, Columbus, GA 31902-2427
Phone (706) 748-2020 FAX (706) 748-2029
E-Mail: cbradshaw@mcsdga.net

APPENDIX D

Families and Schools Together (FAST) Permission Letter

Families and Schools TOGETHER INC.

PROTECTING HEARTS AND MINDS™

February 24, 2011

To Whom It May Concern:

FAST is a national program aimed at promoting family cohesion in an effort to improve family functioning and parental involvement at the school level. Monica Sparks has asked and we gladly agree to participate in her study on the role of family involvement in children's career awareness, development and education in the early childhood years. We anticipate with much excitement Mrs. Sparks' findings in her research. Mrs. Sparks has our full support and cooperation in this endeavor. Thanks in advance for your consideration.

Respectfully,

Pat Davenport
Chief Executive Officer
Families And Schools Together Inc.
2801 International lane, Suite 212
Madison, WI 53704

2801 International Lane, Suite 212 Madison, WI 53704
888.[illegible] or 608.663.2382
[illegible]

APPENDIX E

Participant Information and Rights Letter

INFORMATION LETTER
for a Research Study entitled

"How Families and Schools Together (FAST) Shape African American Families' Perspectives on Elementary Students Career Development"

You are invited to participate in a research study to investigate the impact the family strengthening program, Families and Schools Together, Inc. (FAST), has on elementary students' career development. The study is being conducted by Monica Sparks, a Doctoral Candidate in the Valdosta State University Department of Adult and Career Education. You were selected as a possible participant because you are a parent or guardian of a student at Dawson Elementary School, and are age 18 or older.

What will be involved if you participate?

If you decide to participate in this research study, you will be asked to complete a 33 item checklist about the level of career development involvement you feel you have with your elementary student. The total time needed to complete the questionnaire will be approximately 15 minutes.

Are there any risks or discomforts?

The risks associated with participating in this study are: you may feel pressure to participate and completing the questionnaire may cause you stress. To minimize risk of pressure, I will provide every possible volunteer with a consent form and ask that every possible volunteer returns a consent form so that the choice to participate or not participate is not obvious to others. To minimize risks associated with anxiety, I emphasize that participation is voluntary with no penalty for nonparticipation or for withdrawing your consent to participate. Your answers will be anonymous, meaning that there will be no way for the researcher to connect you to your responses.

Are there any benefits to yourself or others?

If you participate in this study, you can expect to feel personal satisfaction that your answers will inform the field of career development and shape future family and school collaboration efforts. I cannot promise you that you will receive any or all of the benefits described.

Will you receive compensation for participating?

There is no compensation, but I thank you for your time.

Are there any costs?

If you decide to participate, there will be no costs to you.

Your participation is completely voluntary. If you choose to withdraw, your data can be withdrawn at your request. Your decision to participate or to stop participating will not jeopardize your present or future relationships with Valdosta State University, Muscogee County School District or Dawson Elementary.

Any information obtained in connection with this study will remain anonymous. The researcher will have no way to connect you to the information you provide. The packet that you complete will have a number written on the top of the front page. Please record this number. You are the only one who will know your number, unless your share that information. If, at any time, you would like to discontinue or withdraw your participation, provide the researcher with the number and your checklist will be destroyed by shredding.

Neither the Muscogee County School District, nor Dawson Elementary School is conducting, nor sponsoring this research project.

If you have questions about this study, please ask them now or contact Monica Sparks at 706-683-8732 or Dr. James Reffel at 229-249-2777. A copy of this document will be given to you to keep.

If you have questions about your rights as a research participant, you may contact the Valdosta State University Office of Human Subjects Research or the Institutional Review Board by phone 229-333-7837 or e-mail at irb@valdosta.edu.

HAVING READ THE INFORMATION PROVIDED, YOU MUST DECIDE IF YOU WANT TO PARTICIPATE IN THIS RESEARCH PROJECT. IF YOU DECIDE TO PARTICIPATE, THE DATA YOU PROVIDE WILL SERVE AS YOUR AGREEMENT TO DO SO. THIS LETTER IS YOURS TO KEEP.

_____

Investigator's signature Date

Monica Sparks_____

Print Name

APPENDIX F

School Code of Conduct Team Intervention Form

Code of Conduct
Teacher Interventions

Student's Name _____ Grade_____ Teacher _____

Action Taken:

1st Offense:	Teacher counseled student/warning	Date _____
2nd Offense:	Discipline essay (signed by parent)	Date _____
3rd Offense:	Discipline essay (signed by parent)/referral to Counselor	Date _____
4th Offense:	Referral to Office/parent conference	Date _____
5th Offense:	After school detention	Date _____
6th Offense:	After school detention/referral to SST	Date _____
7th, 8th, 9th Offense:	Out-of-school suspension (Number of days: 2, 3, 4)	(7th) Date _____
		(8th) Date _____
		(9th) Date _____
10th Offense:	Referral to MCSD Conduct Saturday School	Date _____
11+ Offenses:	Student will be labeled chronic behavior problem and referred to the MSCD Discipline Tribunal.	

Description of Offenses:

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____
6. _____
7. _____
8. _____
9. _____
10. _____

Copy distribution: White - Parent Yellow - Teacher Pink - Principal

APPENDIX G

DRA 2 Reading Levels and Grade Equivalents

Grade level	DRA Level
Kindergarten	A
	1
	2
	3
	4
1st grade	6
	8
	10
	12
	14
	16
2nd grade	18
	20
	24
	28
3rd Grade	30
	34
	38
4th Grade	40
	44
5th Grade	50

APPENDIX H

Person Developmental Reading Assessment 2nd edition Sampling Items

Level	Book Title	Sample Item
1	What is Red?	The car is red.
8	Duke	Jim had a dog. The dog was black and white. The dog's name was Duke.
14	The Wagon	One day Kevin's big brother got a new wagon. He used it to carry his newspapers.
16	Animal Homes	Animal homes are everywhere. You can find them in trees, under the ground, and in caves. Animals build homes to keep warm and safe.
18	Game Day	One morning Raccoon went to the river to wash her face. She saw a stopwatch under some leaves. Raccoon picked up the stopwatch to look at it.
20	Green Freddie	Freddie the Frog was sitting on a log. He wasn't doing anything. He was not eating or drinking. He was just sitting there. A squirrel came hopping along. He looked at himself in the water. He smiled. Then he patted his silver-gray fur with his paw. The squirrel looked at Freddie and said, "My fur looks pretty, doesn't it?" Freddie smiled at the squirrel. "Yes, it looks very pretty."
28	From Peanuts to Peanut Butter	Peanut Butter You can find a jar of peanut butter in most homes. Lots of kids like to eat peanut butter. Did you know that millions of pounds of peanut butter are eaten in the United States and Canada each year? That's a lot of peanut butter!
40	A Journey to Freedom	After a hard day of picking cotton, Jed went into the slave cabin. He lay down on the narrow board that was his bed. A few minutes later he heard his mother, Bess, come in. Jed expected to feel his mother's soft kiss and to hear her whisper, "Good night." Instead, Jed heard her whisper, "We have to leave this place tonight. Master Boyd is dying. When I was sewing in the plantation house, I overheard Master Boyd's son. He said that he plans to sell some of the young slaves as soon as his father dies."