

**PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT**

**FINAL THESIS**

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Master of Science in Education

by

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FINAL THESIS PROPOSAL

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Thesis X

Advisor Betsy Balzano, PH.D.

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Short Description of Proposed Thesis

THE EFFECTS OF CONTACTING PARENTS  
ONCE A WEEK CONCERNING STUDENTS ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE

Parents As Partners

The experimenter proposes that students "Academic Performance" in science class will increase significantly if parents are told what their children are expected to know at the end of each week. Parents will be encouraged to act as study partners by asking specific questions related to classwork. Parents will also fill out a weekly survey related to their child's study habits and family interests. Students will receive a Study Guide and a weekly Time Management Log which is designed to assist parents in answering questions on the Parental Survey.

Students' "Classroom Behavior" will improve along with their attendance in relation to the level of "Parental Involvement". A daily Student Behavioral Continuum Log will be kept for both the control group and the experimental group during the first two weeks of the study. This continuum will measure homework, classwork, class participation, note taking, classroom conduct and preparedness. The students will be measured on a scale of 1 to 10 during this time period.

Approved by Thesis Advisor \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

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## TABLE OF CONTENTS

Chapter		Page
	Final Thesis Proposal	i
	Table of Contents	ii
<b>1</b>	<b>INTRODUCTION</b>	<b>1</b>
	The Role of Home Experiences in Pupils' Preparation for School Learning	3
	The Role of Ethnicity in Family Life	4
	The Family Life of High Achievers in Two-Parent Homes	5
	The Family Life of High Achievers in One-Parent Homes	5
	An Analysis of Dispositions and Life-Styles in High Achievers Homes	6
	The Family Life of Low Achievers In Two-Parent Homes	7
	The Family Life of Low Achievers In One-Parent Homes	9
<b>2</b>	<b>EXPERIMENT</b>	
	Questions This Study Seeks To Answer	10
	Case Study Variables	11
	Null Hypothesis	12
	Case Study Questions	12
	Operational Definitions	14
	How Participants Were Chosen	21
	Experimental Data	22
	Case Studies	33

Table of Contents (cont.)

<b>3</b>	<b>CONCLUSION</b>	
	Adolescent Behavior Education Seminar Objectives	52
	How To Help Your Child With Homework	55
	Why Should Schools Involve Parents in Education?	56
	Appendix A - Calculations for Null Hypothesis #1	58
	Appendix B - Calculations for Null Hypothesis #2	59
	Appendix C - Calculations for Null Hypothesis #3	60
	Appendix D - Calculations for Null Hypothesis #4	61
	References	62

## CHAPTER 1

### INTRODUCTION

In this research project I will attempt to address a perpetual and troublesome problem for educators of middle school children abiding in low-income, depressed inner-city school districts: Does parental involvement in education affect student performance, attendance and attitudes towards education? (The focus of this research). Little up-to-date research is available on this topic.

Practically all of the empirical research done to date has reported statistically significant relationships between "family background" and American children's school achievement levels. (Dave's study cited in Clark, 1983) Much of the work that is available tends to lean more towards Parent Teacher Association (PTA) involvement. I was able to find a book written by Reginal M. Clark that effectively dealt with the family life and school achievement of poor black children. I will refer to Mr. Clark's work often in this introduction and give him full credit for his extraordinary findings.

Edgar G. Epps' observation of other related research is

as follows: "... for low-income urban Black children the school experience is often discontinuous with early childhood development. Teacher expectations, and the culture of the school, often conflict with home experiences; competencies acquired in the home may not be valued in the classroom." (Epp's study cited in Clark, 1983 p. xi)

Reginal M. Clark's book, Family Life and School Achievement-Why Poor Black Children Succeed or Fail, is suggestive in that he found the parents of high achievers to be assertive in their efforts to attain information about their children's progress in school. The parents of low achievers, in contrast, tended to avoid contact with school personnel unless they were summoned to the school by the authority. (Clark, 1983)

According to Clark, the family's main contribution to a child's success in school is made through parent's dispositions and interpersonal relationships with the child in the household. Children receive essential "survival knowledge" for competent classroom role enactment from their exposure to positive home attitudes and communication encounters. Clark's argument is that a family's ability to equip its young members with survival and "success" knowledge is determined by the parent's (and older family members) own upbringing. This ability is also determined by the parents' past relationships and experiences in

community institutions, the parents current support networks, social relationships and other circumstances outside the home. Most centrally, the parents current social relationship in the home and their satisfaction with themselves and with home conditions determines the family's success. Clark further states that it is the family members' beliefs, activities, and overall cultural style, not the family unit's composition or social status, that produces the requisite mental structures for effective and desirable behavior during classroom lessons. (Clark, 1983)

#### **THE ROLE OF HOME EXPERIENCES IN PUPILS' PREPARATION FOR SCHOOL LEARNING**

Clark used Colin Green's argument from his book, The Great School Legend, "...many parents have assumed that the primary function of the school is to make their children literate and successful. Here literacy is defined as the general ability to speak, write, and understand at a level sufficient to achieve communication goals in interpersonal encounters." (Colin's study cited in Clark, 1983 p. 4)

... most people would have no trouble agreeing that experiences in the home significantly shape their interpersonal competence in classroom settings and other out-of-home environments. After all, the home-community setting is where students first develop -or fail to develop -- their social abilities to express themselves maturely and intelligently. The

home-community setting also help the child develop attentiveness, concentration, volunteer work, and compliance. Children learn to engage in constructive self-directed activity, initiate work interactions, enjoy orderly social interaction, accept responsibility, carry through and complete tasks, and hold positive concepts of "learning" in the home-community setting. Manifestation of leadership skills, exercising self-control, showing sensitivity to the needs of others, and enjoying a sense of accomplishment about goals achieved are also learned in the community. It is these social "survival skills" that are basic to high quality student performance in learning classroom lessons. (Cooper's study cited in Clark, 1983 p. 5)

## **THE ROLE OF ETHNICITY IN FAMILY EDUCATIONAL LIFE**

The ethnic background of parents is ordinarily an excellent gauge for predicting how family members have fared with other American families in the resource marketplace. To accept that this is true requires that we remember how closely one's family background is linked to the family's economic, occupational and political status in the United States. Economic stratification in our society is, to a significant degree, distinguishable according to an ethnic division of labor. With this kind of economic and ethnic stratification pattern, social class and ethnicity become very closely linked for many ethnic groups. (Sullivan's study cited in Clark, 1983)

**THE FAMILY LIFE OF HIGH ACHIEVERS IN TWO-PARENT HOMES  
ACCORDING TO REGINAL M. CLARK'S STUDY**

The major behavioral and psychological patterns that set them apart from the two-parent low achievers are:

- (1) parents' beliefs about their own responsibility in the child's academic pursuits
- (2) parents' sense of control over their circumstances (the degree to which life had worn them down)
- (3) the type of routinized social activities engaged in at home by family members
- (4) the expectations for the student
- (5) parents' supervision strategies

In addition to these distinctive traits, families in this group distinguished themselves from all other groups in two ways: the conjugal relationship tended to be more egalitarian in terms of greater maternal decision-making power and there tended to be a value consensus between the parents on issues relating to child rearing and the students' academic development. Fathers made greater efforts to be supportive (at least psychologically) of mothers in the home. (Clark, 1983)

**THE FAMILY LIFE OF HIGH ACHIEVERS IN ONE-PARENT HOMES  
ACCORDING TO REGINAL M. CLARK'S STUDY**

A 1981 census report placed the percentage of

school-age children in Black single-parent families in the United States at 46% percent of the total Black child population. In comparison, about 25% of the nation's children are living in single-parent homes.

In most respects, the psychological and behavioral pattern found in this group were identical to those found in the two-parent families. The major difference between the two-parent and single-parent families was the creative use of other persons to reinforce parents' goals for their children. The approach of these single mothers to their circumstances is an example of sheer determination, persistence, and strength. (Clark, 1983)

#### **AN ANALYSIS OF DISPOSITIONS AND LIFE-STYLES IN HIGH ACHIEVERS HOMES ACCORDING TO REGINAL M. CLARK'S STUDY**

In Clark's case studies, no matter whether the family unit consisted of one or two parents, specific psychosocial orientations and home activity patterns were seen clearly time and again in the high achievers' homes. These recurring processes and patterns, as a group, represent parents' styles of helping their children adjust to the student role by "sponsoring" or grooming them for that role. The interpersonal communication patterns in these homes tended to be marked by frequent parent-child dialogue,

strong parental encouragement in academic pursuits, clear and consistent limits set for the young, warm and nurturing interactions, and consistent monitoring of how they used their time. According to Clark, sociologist Bernard Farber calls this type of parent-child communication a "sponsored independence" style. (Farber's study cited in Clark, 1983)

Parents in these homes have taken the responsibility for guiding, nursing, and protecting their children during the pursuit of competent adult behavior. The parents who have sustained this type of home relationship have also been successful in producing bright, capable and well-adjusted children. The children, in turn, feel a deep and comforting loyalty to (a) their parents' expectations and wishes, and (b) their own betterment through involvement in achievement related activities. (Clark, 1983)

#### **THE FAMILY LIFE OF LOW ACHIEVERS' IN TWO PARENT HOMES ACCORDING TO REGINAL M. CLARK'S STUDY**

"I can conceive of no Negro native to this country who has not, by the age of puberty, been irreparably scarred by the conditions of his life... the wonder is not that so many are ruined but that so many survive."  
(Baldwin, 1955 p. 59)

The Coleman report (Coleman et al., **Equality of**

**education opportunity**) showed that most minority students in urban schools are low achievers in terms of their measured levels of achievement on standardized tests. Life in less successful families is typified by fewer social and material options and greater despair, pathos, lethargy, and psychological confusion. Parents in these families are often hurt, embarrassed, and ashamed about the circumstances of their homelife. A very telling indication of the serious problems these families have is their general disinclination to talk about their lives. (Coleman's study cited in Clark, 1983)

Clark's cases are marked by three distinctive patterns. First, both the mother and the father have been struggling unsuccessfully for many years to become upwardly mobile. There is a terrible sense of frustration and distress that exudes from the adults in these families. A second pattern is the father's lack of involvement in child-rearing activities. Mothers in these homes are trying to manage a huge assortment of home tasks and responsibilities while the husband hardly ever participates. As with most family patterns, this pattern has been functioning in this way for many years. The third key feature of these families is the mother's almost total sense of helplessness, aimlessness, and resignation to their economic and social lot. (Clark, 1983)

## THE FAMILY LIFE OF LOW ACHIEVERS IN ONE-PARENT HOMES ACCORDING TO REGINAL M. CLARK'S STUDY

The intrafamilial characteristics so evident in the lives of high achievers are almost totally lacking in the single-parent families studied by Clark. The mothers are still working through deep personal traumas from their own childhood and young adult years. As with the intact families of low achievers, it is clear that these families need help, and as Clark so profoundly states it... "they need it yesterday".

The young women in his study, while unsuccessful as students, are still basically level-headed and searching for something better. They still love their families. These cases demonstrate the degree of home abuse one can withstand at various stages in the life-cycle and still be considered legally sane. (Clark, 1983)

## CHAPTER 2

### QUESTIONS THAT THIS STUDY SEEKS TO ANSWER

1. Does encouraging parents and students to interact about school work increase academic performance?
2. Does encouraging parents and students to interact about school work improve classroom behavior?
3. Will there be a correlation between the level of parental involvement and the student's performance on the Final Examination?
4. In the sample what are the descriptive statistics for the independent variable (x): The Level of Parental Involvement?
5. In the sample what are the descriptive statistics for the dependent variable (y): The Student's Post-Score on the Final Examination.

6. How strong is the relationship between the two variables, the score on the Level of Parental Involvement and the Score on the Final Examination? How much of the variation on the Final Examination Score ( $y$ ) is explained by the variation in the Level of Parental Involvement ( $x$ )?
  
7. In choosing a score on the Level of Parental Involvement ( $x$ ) near the mean score, what is the best single point estimate of the Final Examination Score ( $y$ )?

#### **CASE STUDY VARIABLES**

Case studies will be developed from the correlation study information. The studies will concentrate on:

1. Students who showed an increase of six or more percentage points over the pre-test, and the parent(s) returned five or more parental surveys.
  
2. Students who showed an increase of five or less percentage points over the pre-test, and the parent(s) returned five or more parental surveys.

3. Students who showed an increase of six or more percentage points over the pre-test, and the parent(s) returned less than five parental surveys.
  
4. Students who showed an increase of five or less percentage points over the pre-test, and the parent(s) returned less than five parental surveys.

### **NULL HYPOTHESIS**

There will be no statistically significant difference on the pre-test between the two previously obtained sample means on the Eighth Grade Regents track final examination. Significance will be tested at the 95% confidence level.

### **CASE STUDY QUESTIONS**

1. Did this study change your study habits? Explain why or why not.
  
2. Were the time management sheets and study guides helpful to you? Explain why or why not.
  
3. What did you like most about this study?

4. What did you not like about this study?
5. Is there anything that I could have done to make this study more helpful for you and your parents?
6. Did you find the parental contact method too impersonal?
7. Did you find that your parents had an increased interest in your school work during this study? If there was an increase in parental interest of school work, was it in all classes?
8. Should your parents check all of your school work? Explain.
9. How could your parents help you become more prepared for the future?
10. What are some of the steps that you can take to assure a successful financial future?

## OPERATIONAL DEFINITIONS

- I. **Academic Performance** - positive academic performance will be defined as the student scoring five or more percentage points above his or her pre-test score on the post-test. Academic performance can by no means be limited to the pre and post-test given in this experiment, yet it is essential to establish a scale by which the experimenter can evaluate student performance.
  
- II. **Classroom Behavior** - Classroom behavior will not be monitored in this particular study. Although it would have been ideal for the experimenter to monitor student behavior throughout the study, the decision was made to eliminate this aspect of the study and concentrate on the development of a series of case studies. Further analysis of this topic will be examined in a doctoral study and outlined as follows:
  - a. according to the level of preparedness, such as having textbook, paper and pencil.
  
  - b. whether or not the student does written work such as note taking, class assignments and homework.

The level of preparedness and the amount of written work the student hands in are personal skills that the student should develop in order to be successful. On the other hand, social skills should also be developed and objectively measured if the student is to be successful in school and productive in society.

- c. Classroom conduct happens to be a one of the most important aspects of the learning environment. Disruption of the educational process not only inhibits learning for the individual causing the disruption, but the entire class is at a disadvantage.
  
- d. Participation - classroom participation will also be addressed under behavior. Asking and answering questions is also considered important. It facilitates the development of self-confidence and it is a very important tool in the learning environment.

All of the students in this study were assigned to remedial reading and have experienced some level of

underperformance and/or failure in their academic careers. Some have resorted to "acting out" with negative behaviors such as being destructive to school property, fighting, assault, excessive tardiness, poor attendance, truancy, deliberate defiance of authority, disruption of the education process and/ or abusive language. Class and school rules are challenged more often than expected in a middle school environment.

**III. Parental Involvement** - parental involvement was measured according to the level of participation in this study. Parents were instructed to return the parental survey to the experimenter in the self-addressed stamped envelope provided weekly along with the cover letter and study guide. The parents received one point for each survey returned. Parental Involvement was measured on a scale of 1 - 10.

**IV. Parental Survey** - each week the parents received a questionnaire related to home socialization such as time the student spends studying science and other school work, time watching television, and time spent on other recreational activities. The parents were also encouraged to monitor verbal interaction with their child relating to class work, future careers,

financial plans, and future economic indications with or without a high school diploma. The same survey was sent each week to encourage a pattern of communication between the parent and child.

### PARENT'S SURVEY

1. How many minutes did your child spend studying Science or doing Science homework on:  
Mon. \_\_\_\_\_ ; Tues. \_\_\_\_\_ ; Wed. \_\_\_\_\_ ; Thurs. \_\_\_\_\_ ; Fri. \_\_\_\_\_ ; Sat. \_\_\_\_\_ ; Sun. \_\_\_\_\_.
2. How many minutes/hours did your child spend on other schoolwork (Math, Social Studies, English, Reading) on:  
Mon. \_\_\_\_\_ ; Tues. \_\_\_\_\_ ; Wed. \_\_\_\_\_ ; Thurs. \_\_\_\_\_ ; Fri. \_\_\_\_\_ ; Sat. \_\_\_\_\_ ; Sun. \_\_\_\_\_.
3. What did your child spend most of his/her time doing after school this week? (Circle one)
  - a. Watch television
  - b. Play with friends
  - c. Schoolwork
  - d. Other activities
4. Did you help your child study Science homework, and/or study questions this week?
  - a. Yes
  - b. No
5. Did your child help you figure out the family's grocery bills and/or other bills this week?
  - a. Yes
  - b. No
6. Did you and your family do any of the following educational activities this week?
  - a. Talk about newspaper articles
  - b. Clip grocery coupons
  - c. Discuss television programs
  - d. Read a book together
7. Did you and your child review all or most of his/her homework assignments this week?
  - a. Yes
  - b. No

8. Did you and your child talk about his or her career goals and how much money he or she would make as an adult:
- a. Without a high school diploma
  - b. With a high school diploma
  - c. With a trade
  - d. With a college degree
9. Did you encourage your child to find out more about the career that interests him or her?
- a. Yes
  - b. No
10. Did any of your child's teachers call you this week?
- a. Yes
  - b. No
- \* Please return this survey in the self-addressed envelope.

**V. Study Guides** - The study guides were designed to help parents understand what their child was expected to know by the end of the following week. Parents were encouraged to ask their child the questions on the study guide and help the child search for answers in the class notes and the textbook. Students were to be encouraged to write the answers in complete sentences and also to be able to answer the questions verbally.

## Example of a Study Guide

April 10, 1989

Your child should use his/her notes and textbook to answer these questions. The day before our exam he/she should be able to answer these questions.

1. Why must thermometers be shielded from rain and direct sunlight?
2. What is relative humidity?
3. What is dew point?
4. How is wind measured?
5. What can clouds tell us about atmospheric conditions?
6. What are the different kinds of precipitation?
7. What information can satellite photos provide?
8. Draw a set of cumulus clouds.
9. Draw a set of cirrus clouds.
10. Draw a set of stratus clouds.
11. Draw the symbol for a warm front.
12. Draw the symbol for a cold front.
13. Draw the symbol for a stationary front.
14. What is the difference between radiation and convection?
15. Explain why a person wearing dark colors on a hot and humid day may be uncomfortable.

**VI. Significantly Increase** - the experimenter states that the students' grades will increase significantly if parents are informed and involved. Significantly increased will be defined as an increase of the post-test score of not less than 10 percentage points above the performance level of the individual pre-test score.

**VII. Criterion Measurement** - The criterion measurement used for this experiment was the Science VIII Final Examination given in June, 1988 to the Regents tract student by the City School District of Rochester, New York. This criterion measurement is a comprehensive exam consistent with the 8th grade Block D, Block E, and Block F section of the New York State Science Syllabus.

The students of both the control group and the experimental group took the Part II portion of the exam which consists of 100 multiple choice questions. The part I writing section and the laboratory practical was omitted by the experimenter to eliminate subjectivity and due to unavailability of laboratory equipment.

The Block D section of the syllabus entitled 'The Earth's Changing Surface' represents 20% of the examination.

The Block E section of the syllabus entitled 'Weather and Climate' represents 45% of the examination. The Block F section of the syllabus entitled 'Astronomy and Aerospace Science' represents 35% of the examination.

#### **HOW THE PARTICIPANTS OF THIS STUDY WERE CHOSEN**

The subjects for this study were not chosen randomly. The population was previously defined. All participants were in the 8th grade at Douglass Middle School in the City of Rochester, New York. Douglass Middle School services a population of low income families in the inner city. Many of the students receive either free lunch or reduced lunch price.

The students in this particular study were assigned to the Red House Cluster B quadrant of the school, as mentioned earlier, they were a homogeneous group of non-Regent students assigned to remedial reading and grouped according to their stanine scores. Three out of the four classes taught by the experimenter were selected to take the pre-test. The two groups exhibiting the most similarities in size and mean average on the pre-test were selected as the control group and the experimental group. The group with the lowest mean was selected as the experimental group. According to the inferential statistics, the two groups are from the same population.

## EXPERIMENTAL GROUP

### PARENTAL SURVEYS RETURN

NAME	SURVEYS RETURNED	DIFFERENCE BETWEEN POST AND PRE TEST
Stacey	0	+11
Lavette	6	9
Cordell	7	-1
Chauncey	8	+5
Roderick	2	-1
Yvonne	8	+2
Eric	3	0
Leader	0	+12.5
Jon	0	+6
Felicia	0	+1
Harold	1	+7
Jenelle	5	+10
Tambora	6	+5
NaKiethia	0	+10
Allen	0	-4

\* There appears to be no correlation between the number of surveys returned and the difference between the post-test and the pre-test. 25% of the parental surveys were returned. Six out of nineteen parents returned 5 or more surveys.

## NULL HYPOTHESIS #1

There will be no statistically significant difference in the Pre-test means at the 95% confidence level between the Control Group and the Experimental Group.

CONTROL GROUP		EXPERIMENTAL GROUP	
A	85	A	71
B	82	B	69
C	77	C	66
D	76	D	66
E	76	E	65
F	73	F	64
G	71	G	63
H	68	H	62.5
I	66	I	62
J	61	J	59
K	57	K	59
L	53	L	57
M	53	M	57
N	51	N	41.5
O	49	O	41
P	49		
Q	45		
R	42		

**NULL HYPOTHESIS #1      Statistical Data Summary**

	Pre-Control Group	Pre-Experiment Group
N (# of participants)	18	15
m (Mean)	63.00	60.20
x (Median)	63.50	62.50
s.d. (Standard Deviation)	13.543	8.689
t required	+/-2.042	
t obtained	+0.690	

FINDINGS : Since the t required for 31 degrees of freedom at the 95% confidence level is +/-2.042 and since the T obtained is +0.690, we must retain the null hypothesis and conclude that there is no statistically significant difference in the performance of the Control Group and the Experimental Group, Parents as Partners, on the pre-test means. Therefore the Control Group and the Experimental Group are considered equivalent. There is no statistically significant difference between the Control Group and the Experimental Group. Null Hypothesis ( $H_0$ ) must be retained.

Calculations can be found in Appendix A



**NULL HYPOTHESIS #2**

**Statistical Data Summary**

	Pre-Control	Post-Control
N (# of Participants)	18	18
$\bar{x}$ (Mean)	63.72	67.83
m (Median)	68.50	70.00
s.d.	13.54	13.24
$\Sigma D$ (Sum of the differences)		-8
$\Sigma D^2$ (Sum of the differences squared)		1034
t (Required @ N-1)		+/-1.740
T (Obtained)		-2.240

FINDINGS: Since the t required for 17 degrees of freedom at the 95% confidence level is +/-1.740 and since the T obtained is -2.240, we must reject the null hypothesis and conclude that there is a statistically significant difference in the performance of the Control Group pre-test and the post-test. This difference can be attributed to the materials taught during the remainder of the academic year.

\*Calculations can be found in Appendix B

**NULL HYPOTHESIS #3**

**Pre-Experiment Post-Experiment**

GROUP B -

t TEST FOR PAIRED SAMPLES 2nd AND 3rd NULL HYPOTHESIS

Subject	X1 PRE	X2 POST	Difference	Difference <sup>2</sup>
A	71	82	-11	121
B	69	78	-9	81
C	66	65	1	1
D	66	71	-5	25
E	65	64	1	1
F	64	66	-2	4
G	63	63	0	0
H	62.5	75	-12.5	156.25
I	62	68	-6	36
J	59	60	-1	1
K	59	66	-7	49
L	57	67	-10	100
M	57	62	-5	25
N	41.5	52	-10.5	110.25
O	41	37	4	16
	SUM		-73	726.5

\* (Pre-Experiment - Post-Experiment) = Difference  
 \* (Pre-Experiment - Post-Experiment) = Difference<sup>2</sup>

	Pre-Experiment	Post-Experiment
N (# of Participants)	15	15
x (Mean)	60.20	65.07
m (Median)	62.50	66.00
s.d.	8.689	10.690
$\sum D$ (Sum of the Differences)		-73
$\sum D^2$ (Sum of the Differences Squared)		726.5
t (Required @ N-1)		+/-1.761
T (Obtained)		-3.661

FINDINGS: Since the t required for 14 degrees of freedom at the 95% confidence level is +/-1.761 and since the T obtained is -3.661, we must reject the null hypothesis and conclude that there is a statistically significant difference in the performance of the Experimental Group, Parents of Partners, between the pre-test and the post-test means. This difference can be attributed to the materials taught during the remainder of the academic year.

\* Calculations can be found in Appendix C

**NULL HYPOTHESIS #4****Post-Control Versus Post-Experiment**

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There will be no statistically significant difference in the post-test means at the 95% confidence level between the Control Group and the Experimental Group.

	Post-Control	Post-Experiment
1.	86	82
2.	83	78
3.	82	75
4.	81	71
5.	79	68
6.	78	67
7.	75	66
8.	74	66
9.	74	65
10.	66	64
11.	65	63
12.	61	62
13.	60	60
14.	57	52
15.	57	37
16.	63	--
17.	51	--
18.	39	--

**NULL HYPOTHESIS #4**

**Statistical Data Summary**

	Post-Control	Post- Experiment
N (# of participants)	18	15
$\bar{x}$ (Mean)	67.83	65.067
m (Median)	70	66
s.d. (Standard Deviation)	13.24	10.694
t (Required N + N - 2)		+/-1.697
T (Obtained)		0.650

FINDINGS: Since the t Required for 31 degrees of freedom at the 95% confidence level is +/-1.697 and since the T obtained is 0.650 we must retain the null hypothesis and conclude that there is no statistically significant difference between the Control Group and the Experimental Group, Parents as Partners, on the post-test means. Therefore, Null Hypothesis ( $H_0$ ) must be retained.

\*Calculations can be found in Appendix D

# EXPERIMENTAL GROUP

NUMBER	STUDENT	ATTENDANCE	
		2nd Quarter Nov.14 - Jan.27 (46 Class Days)	4th Quarter Apr.3-June 9 (46 Class Days)
1.	Stacey	3	1
2.	Lavette	1	3
3.	Cordell	3	5
4.	Chauncey	2	5
5.	Roderick	0	4
6.	Yvonne	9	9
7.	Eric	18	21
8.	Leader	18	4 *
9.	Jon	8	0 *
10.	Felicia	6	13
11.	Harold	3	2
12.	Jenelle	8	3 *
13.	Tambora	2	1
14.	NaKiethia	8	7
15.	Allen	8	10
SUM		97	93

There is a slight positive difference in class attendance between the Second Quarter and the Fourth Quarter. (The experiment was conducted during the Fourth Quarter.) This difference may be attributed to three students whose attendance improved dramatically.

**CONTROL GROUP**

NUMBER	STUDENT	ATTENDANCE	
		2nd Quarter Nov.14 - Jan.27 (46 Class Days)	4th Quarter Apr.3-June 9 (46 Class Days)
1.	Gregg	11	10
2.	Agustin	2	3
3.	Miguel	10	16
4.	Cullen	7	10
5.	Jenolee	0	0
6.	Jerome	12	25
7.	Sheronda	4	0
8.	Tiffany	1	1
9.	Darrest	18	16
10.	LaKisha	4	13
11.	Jeames	10	10
12.	Bridgett	5	6
13.	Tracee	13	7
14.	Caton	6	0
15.	Ali	0	1
16.	Zoraida	20	16
17.	Lolita	-	6 *
18.	Teresa	9	14
	SUM	132	142

There is a negative difference in class attendance between the Second Quarter and the Fourth Quarter. This difference can be attributed to the end of the year increase in truancy and the increase in tardiness. This class was taught during first period.

## CASE STUDY # 1

Stacey : - Academic Increase with no parental involvement. Post-test score is equal to 11.0% above the pre-test score. The groups average increase above the pre-test was 4.6%.

Stacy is a respectful 14 year-old black male who is repeating eighth grade. He is the oldest of four boys and is responsible for baby sitting his younger brothers after school; a set of one-and-a-half year-old twins and a six month old. He lives with his mother who works from 3:00 pm to 11:00 pm and his step-father who also works.

Stacy's mother called the school during the fifth week (May 10th) of the study to explain to me that she really cares about his education, but she did not have time to monitor his study habits and/or fill out the parental survey. She also said that she worked the night shift. She stated:

"When Stacy gets in from school, I go to work."

"When I get home at night, he is sleep."

"When he leaves for school in the morning, I am sleep."

During this telephone conversation Stacy's mother sounded as if she was under stress. She freely volunteered information and sounded as if she appreciated the level of interest I have taken in her son.

I started the conversation off in a very cordial manner I asked Stacy if he was enjoying his summer vacation, did he have a summer job, and was he involved in any of the summer educational programs for junior high and high school student. He said that he had to baby sit his brothers for the summer so he did not have time to participate in anything.

1. Did this Parental Involvement Study changed any of your habits?

"No. Not really. My mother looked at it (parental survey) but didn't fill them out. Then she gave me the study guides."

2. Were the time management sheets and study guides helpful to you?

"I looked at the study guide questions and wrote down

Telephone Interview (cont.) - Stacy

the answers to the ones I knew. I didn't use the time management sheets 'cause I was too busy baby sitting. I studied 5 minutes here and there. If I don't know something, I just don't know it. I'll do better next year though."

3. What did you like most about this study?

"I don't know."

4. What did you not like about this study? "It told the grades for the week. My mother asked me too many questions... like, 'Why did you get this grade?'... She pressured me."

5. Is there anything that I could have done to make this study more helpful for you and your mother?

"Open up after school activities for students like, study-time, demonstrations and experiments for those students who wanted it."

6. Did you find the parental contact method too impersonal?

"No."

Telephone Interview (cont.) - Stacey

7. Did you find that your parents had an increased interest in your school work during this study?

"Yes. Especially my mother. She always asked me about school work. It gave her something to go on."

8. Should your parents check all of your school work?

"No. 'Cause every time they (parents) checked my work... if one little thing was wrong they made me do it over. Maybe if they didn't know about it (school work) they won't ask so much."

9. How could your parents help you become more prepared for the future?

"They can buy me a computer, get me a tutor or help me with my work themselves. ... My mother might not be helpful 'cause sometimes she gets frustrated."

10. What are some of the steps that you can take to assure a successful financial future for yourself?

"Finish high school and maybe go to college or a trade school."

## SUMMARY OF STUDY #1 -

Although Stacey repeated 8th grade I find him to be mature for his age. He does not like being academically challenged and he does just enough to get by.

According to the definition of parental involvement for this study, Stacy's mother is not involved in her son's academic career. Yet, after talking to Stacy about his mother's role during the study it is obvious that she played a significant role in changing his study habits. She caused him to be more accountable for his grades by monitoring his progress with the weekly notices sent during the study.

Although this case may not be normative for all such cases, it certainly shows that parental level of interest and/or involvement cannot be judged solely on the basis of points gained on such surveys. Stacy's mother spends very little time with her son, yet she controls most of his free time by assigning familial responsibilities. Stacy did not use the time management sheets because he was already on a tight schedule from the time he came home from school until it was time for him to go to bed.

## CASE STUDY # 2

Cordell - Very little academic increase with parental involvement. Post-test score is equal to 1% above the pre-test. The experimental groups average increase above the pre-test was equal to 4.6%.

Cordell is a playful, happy and respectful 13 year-old black male who is an only child. He lives with his mother who is divorced from his father. Cordell did not mention anything about his father or any other male who would have a positive influence on him. Cordell's mother works two jobs, one during the day and also a night job.

I met Cordell's mother during the graduation ceremony. She told me that she made Cordell answer the questions on the study guide every week. She also said that she was glad to see someone take an interest in her son's education. She returned seven out of ten parental surveys. Cordell's mother was very supportive of this study. She told Cordell that I was trying to make him more responsible and that he should appreciate what I was doing because it was for his own good.

## Telephone Interview - Cordell

I started the conversation off in a very cordial manner. I asked him if he was doing anything for the summer. He replied, "I have a summer job working at Edison Tech. (a high school in Rochester) working with computers, programming, making spreadsheets, I keep my own file...hours and wages, other students' hours and wages too. My teacher showed us where the circuit box was and where the information goes..." Cordell was really excited about this summer program.

### **CASE STUDY QUESTIONS**

1. Did this study change your study habits? Explain why or why not.

"Yeah. Like it set a schedule up...My mother put me on a study and play time schedule.

2. Were the time management sheets and study guides helpful to you? Explain why or why not.

"Yeah. She made me fill the time management sheets out until the last two weeks of school. My mother made me answer the study guide questions out loud. And when I did not know an answer she told me to ask you and then

Telephone Interview - Cordell

3. What did you like most about this study?

"Nothing."

4. What did you not like about this study?

"Answering questions out loud for my mother."

5. Is there anything that I could have done to make this study more helpful for you and your parents?

"Add more graphs and diagrams to the study questions."

6. Did you find the parental contact method too impersonal?

"No. Not Really."

7. Did you find that your parents had an increased interest in your school work during this study? If there was an increase in parental interest of school work, was it in all classes?

"Yes. She started making me study more science work. She didn't really bother me much about my other courses."

8. Should your parents check all of your school work?

Explain.

"Yes. But not all of the time. Every other week to see how you're doing."

9. How could your parents help you become more prepared for the future?

"Try to keep my room organized and other stuff.

Developing organizational skills would be helpful."

10. What are some of the steps that you can take to assure a successful financial future?

"Stay out of trouble like drugs and gangs, increase my math skills, pay more attention in school, graduate and go to college to be an engineer."

## **SUMMARY OF CASE STUDY #2**

Although Cordell's mother returned seven out of ten parental surveys Cordell's post-test score had only increased by 1%. In this particular case there is no correlation between the amount of parental surveys returned - "high parental interest" - and student performance on post-test.

### CASE STUDY #3

Yvonne - Very little academic increase with parental involvement. Post-test score is equal to 2% above the pre-test. The experimental groups average increase above the pre-test was equal to 4.6%.

Yvonne is a quiet 13 year-old female who said that she wanted be a doctor. Yvonne's verbal goals are not consistent with her actions. Although she has the ability to do very good work she failed to make up the work she missed. I spoke with Yvonne on several occasions concerning her attendance, self-esteem and self-motivation. Yvonne was absent from school nine times during the study.

I called Yvonne's home several times and talked to her father after repeated conversations with her. I did not have an opportunity to speak with Yvonne's mother, she quickly passed the phone to Yvonne's father on one occasion. He was verbally supportive of Yvonne's education. He said, "Yvonne was good and never gave me or my wife problems." He told me he would send the surveys back, but he didn't have time to monitor her work. He said, "I got other children to worry about too."

## Telephone Conversation - Yvonne

The telephone conversation started off very slow at first. Yvonne was very short and to the point with her responses. I tried to make her more comfortable with the conversation by asking her about her summer vacation and some of the activities she was involved in. (I wrote a letter of recommendation for Yvonne to participate in a summer science program offered by one of the community colleges in the area. She was turned down.) She reluctantly told me that she was baby sitting two kids, a four year-old and a three-year old, around the corner from her house.

### CASE STUDY QUESTIONS

1. Did this study change your study habits? Explain why or why not.

"No... Yeah... a little. The study guide gave me an advantage over other students."

2. Were the time management sheets and study guides helpful to you? Explain why or why not.

Telephone Conversation - Yvonne (cont.)

"Yes. The time management sheets helped me plan time to do other things like when to study for other classes and when to take breaks. I plan to use something like that next year."

3. What did you like most about this study?

"The time management sheets. Because...you can plan your whole week and that's good."

4. What did you not like about this study?

"Well... I ain't like sharing the information (mail package) with my parents. Expecially the test grades for the week. My parents started filling out the time themselves, and they started asking me questions about science and even read my book with me."

5. Is there anything that I could have done to make this study more helpful for you and your parents?

"You could have added more questions to the study guide, like pictures to look at."

Telephone Conversation - Yvonne (cont.)

6. Did you find the parental contact method too impersonal? "No."
7. Did you find that your parents had an increased interest in your school work during this study? If there was an increase in parental interest in school work, was it in all classes? "Yes. All of my classes."
8. Should your parents check all of your school work? Explain.  
"Yes. At the end of the week."
9. How could your parents help you become more prepared for the future?  
"I think that they should sit down and talk to me and help me with my homework."
10. What are some of the steps that you can take to assure a successful financial future?  
"Well... I'll just... I don't know. I'll probably go to college and get a job or take a bank loan out."

### SUMMARY OF CASE STUDY #3

Although Yvonne's parents sent back eight out of ten parental surveys, on her post-test she scored only 2% above her pre-test score. This insignificant increase can be attributed to her poor attendance and lack of motivation. Even though Mr. and Mrs. McDaniels faithfully sent back the parental survey forms, it is clear that it had no affect on Yvonne's academic performance and/or attendance. Yvonne was absent nine times during second quarter and nine times during the study.

According to the definition on parental involvement in this study Yvonne's parents recieved one of the better scores. There is certainly no correlation between the number of survey's returned by Yvonne's parents and Yvonne's academic performance on the post-test.

#### CASE STUDY # 4

Leader - Academic Increase with no parental involvement. Post-test score is equal to 12.5% above the pre-test score. The average increase above the pretest was 4.6%.

Leader is a 14 year-old black male who also repeated eighth grade. Before the study began Leader's attendance was sporadic. He did not comb his hair and he wore wrinkled, unkempt clothing. It was not easy to obtain information about his home life. Due to a tremendous amount of noise in the background, I gathered from a previous phone conversation with Leader and his mother that there were several younger children in the home.

I called Leader's mother during the second week of the study because Leader informed me that he did not receive a study guide for the week. I asked Ms. Brown if she had received the information and she said that she did not have time for it and she threw it away! I tried to encourage her to help Leader study...and she just did not want to. I then

## CASE STUDY QUESTIONS

### Telephone Interview - Leader

Our conversation was distant at first. I got the feeling that Leader did not feel comfortable talking to me. Yet he was cooperative, he answered all of the questions.

1. Did this study change your study habits? Explain why or why not.

"No...not really. I just studied longer."

2. Were the time management sheets and study guides helpful to you? Explain why or why not.

"Yes. You can organize study time better. I found more time to study. I answered the questions on the study guide."

3. What did you like most about this study? "The time management sheets."

4. What did you not like about this study?

"All was equally important."

5. Is there anything that I could have done to make this

study more helpful for you and your parents?

"I don't know."

6. Did you find the parental contact method too impersonal?

"No."

7. Did you find that your parents had an increased interest in your school work during this study? If there was an increase in parental interest of school work, was it in all classes?

"No. The same."

8. Should your parents check all of your school work?

Explain.

"Yeah. 'Cause it's important! She supposed to know everything you do...all grades. She could help me out on things I don't know."

9. How could your parents help you become more prepared for the future?

"Help me find out what I'm interested in and good at."

10. What are some of the steps that you can take to assure a successful financial future?

"Stay in school. Go to college and study."

#### **SUMMARY OF CASE STUDY #4**

Leader has strong feelings about his mother's lack of interest in his education. It is possible that he responded so well to the study because someone took an interest in him. It is a strong possibility that Leader is a victim of physical and emotional neglect. According to the house administrator, documentation of physical abuse has been reported in his cumulative records. There was a dramatic improvement in his attendance during the study, and he began to take better care of himself.

## CHAPTER 3

### CONCLUSION

As a second year teacher in an urban public school I find myself in situations beyond textbook theories. For the most part, parent-teacher conferences are limited to problem solving sessions. Parents are called in to help teachers and administrators solve chronic behavioral problems of students who insist on disrupting the educational process in classroom settings. After report cards are issued there is an influx of parents who make appointments to inquire about their children's grades. Afterwards, many of the same children fall back into undesirable academic patterns.

Many parents try everything they know to try only to find that they have lost control. J. Myers (1985) in his book, Involving Parents in Middle Level Education, summed it up quite well when he included the following complaint of one parent during a conference:

"I don't understand it. My child never behaved this way in elementary school. I don't know why

"I don't understand it. My child never behaved this way in elementary school. I don't know why he is causing all this trouble. It's the same way at home. I can't control him anymore. I've had it!" (p. 21)

How many times have we, as educators, heard similar comments from parents of adolescents? How many conferences have ended in frustration, with a solution never really reached, only agreement that the student is having great difficulty adjusting to this new stage of developmental growth? (Myers, 1985)

I have actually had a parent totally give up and say, "It's up to the school to take care of him." What is the answer to helping the parent better understand this period of adolescence? What support can the school offer to parents which will enable mothers and fathers to endure and survive this most difficult phase of their child's maturation process. Keeping in harmony with middle school education philosophy, the answer is to educate the parents. YES EDUCATE THE PARENTS! Providing a meaningful and practical parent education program can help to minimize parent frustration and maximize parent understanding of this age group. (Myers, 1985)

Adolescent Behavior Education Seminars (ABES) are

1. Provide education to parents of adolescent children.
2. Inform parents about behaviorally related problems.
3. Suggest and demonstrate various strategies to help parents deal with problems.
4. Actively involve parents in their childrens' education.
5. Provide an opportunity for parents to interact with professionals.
6. To provide parents with an opportunity to share common concerns with other parents of adolescents. (Myers, 1985)

According to Craft, (1980) in Linking Home and School, a change in parental attitudes could improve home-school relations and it is inferred, raise the level of attainment, but comparatively little research has been done in this country on schemes designed to change parental attitudes and assess any educational outcomes that could be directly linked to such change.

The task of linking home and school is not the exclusive right of any one professional group. Teachers, social workers, doctors, nurses, policemen, and clergymen will all have to become involved. (Craft, 1980) Educating our children must become our primary goal if we are to save this generation of children. Furthermore, if teachers want to restore the respect that was once given to their profession they must take on this challenge enthusiastically.

this generation of children. Furthermore, if teachers want to restore the respect that was once given to their profession they must take on this challenge enthusiastically.

Have we grown too accustomed to asking why working-class children fail? An alternative is to ask why teachers fail with working-class children. In education, working-class children are considered a problem. They are often difficult to control, let alone teach. (Craft, 1980) Teachers, administrators, parents and others who are involved in the process of educating and socializing our children must change their attitudes and stop blaming each other.

Historically, the school has often served to separate the child from the home, sometimes with partial cooperation of parents, sometimes without. The schools of the past were boarding schools, reflecting the Victorian conviction that the family did not constitute the best environment for the growing child. Psychologically, as well as socially and historically, the school has tended to divide children and parents. (Craft, 1980)

As we painfully examine the current situation in urban schools, we must admit that we need to talk directly to the parents. Parents! You must take the initiative and be a change catalyst if your youngster's education is to be

improved. (Dobbert, 1980)

## HOW TO HELP YOUR CHILD WITH HOMEWORK

M. Radencich and J. Schumm in How To Help Your Child with Homework provides an outline of pointers that could help parents get started.

### **A. Getting Started**

1. Set a homework schedule.
2. Set up a study area.

### **B. Two Way Street Between Home and School**

1. Talk to your child about school.
2. Meet with teachers at least three times a year.
3. Find out how you will be informed about your child's progress.
4. Make an appointment immediately and tell the teacher why you want to meet if you suspect that a problem exists. (Spur-of-the-moment, unannounced visits are discouraged.)

### **C. Twenty Tips For Homework Helpers**

1. Maintain two-way communication with your child.
2. Don't give your child a choice unless you mean it.
3. Set goals with, not for your child. Then focus on one at a time.
4. Expect progress.
5. Make your child aware of his or her improvement. Reward achievement.
6. Praise generously, yet honestly.
7. Direct praise to the task at hand.
8. Try not to show disappointment if your child does not do as well as you like.
9. Be enthusiastic. Use humor.
10. Use timers and competition judiciously.
11. Be prepared to teach.
12. Use concrete materials rather than abstract ones.
13. Help your child build association between what he or she already knows and what is being learned.
14. Provide variety. Take breaks.

20. Show a positive attitude toward school.  
(Radencich, 1988 p. 2-16)

### **WHY SHOULD SCHOOLS INVOLVE PARENTS IN EDUCATION?**

John W. Myers states some of the benefits of parental involvement in his book Involving Parents in Middle Level Education.

1. Parent involvement leads to improved academic performance on the part of students. Students report an emotional and motivational boost when their parents are actively involved in school programs.
2. Parents become closer to their children as school becomes a shared experience, a family experience. In addition, parents become more familiar with that unique creature we call a "transescent" - adolescence.
3. Relations between home and school, as well as between the school and community, improve as parents become involved. What goes on at school is no longer a mystery; the child's teacher is no longer just a name. Such close cooperation builds support for school programs in the community support that can be of great value in times of crisis, financial or otherwise. Good communication with the community is worth its weight in gold to today's middle school.
4. Parents have the skills needed to help students in the classroom, both academically and socially. Parents need not, and should not be limited to mundane tasks in the classroom or in other areas; they are often capable of creative thought and should be fully utilized.
5. Students need all the extra support and understanding their parents can give them, both at home and at school. They are in a time of great physical, psychological, and emotional change. No one teacher can meet all the many needs of these

varied transescent, but parents and other volunteers can help to fill the gaps.

6. Finally, there is the obvious benefits that accrues because service performed by parents and other volunteers do not cost anything. Volunteers in general can be a fine investment; parents in particular, present an investment not only in terms of dollars, but also in terms of family relationship and an understanding of school programs and goals. (Myers, 1985 p. 1-2)

As a teacher it is easy for me to say that the key to educating urban children is to involve the parents. Just like it is easy for Nancy Reagan to tell the children of America to "Just Say No" to drugs. "Involve the Parents" will become just another empty slogan if we fail to develop effective strategies with the various community organizations. African American, Hispanics, and other minority groups from all walks of life must be involved in the developmental plans.

Appendix A - Calculations for Null Hypothesis #1

$$\begin{aligned} \text{Pre-A Skewness} &= 3 * (\text{Mean} - \text{Median}) / \text{s.d.} \\ &= 3 * (63.00 - 61.00) \\ &\quad \text{-----} \\ &\quad \quad \quad 13.543 \\ &= 0.443 \end{aligned}$$

$$\begin{aligned} \text{Pre-B Skewness} &= 3 * (\text{Mean} - \text{Median}) / \text{s.d.} \\ &= 3 * (60.20 - 62.00) \\ &\quad \text{-----} \\ &\quad \quad \quad 8.689 \\ &= - 0.621 \end{aligned}$$

Pre-A verse Pre-B T (Obtained)

$$\begin{aligned} T &= \frac{\bar{x} - \bar{y}}{\sqrt{\frac{n_x - 1 * s.d.^2_x + (n_y - 1) * s.d.^2_y}{n_x + n_y - 2} * \left(\frac{1}{n_x} + \frac{1}{n_y}\right)}} \\ T &= \frac{63.00 - 60.20}{\sqrt{\frac{(18-1) * 13.543^2 + (15-1) * 8.689^2}{18+15-2} * \left(\frac{1}{18} + \frac{1}{15}\right)}} \\ T &= \frac{2.80}{\sqrt{\frac{(17 * 183.41) + (14 * 75.50)}{31} * (0.05 + 0.07)}} \\ T &= \frac{2.80}{\sqrt{\frac{3117.47 + 1057.00}{31} * 0.12}} \\ T &= \frac{2.80}{\sqrt{\frac{4174.97}{31} * 0.12}} \\ T &= \frac{2.80}{\sqrt{\frac{134.68 * 0.12}{4.02}}} = \frac{2.80}{4.02} = 0.70 \end{aligned}$$

Appendix B - Calculations for Null Hypothesis #2

Pre-A versus Post-A

$$T = \frac{\bar{x}_1 - \bar{x}_2}{\sqrt{\frac{n * [\sum D^2] - [\sum D]^2}{n^2 * (n-1)}}$$

$$T = \frac{63.00 - 67.83}{\sqrt{\frac{18 * 1034 - (-8)^2}{18^2 * (18-1)}}$$

$$T = \frac{-4.83}{\sqrt{\frac{18612 - 64}{324.00 * 17}}$$

$$T = \frac{-4.83}{\sqrt{\frac{18548}{5508}}$$

$$T = \frac{-4.83}{\sqrt{3.37}}$$

$$T = \frac{-4.83}{1.84}$$

$$T = -2.63$$

Appendix C

Calculations for Null Hypothesis #3

Pre-B versus Post-B

$$T = \frac{\bar{y}_1 - \bar{y}_2}{\sqrt{\frac{n * [\sum D^2] - [\sum D]^2}{n^2 * (n-1)}}$$

$$T = \frac{60.20 - 65.07}{\sqrt{\frac{15 * 726.5 - (-73)^2}{15^2 * (15-1)}}$$

$$T = \frac{-4.87}{\sqrt{\frac{10897.5 - 5329}{3150}}}$$

$$T = \frac{-4.87}{\sqrt{\frac{5568.5}{3150}}}$$

$$T = \frac{-4.87}{\sqrt{1.77}}$$

$$T = \frac{-4.87}{1.33}$$

$$T = -3.66$$

Appendix D - Calculations for Null Hypothesis #4

Post-A versus Post-B T (obtained)

$$T = \frac{\bar{x}_1 - \bar{y}_2}{\sqrt{\frac{(n-1)_x * s.d.^2_x + (n-1)_y * s.d.^2_y}{n_x + n_y - 2} * \left(\frac{1}{n_x} + \frac{1}{n_y}\right)}}$$

$$T = \frac{67.83 - 65.07}{\sqrt{\frac{(18-1) * 13.24^2 + (15-1) * 10.694^2}{18 + 15 - 2} * \left(\frac{1}{18} + \frac{1}{15}\right)}}$$

$$T = \frac{2.76}{\sqrt{\frac{17 * 175.30 + 14 * 114.36}{31} * (0.06 + 0.07)}}$$

$$T = \frac{2.76}{\sqrt{\frac{2980 + 1601.04}{31} * 0.13}}$$

$$T = \frac{2.76}{\sqrt{\frac{4581.04}{31} * 0.13}}$$

$$T = \frac{2.76}{\sqrt{147.78 * 0.13}}$$

$$T = \frac{2.76}{\sqrt{19.21}}$$

$$T = 0.63$$

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