

Running head: INCREASING THE ACADEMIC AND OCCUPATIONAL

Increasing the Academic and Occupational Expectations of African American Male Probationers

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Abstract

The problem was that African American males, ages 18-29, were overrepresented in prisons and underrepresented in college when compared to the general population. The purpose of this study was to determine if a mentor-guided, self-identity educational program would improve the academic and occupational possible selves in African American males placed under correctional community supervision. The literature predicted that providing positive role models, raising peer and instructor expectations, and strengthening a focus on possible selves would produce a shift in academic and occupational self-expectations in this cohort. The null hypothesis could not be rejected as stated. However, participants demonstrated an increased growth rate in academic possible selves and a reduced rate of unexpected decline in occupational selves that had practical significance. Possible causes and recommendations for future studies are discussed.

Increasing the Academic and Occupational Expectations of
African American Male Probationers

Chapter I: Introduction

Problem Statement

The problem was that African American males, ages 18-29, were overrepresented in prisons and underrepresented in college when compared to the general population. The problem was investigated over a 12-week period.

Purpose

The purpose of this study was to determine if a mentor-guided, self-identity educational program improved the academic and occupational possible selves in African American males placed under correctional community supervision.

For the purposes of this study, the construct of self-identity was defined as “the extent to which a person views himself or herself as fulfilling a role tied to a specific behavioral domain” (Celuch, Black, & Warthan, 2009, p. 32), including the social, occupational, and academic domains. A true experimental design was used to examine the cause-effect relationship between the intervention and the two dependent variables of academic and occupational possible selves. The participants were selected using purposeful sampling then randomly assigned to either the control group or experimental group.

Specifically, the study tested the following hypothesis regarding African American males under correctional community supervision:

H₀: Participants in a mentor-guided, self-identity educational program report the same number of academic and occupational possible selves as nonparticipants after 12 weeks.

H_a: Participants in a mentor-guided, self-identity educational program report a significantly higher number of academic and occupational possible selves than nonparticipants after 12 weeks.

Description of the Community

The selected community, located in the southern United States, was experiencing a demographic transformation from a predominately biracial Southern city to a culturally diverse metropolitan area. In 1960, Anglos comprised the greatest percentage of the population (73.9%). African Americans accounted

for 19.8% of the residents. Four decades later, the community shifted to a 36.5% Anglo, 18.2% African American, and 38.6% Hispanic distribution in 2007 (Klineberg, 2009).

When compared to state and national percentages, the community also showed a more populous, multicultural demographic. The county outranked others in the state in terms of number of residents (US Census Bureau, 2009). The African American population was 6.3% higher than the state average and 5.3% higher than the national average. Additionally, the percentage of inhabitants speaking a language other than English in the home was twice the national average. However, the general educational attainment of community citizens was an above-average concern because the percentage of high school graduates lagged behind the national average by 7.5%.

The local Community Supervision and Corrections Department (CSCD) maintained a greater caseload than that of other departments in the state. The CSCD served 22 district criminal courts, 15 county criminal courts, three neighborhood reporting locations, and five residential substance abuse treatment programs (Harris County, n.d.a). A staff of approximately 875 employees provided services to an estimated 38,000 individuals under direct, indirect, or pretrial community supervision for misdemeanor or felony offenses (Harris County, n.d.a; Community Justice Assistance Division, 2003).

The CSCD's goals focused on protecting the public by helping all offenders to become successful. According to the Department's vision statement, the CSCD declared a commitment "to promoting a positive atmosphere and enhancing community safety by providing all...clients opportunities for change so that they can successfully complete community supervision and become productive, law-abiding citizens" (Harris County, n.d.a, ¶2). As such, supervising and rehabilitating offenders sentenced to community supervision—commonly referred to as probation—by local courts stood as the Department's primary role.

Operating on the belief that a successful probationer "is not just one who completes the terms of probation" (White, 2007, p. 15), the CSCD emphasized resolving the issues leading to the criminal behavior. The Department intended to fulfill its role and realize its vision by helping individuals under community supervision to: (a) find their place in society, (b) learn to resolve the underlying causes that led to the illegal acts, (c) learn the consequences of their actions, and (d) adjust their decisions and behavior in the future.

The Pretrial Services division aimed to “develop and provide services that support informed, accountable pretrial release and detention processes that neither unduly restrict a defendant's liberty nor compromise the safety of the community” (Harris County, n.d.b, ¶1). The program’s role in the community included investigating individuals arrested and charged with a felony or with a class A or B misdemeanor offense. Pretrial officers compiled a profile of the individual and provided the judiciary with a comprehensive defendant report of all collected information to assist with release and detention decisions (Harris County, n.d.b; Harris County Pretrial Services [HCPS], 2008). Further, Pretrial Services monitored all defendants released on bond under pretrial supervision to ensure compliance with conditions of release and minimize risk to the community (Harris County, n.d.b).

Description of Work Setting

The research project took place in one of the 22 district criminal courts in this county. The chosen district criminal court handled a portion of the 11,196 new defendants placed under pretrial supervision (HCPS, 2008). The cultural composition of defendants included approximately 46% African Americans, 31% Hispanics, and 22% Anglos. Nearly 40% percent of these individuals lacked a high school diploma and almost 35% were between the traditional college ages of 17-25 years. Individuals aged 18-29 made up more than half of the total defendants. Sixty-eight percent (68%) of all defendants had at least one prior conviction.

All defendants under pretrial community supervision had to comply with a set of predetermined release conditions to ensure their appearance in court. Standard supervision requirements, such as regular check-ins, applied to all defendants. However, the judiciary ordered 64% to follow additional enhanced release conditions, which represented a 10.4% increase over the previous year’s reporting of persons requiring intensive supervision (HCPS, 2008). The judiciary most frequently ordered mandatory scheduled or random drug testing as an enhanced condition for 85% of the defendants.

A little more than 10,000 individuals exited Pretrial Services, leaving an average of 2,769 actively supervised defendants at any given time (HCPS, 2008). During sentencing, most defendants exiting pretrial supervision received some form of post-trial direct or indirect supervision. Specifically, the judiciary ordered probation for 40.8% of defendants charged with a misdemeanor and 53.4% of those charged with a felony. Nearly 20% of those leaving the Pretrial Services program received a jail or prison sentence and 21% received citations for violations of the conditions of their supervision.

Drug-related offenses, including DWI, emerged as the most common charges, accounting for 42% of all misdemeanor and felony offenses combined (HCPS, 2008). Of those defendants required to submit to drug testing, 50% failed the first test. Approximately, 21.8% still tested positive by the third test. Consequently, the court ordered or made referrals for defendants to participate in substance abuse programs. Of the 354 defendants ordered to attend a substance abuse program, 174 participated in substance abuse education, 74 in counseling, and 47 in support groups. Of the 275 defendants who requested substance abuse counseling and evaluation, 209 received referrals.

Self-identity education, learning to overcome the underlying issues leading to the offensive behavior, and finding one's place in society had strong judiciary support at the district level. Thus, participants for this study were purposefully sampled from the population of defendants who met the following criteria:

1. They were male;
2. They were African American;
3. They were between the ages of 18 and 29;
4. They were under pretrial supervision;
5. They requested substance abuse counseling; and
6. They received a referral from the chosen district criminal court.

Individuals from this sample (N=44) were randomly assigned to two groups as follows:

1. One participant was asked to flip a coin.
2. If the result was heads, the participant was assigned to the control group.
3. If the result was tails, the participant was assigned to the experimental group.
4. Steps One through Three were repeated until one group reached a maximum of 22 individuals. Any remaining participants were automatically assigned to the other group.

The control group ($N_a=22$) consisted of individuals who did not participate in the mentor-guided, self-identity educational intervention. The experimental group ($N_b=22$) included those who did participate in the intervention.

Writer's Role

In the community, the writer was the founder, CEO, and Lead Facilitator of an organization specializing in personal transformation education for adults. She regularly assessed clients on such self-

concept related factors as locus of control, generalized self-efficacy, personal effectiveness, motivation, and readiness for change. The writer was also responsible for creating and facilitating individual and group interventions based upon a 12-week transformative learning curriculum. The curriculum served clients seeking help with a variety of professional and personal challenges including unsatisfactory career advancement, relationship issues, poor emotional health, spiritual discord, and a general dissatisfaction with life.

Furthermore, the writer consulted with outside organizations seeking assistance with the planning and development of transformational social service programs for adults. She guided organizational leaders through a needs assessment and gap analysis, identification of the target client, writing goals and performance-based objectives, an exploration of implementation strategies, and an examination of possible evaluation strategies. The writer also consulted with outside organizations and institutions experiencing recidivism in several treatment and rehabilitation areas to discuss more efficient pathways for services that led to comprehensive, long-lasting solutions for the clients.

The writer was a 2009 candidate for an M.A.Ed. in Adult Education and Training and held a Bachelor of Science in Electrical Engineering as well as a Master/Teacher certification in Reiki, a form of mind-body-spirit balancing and counseling. She counseled and mentored disadvantaged youth for seven years. Upon realizing that few programs addressed the needs of the adults in the youths' home and community, the writer switched her focus to adults. As a result, she provided holistic counseling and supportive services to these individuals for the past five years.

Chapter II: Study of the Problem

Problem Description

The problem was that African American males, ages 18-29, were overrepresented in prisons and underrepresented in college when compared to the general population. Jail and prison records along with college enrollment records indicated that African American males had a greater presence in prison than in college. Moreover, the records confirmed that these men represented the largest percentage of inmates and had the highest incarceration rate across all age, race, and gender group categories.

The writer frequently worked with African American male clients currently or previously placed under community supervision or parole. Many had several prior convictions and several prior instances of

probation. She also counseled college-educated African American males. Her observations, personal interviews, and client intake surveys with all these men revealed several key factors worthy of investigation.

For instance, men from both cohorts shared a similar story of growing up in single parent, mother-headed households with very little material wealth. Clients with a record of misdemeanor or felony offenses often cited these two conditions as influential factors in their decisions to pursue illegal activities such as selling drugs, burglary, and theft. Thus, at first glance, economics seemed to be the primary motivator. However, surveys of and interviews with the college-educated clients most often cited their parents' expectations as having the greatest influence over their decision to pursue higher education. In fact, parents' expectations and the school and neighborhood environment outranked other factors such as growing up in a single parent household or socioeconomic status.

Upon further observation, the writer noticed that the major difference between the two cohorts rests in their personal views and beliefs about themselves. Those involved with the criminal justice system tended to label themselves as "criminals" or "screw ups" and sought out other individuals with the same self or societal label. Additionally, these men viewed themselves as "not college material" or only capable of getting low-level, low-wage, non-professional jobs. Furthermore, this cohort lacked the belief that they were the "career type."

According to client interviews, society reinforced these self-beliefs when the individuals attempted to apply for work. The writer's clients reported that potential and hiring employers treated them as criminals rather than as human beings and most frequently cited such treatment as motivation to reoffend. From their perspectives, these men believed that if others still labeled and treated them as criminals even when they were attempting to follow the right path, they would rather quit the job to stop the belittling and humiliation and return to the illegal activities that paid much more than the job.

Problem Documentation

Monitoring the population of African American males enrolled in college and incarcerated was accomplished with two major data sources. The United States Census Bureau's (2007) Housing and Household Economic Statistics Division documented the number of African American male students enrolled in undergraduate and graduate degree programs both full-time and part-time. Annual reports prepared by the United States Bureau of Justice Statistics (Sabol & Couture, 2008) provided data to

measure and monitor the number of African American males incarcerated in prisons and jails as well as the rate of incarceration for this cohort. This analysis reflected data from 2007, the most recent year for which both sources reported complete statistics.

As illustrated in Figure 1, there were over 200,000 more African American males enrolled in college than were held in prisons and jails in 2007 (US Census Bureau, 2007; Sabol & Couture, 2008)—a 22% difference. Of those between the ages of 18 and 29, nearly 450,000 more Black males attended college than served jail and prison sentences resulting in a pronounced 82% difference.

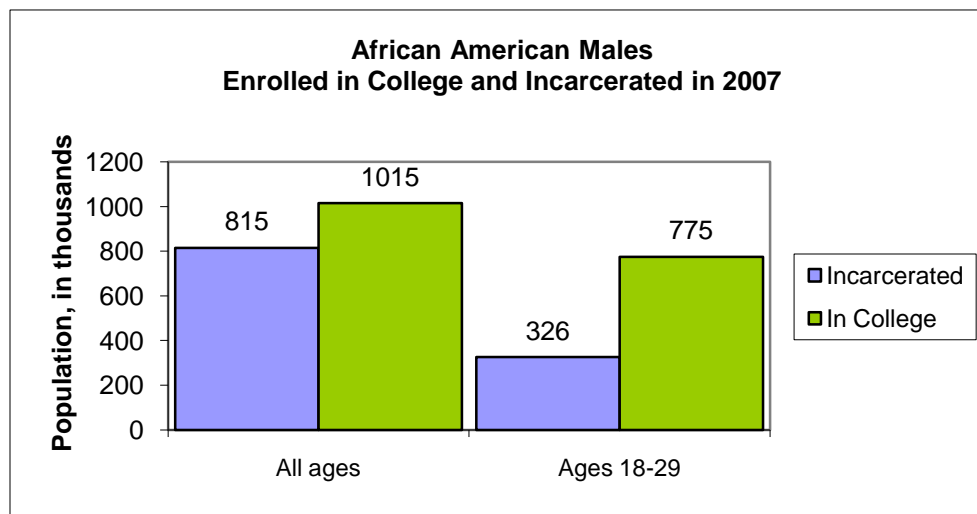


Figure 1. African American male college and incarcerated populations in 2007 (US Census Bureau, 2007; Sabol & Couture, 2008).

Using the same source data, Figure 2 highlighted the African American male representation in the general, college, and correctional populations. Across all ages, races, and gender groups, Black males comprised 6.1% of the total U.S. population compared to 39% of the total prison and jail population and only 5.7% of the total full-time and part-time students enrolled in college (Sabol & Couture, 2008; US Census Bureau, 2007). Moreover, the data revealed that African American males, ages 18-29, made up just 1.2% of the total U.S. population, 4.3% of the total college population, and 15.6% of total inmates.

In the age category of 18-29 years, African American males constituted 14.3% of the general U.S. male population but comprised 42% of incarcerated males in this age group (Sabol & Couture, 2008). In contrast, only 12.5% of the Black men in this age group attended college (US Census Bureau, 2007). Finally, across all ages, races, and gender groups, African American males experienced higher

incarceration rates (Sabol & Couture, 2008) where the majority of these men committed drug-related and robbery/burglary related offenses (West & Sabol, 2008).

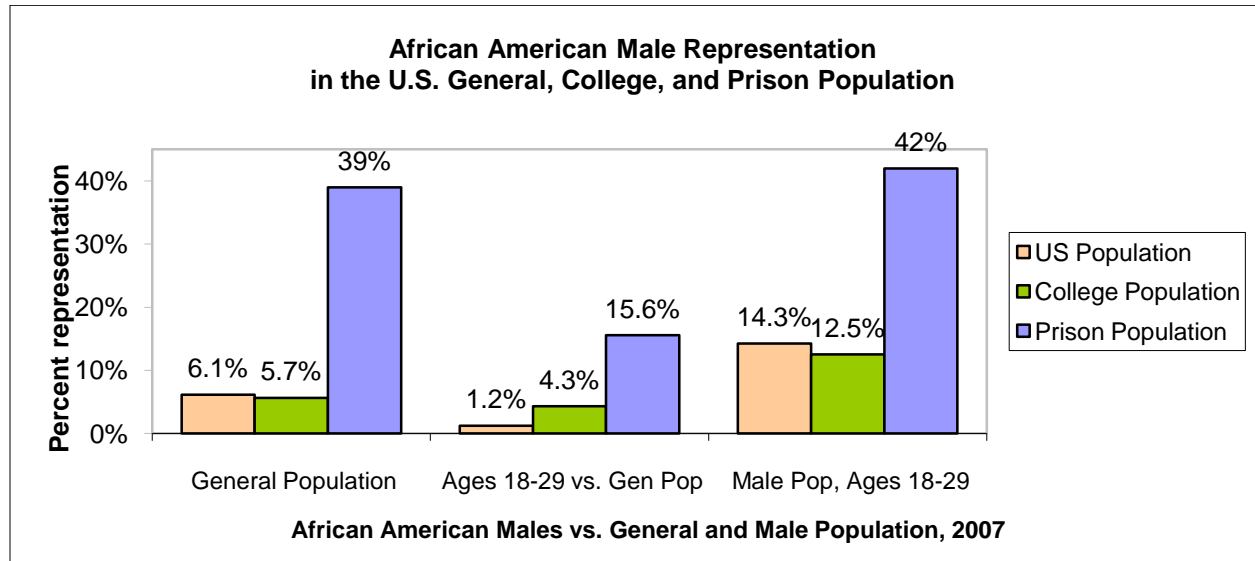


Figure 2. African American male representation in the United States, general, college, and incarcerated population in 2007 (Sabol & Couture, 2008; US Census Bureau, 2007).

The Census Bureau did provide data on enrollment in vocational schools. However, the information did not indicate enrollment numbers by age category for each ethnic and gender group as did the reports on college enrollment, general census, prison, and jail population. Therefore, this examination excluded vocational enrollment because an appropriate comparison was not possible.

Literature Review

The literature review revealed that the postsecondary educational achievement gap between African American males and the general student population began during the formative years and correlated with parents' education and family income. A larger percentage of African American children lived in poverty conditions (KewalRamani, Gilbertson, Fox, & Provasnik, 2007) with 33% classified as poor and almost 27% designated as near-poor (Planty et al., 2008). The U.S. Department of Education [USDOE] (2007) found that 48% of African Americans enrolled in K-12 schools with the highest measure of poverty compared to 5% of Whites, 36% of American Indians, 16% of Asian/Pacific Islanders, and 49% of Hispanics. Additionally, these schools tended to have the highest minority enrollment where at least 75% of students were African American and Hispanic (KewalRamani et al., 2007).

Studies showed that as children living in poverty progressed from ages nine months to four years, the gap between their proficiency in various cognitive skills and those of children living at or above poverty widened significantly (Planty et al., 2009). For example, at age nine months, children living in poverty lagged behind other children in cognitive proficiency by 1-3%. By the age of four, that mastery gap extended from 17-27%. Empirical evidence directly linked this reduction in performance to their parents' education and socioeconomic status. Parents living in poverty read significantly less to their children during these critical developmental years than did parents at or above the poverty level (Planty et al., 2009). Further, mothers with a high school education or less read and sang less to their children during these years than did mothers with higher levels of educational attainment. Nonetheless, half of African American children lived in mother-only households, and 46% of African American parents with school age children had only a high school diploma or less (Planty et al., 2008). Consequently, African American children entered Kindergarten with lower mean achievement scores than all other ethnic groups in reading and math (Wirt et al., 2004). Progressing forward, the achievement scores of these students continued to fall below that of White, Hispanic, and Asian/Pacific Islander children and grew wider by the third grade.

Brunn and Kao's (2005) study showed that young African American boys most significantly under-performed academically during the middle school years from the sixth through eighth grades. The researchers purposely highlighted that this decline in academic performance coincided with the critical developmental stages of adolescence. Further, African American eighth graders had the highest rate of school absenteeism according to reports by the USDOE (2006). These teenagers reported feeling unsafe at school more often than children from other ethnic groups (USDOE, 2005) and went on to experience a substantial drop in grade point average between the 10th and 12th grades (Brunn & Kao, 2005).

Furthermore, several sources confirmed the increased incidence of repeating grades, school suspensions, and dropping out of school among African Americans. According to statistics on student persistence and aspirations compiled by the USDOE (2007), African American boys—as well as all students from the lowest socioeconomic sector—went to school less prepared. In fact, males, African Americans, students from poor families, and students whose mothers had lower educational attainment levels most commonly repeated a grade at least once between Kindergarten and eighth grades (Planty et al., 2009). Moreover, a larger percentage of Black students in elementary and secondary education

experienced school suspension more often than the remaining student population (KewalRamani et al., 2007). Nearly 50% of African American male students failed to earn a high school diploma (Greene & Winters, 2006) and nearly 50% of incarcerated individuals were high school dropouts. Across all races, African Americans had the highest percentage of youth ages 16-19 that neither were enrolled in school nor employed (USDOE, 2007).

Brunn and Kao (2005) cited that such poor early school achievement and attendance affected college enrollment among African Americans. For those Black students who earned a high school diploma and entered college, the achievement gap continued to widen with challenges in the transition. The immediate enrollment rate of African Americans fell below that of their peers with just over half attending college right after graduation compared to 70% of White and 61% of Hispanic students (Planty et al., 2009). Additionally, the number of immediately matriculated students whose parents had a high school education or less was 35% below that of their peers with college-educated parents. Moreover, 23% fewer students from low-income families immediately attended college than did students from high-income households.

Once enrolled, a larger percentage of Black students were mandated to complete remedial reading than the rest of their peers (Wirt et al., 2004). African Americans also accounted for the second largest percentage of students taking two or more remedial courses other than reading. Unfortunately, learners in these two categories had the lowest graduation rates. Only 30% of students who took any remedial reading coursework earned a degree or formal certificate, and only 41% of enrollees completing two or more remedial courses other than reading graduated with a degree.

The literature also supported a positive relationship between African American male achievement, family structure, and parental involvement. Particularly, the extant research confirmed the adverse effects of nonresident and absentee fathers on their children's development, achievement, and involvement in criminal acts. Father absence correlated with decreases in critical developmental measures, educational outcomes, and general well-being (Robbers, 2009; Debell, 2008) and increases in disrespect for authority figures, poverty, criminal behaviors, and substance abuse (Robbers, 2009). From the developmental perspective, Cabrera, Shannon, and Tamis-LeMonda's (2007) study concluded that father engagement significantly determined children's cognitive and language proficiency at ages 24 and 36 months as well as their social and emotional development at 24 months, 36 months, and pre-

Kindergarten (Cabrera et al., 2007). Jackson, Jeong-Kyun, and Franke (2009) extended these positive outcomes into the Kindergarten years. The researchers indicated that frequent involvement between nonresident, low-income, African American fathers and their children resulted in better adaptive language skills and reduced behavioral problems in those students.

Sarkadi, Kristiansson, Oberklaid, and Bremberg's (2008) systematic literature review of 24 longitudinal studies involving fathers and father figures also found that active and regular engagement enhanced the cognitive development and educational outcomes of their children. Surprisingly, the authors' review presented a key link that may influence academic outcomes. African American children who had highly engaged fathers reported significantly higher IQ scores than those whose fathers did not care for them daily. In fact, the percentage of students with a resident father who had ever repeated a grade was more than half that of children with a nonresident father (Debell, 2008). Moreover, children with resident fathers earned higher grades and reported higher levels of school enjoyment than those with an absentee father.

From a behavioral perspective, a father's active presence decreased the incidence of delinquency and challenging conduct (Sarkadi et al., 2008). Boys from low socioeconomic backgrounds had a reduced tendency to exhibit externalizing behavioral problems when fathers lived in the home. To illustrate, the percentage of school-age children expelled or suspended from school more than doubled when the father was absent and not involved in the child's life (Debell, 2008). Interestingly, the research showed no difference between biological fathers and stepfathers in terms of their level of involvement with their children (Adamsons, O'Brien, & Pasley, 2007).

As expected, parental involvement in a child's school significantly decreased among children with nonresident or absentee fathers. Debell's (2008) analysis of the U.S. Department of Education's Parent and Family Involvement in Education Survey concluded that not having a father in the home positively correlated with a lower incidence of parents attending school meetings, teacher conferences, and school events; volunteering at the school; and participating in school fundraising activities when compared to two-parent families. These findings might have explained the additional USDOE (2006) reports that African American parents—along with single parents, parents with low educational attainment, and parents living in poor or near-poor conditions in general—rated their satisfaction with their child's school, teachers, academic standards, and discipline lowest among all parents. Such parental involvement in

terms of academic socialization was shown to have a strong positive influence, particularly for middle school youth (Hill & Tyson, 2009).

The large percentage of African American boys growing up in fatherless households and the negative impact such family structure had on their educational experiences and behavior warranted a review of the literature examining the factors influencing father absence. First, in low-income families with both residential and nonresidential fathers, mother-father conflicts over parenting and financial matters reduced the fathers' involvement with their children (Coley & Hernandez, 2006). Conversely, the research suggested that nonresidential fathers who actively engaged in the child's life may have proactively reduced familial conflicts and instability.

A second influential factor arose out of the father's own childhood experiences with his father. As expected, greater involvement, contact, and co-residence with his own father influenced the nonresident fathers' increased engagement with his children (Coley & Hernandez, 2006). Although nonresident fathers who had limited involvement with their fathers in childhood reported a desire for greater connections with their own children, most repeated the same model of disengaged fathering.

Father's employment stability, education, and income also emerged as contributing factors to active involvement and engagement. Not surprisingly, the most supportive and actively involved fathers had at least a high school education (Cabrera et al., 2007) as well as a stable and consistent work history (Coley & Hernandez, 2006; Woldoff & Cina, 2007). Coley and Hernandez (2006) posited that unemployed fathers participated less in the child's life due to feelings of inadequacy or not living up to societal expectations. Further, mothers held negative views of paternal unemployment, which led to increased mother-father disagreements, strained relations, and ultimately reduced paternal access to the child (Coley & Hernandez, 2006; Woldoff & Cina, 2007). Ironically, greater income also positively related to lower father involvement perhaps owing to increased working hours and less time for participation in activities. On the other hand, a greater percentage of children with behavioral problems had fathers who worked less hours (Woldoff & Cina, 2007). Nonetheless, longitudinal studies confirmed that such an unstable upbringing predicted future criminal behavior (Bergman & Andershed, 2009).

Coley and Hernandez's (2006) finding that engagement in illegal activities related to reduced father involvement highlighted another important topic in the literature. The Woldoff and Cina (2007) study showed that inner city, nonwhite men experienced a greater incidence of unemployment and

underemployment. The strained finances of these low-income fathers challenged their sense of parental obligations. To compensate their low wages, or lack thereof, these men displayed an increased dependence on underground work and such risky, illicit hustles as selling drugs and stolen goods for extra income. Although fathers who engaged in illicit activities expressed good intentions, such actions resulted in reduced parental involvement with their children and “socialization into unconventional roles and values for fathering” (Woldoff & Cina, 2007, p. 168). Of those fathers who were convicted for their illegal activity, 48% of their male children went on to offend and received convictions perhaps due, in part, to poor supervision (Farrington, Coid, & Murray, 2009; Bijleveld, & Wijkman, 2009; van de Rakt, Nieuwbeerta, & Apel, 2009; Lonardo, Giordano, Longmore, & Manning, 2009). For African Americans in particular, engagement in regular work had a greater positive impact on paternal involvement than for fathers of other races.

A further review of the literature indicated a positive relationship between African American male achievement and positive male role models, particularly fathers. Empirical evidence linked positive educational outcomes for Black teens to having a father with values “worth imitating” as a male role model (“Black Teenagers and their Fathers,” 2004, p. 6). On the other hand, maternal role models affected psychological stability. Moreover, African American males demonstrated significantly higher GPAs, significantly reduced truancy rates, and greater high school graduation expectations when identifying their fathers as a role model as opposed to a relative or reporting no role model. Not surprisingly, teens without a role model had the greatest incidence of behavioral problems and lowest educational outcomes.

Additional studies provided more evidence that Black males received positive benefits from having a high-achieving same-sex role model or mentor (Wood et al., 2007). Unfortunately, one half (50%) of African American males came from single mother households and lacked positive Black male role models (Planty et al., 2008; Marcus et al., 2004). In fact, low-attaining African American men were more likely to grow up in single-parent, mother-headed households (Wood et al., 2007). Further, Marcus et al. (2004) contended that “peer relationships are likely to take on greater significance when family and community attachments are weak” (p. 349) such as those found in single parent households in urban areas. In the absence of these strong family ties, students believed they had nothing to lose by following others displaying deviant behaviors.

An examination of the literature supported the assertion that parental and teacher expectations predicted the academic success of young African American males by affecting the self-expectations of these students. Actually, Black male youths' low academic self-expectations mirrored the low expectations for future achievement held by their teachers and parents (Wood et al., 2007), giving credence to the phenomenon of the self-fulfilling prophesy (Hinnant, O'Brien, & Ghazarian, 2009; Halvorsen, Lee, & Andrade, 2009). Recent research demonstrated that teachers viewed African American boys as lazy, more prone to aggression, and more interested in athletics than academics—all characteristics believed to derail academic achievement (Thomas & Stevenson, 2009). Consequently, teachers did not provide stimulating and challenging activities for such students deemed incapable of learning at higher standards (Halvorsen et al., 2009).

Generally, teachers expected more Black female students to attend college than Black males (Brunn & Kao, 2005). Both parents and teachers already held lower expectations for African American boys by the time the children reach age six (Wood et al., 2007). By age nine, these young boys held low academic expectations for themselves, which decreased as they got older. These findings explained why “girls were more likely than boys to aspire to careers that require a college education, more likely to emphasize career advancement in their rationale for attending college, and less likely to choose sex-typed occupations” (Blackhurst & Auger, 2008, p. 149).

With continued emphasis on the importance of students' experiences throughout primary and secondary education, Hinnant et al. (2009) made a direct link between teachers' expectations of low-income children in the first grade and the students' subsequent performance in the third grade. Moreover, Thomas and Stevenson (2009) reported a direct connection between teacher expectations and student outcomes in high school. Specifically, teacher perceptions and appraisals of students work in 10th grade affected student performance on standardized tests in the 12th grade and had the greatest impact on African American boys. Interestingly, Hinnant et al. (2009) found that minority boys not only displayed the poorest academic performance when teachers underestimated their abilities but also discovered that the boys showed the greatest academic gains when teachers held higher expectations for their performance.

Studies also indicated that these early school experiences affected college enrollment among African Americans (Brunn & Kao, 2005). A smaller percentage of high school seniors from low, socioeconomic backgrounds expected to earn a bachelor's degree, and an even smaller percentage

expected to attend graduate school when compared to students from middle and high socioeconomic backgrounds (USDOE, 2006). In this case, socioeconomic status included a combination of parents' educational attainment, occupation, and family income. Likewise, students with the lowest mathematical skills and test scores reported lower expectations for attending college or graduate school.

However, competence-promoting parenting practices as well as supportive parent-child relationships in single-parent and African American households boosted self-expectations (Kim & Brody, 2005). Supportive parental communication and involvement led to a reduction in conduct problems, externalizing disruptive behaviors, and deviant peer relationships (Kim & Brody, 2005; Keijsers, Frijns, Branje, & Meeus, 2009). For example, parental involvement in the form of participating in school activities and holding parent-child discussions about college-related topics promoted greater academic preparation, college aspirations, and ultimate enrollment in their children (Rowan-Kenyon, Bell, & Perna, 2008). As a result, children in these supportive parenting environments experienced greater academic achievement and a more developed positive sense of self.

Substantial research linked self-identity and self-efficacy to achievement of goals. Celuch et al. (2009) defined self-identity as "the extent to which a person views himself or herself as fulfilling a role tied to a specific behavioral domain" (p. 32). Self-efficacy, on the other hand, referred to one's belief in his ability to perform a certain task. In the related literature, a person merged with a specific role when he mentally connected the role with certain conduct. As such, the more a person experienced a repeated behavior, the more the person internalized the behavior and the more prominent that particular conduct became as a basis for action in the future. Moreover, identity theorists contended that self-identity significantly influenced motivation and represented internalized role expectations (Lee, Lee, & Lee, 2006). Lee et al. (2006) explained that during the internalization process, individuals compared others' expectations against their beliefs and previous experiences to form their self-expectations. In the end, others' self-expectations became self-expectations.

In terms of self-verification theory, people had a strong fundamental desire to "confirm what they already believe about themselves" in social interactions as it helped to maintain a stable self-view as well as provided a sense of security (Stets & Cast, 2007). The self-verification process allowed individuals to feel less vulnerable emotionally in the midst of myriad life events. When others responded in consistent

ways to an individual, that individual's view of himself stabilized accordingly. In essence, people depended on the self-verifying feedback of others to help construct their own self-views and self-identity even when that feedback was negative. Stets and Cast (2007) cited several empirical studies that confirmed the phenomenon of negative feedback being just as reinforcing as positive feedback. In other words, people started to believe, took on the role, and identified with the negative verification feedback they received in their environments. This laid the foundation for the self-fulfilling prophesy.

A large body of research explored how self-identity in terms of past, present, and future selves played a significant role in future achievement. Oyserman, Brickman, and Rhodes (2007) described possible selves as "positive and negative images of the self already in a future state" (p. 479). Individuals tended to view positive possible selves in terms of expected or hoped-for selves while viewing to-be-avoided or feared selves as negative (Seli, Dembo, & Crocker, 2009; Oyserman et al. 2007). Studies showed that at-risk youth dwelled more upon negative expectations and their feared selves—what might happen to them in future (Simona, 2009). Oyserman et al. (2007) found that having school-focused possible selves reduced the risk of delinquent behaviors and increased academic achievement. Hypervulnerability, such as fear and rejection sensitivity commonly found in feared selves, led to aggression-related and hypermasculine behaviors in young African American males (Cassidy & Stevenson, 2005; Thomas & Stevenson, 2009).

Causative Analysis

A number of causes led to the problem of African American males being overrepresented in prison and underrepresented in college when compared to the general population. First, African Americans had a greater number of family risk factors such as living below poverty level, low parental educational attainment, and living in single-parent households, which negatively related to children's achievement gains in reading and mathematics (USDOE, 2005). Research confirmed that as the number of family risk factors increased, children experienced smaller achievement gains.

As such, a second cause of African American male students failing to enroll in college stemmed from poor elementary and secondary educational achievement. The majority of African American males (48%) attended underperforming schools with the highest measure of poverty (USDOE, 2007). As a result of substantial reductions in performance in grades 6-10, nearly 50% of African American male students failed to earn a high school diploma (Greene & Winters, 2006). Thus, these youth found themselves

neither enrolled in school nor employed (USDOE, 2007). Consequently, the majority of imprisoned Black males were high school dropouts as well as the majority of offenders on community supervision at the local level (Pettit & Western, 2004; HCPS, 2008). Most committed drug-related and robbery-related crimes most typically associated with reduced economic opportunities and unemployment (West & Sabol, 2008; HCPS, 2008; Coley & Hernandez, 2006; & Woldoff & Cina, 2007).

Third, African American males had low self-expectations due to exposure to low teacher and parental expectations. Teachers expected more black female students to attend college than black males (Brunn & Kao, 2005). Parents held negative views about the child's school environment and failed to conduct high academic socialization activities in the home. Students who dropped out of school reported not being able to identify anyone in the school who cared about or had high expectations for their academic achievement (Walker-Dalhouse & Risko, 2008). By ages 9-10, African American boys already held low self-expectations due to the cumulative effect of low teacher and parental expectations since the age of six (Wood et al., 2007). Their self-expectations decreased with age.

Fourth, African American males lacked positive male role models and academic-oriented households. One half (50%) of African American males came from single mother households and lacked the positive Black male role models of high-attaining men (Planty et al., 2008; Marcus et al., 2004; Wood et al., 2007). Furthermore, African American fathers were more likely to display inconsistent participation in their sons' lives (Wood et al. 2007). Since 48% of school-age black children lived in high poverty areas, they had even greater exposure to deviant peers and experienced a greater lack of positive male leaders and mentors (Marcus et al., 2004). Only 16% of African American parents held a bachelor's degree or higher, which diminished the amount of academic socialization received by African American males (USDOE, 2007).

Last, several factors compromised the self-identity of young African American boys at an early age. Due to low parental and teacher expectations, low parental educational attainment, low academic socialization, and lack of high-achieving male role models, African American boys failed to develop school-focused possible selves. Young African American males attempted to hide vulnerable characteristics, such as fear and low expectations, behind a façade of fearlessness and toughness to gain peer acceptance, respect, and support (Cassidy & Stevenson, 2005).

Chapter III: Outcomes and Analysis

Goals

African American males, aged 18-29, under pretrial supervision who participate in a 12-week mentor-guided, self-identity educational intervention will develop more academic and occupational possible selves.

Expected Outcomes

1. Participants in the mentor-guided, self-identity educational program were expected to report a significantly higher number of academic possible selves than nonparticipants as measured by the Possible Selves Questionnaire in Appendix A.
2. Participants in the mentor-guided, self-identity educational program were expected to report a significantly higher number of occupational possible selves than nonparticipants as measured by the Possible Selves Questionnaire in Appendix A.

Measurement of Outcomes

The Possible Selves Questionnaire (PSQ) in Appendix A was the instrument used to measure both academic and occupational possible selves (Oyserman, Bybee, Terry, & Hart-Johnson, 2004). The PSQ explicitly measured self-expectations by instructing participants to “Think about next year—imagine what you’ll be like and what you’ll be doing” and to “write what you expect you will be like and will be doing next year.” Additionally, the instrument authentically measured academic and occupational self-expectations by only providing the above-mentioned instructions. No examples were given to lead participants to think about the next year in terms of education or employment. As such, any school and/or job-related expectations reported had to emanate from the participants’ internal processes rather than external influences.

After being randomly assigned to the control ($N_a=22$) and experimental ($N_b=22$) groups, all participants completed the open-ended instrument pre- and post-intervention where up to four possible selves could be reported. Their qualitative responses were coded into categories according to the instrument guidelines for adult possible selves (Oyserman, 2004). The five possible categories included achievement, interpersonal relationships, personality traits, physical/health-related, material/lifestyles, and negative. To isolate reports of academic and occupational possible selves or expectations, all responses coded “achievement” were sub-categorized as either school or job-related. Each academic or career

response was then counted and analyzed. The feared-selves portion of the measure was coded and scored for internal purposes but not included in this analysis.

Analysis of Results

The results of this study were analyzed using coding of qualitative data and descriptive and inferential techniques for quantitative data. First, the qualitative responses on the PSQ were coded as described in the previous section. The identified academic and occupational possible selves were counted for each participant in both groups and displayed in a table (see Appendix C). The control group was coded as “0” and the experimental AAGL group was coded as “1” for testing purposes.

Next, Excel was used to perform a descriptive analysis of each group to determine the measures of central tendency. Frequency diagrams and clustered column charts displaying the number of possible selves pre- and post-intervention were created and reviewed for areas to investigate. To test the hypothesis, independent t-tests of the two groups were calculated in Excel on the two possible selves variables. The data set was further tested for percentage growth during the 12-week period and the percent difference between the two groups’ outcomes in an effort to identify any practical significance. Last, micro-level examination of changes in key data points was also conducted to flesh out determinations of practical significance.

Chapter IV: Solution Strategy

Problem Statement

The problem was that African American males, ages 18-29, were overrepresented in prison and underrepresented in college when compared to the general population as was evident by the general population, college enrollment, and correctional population census data.

Discussion

A number of solutions were gleaned from the literature. First, African American male students’ success rates in grades K-12 were higher in classrooms using gender-based instruction. Teachers trained in boy-girl brain differences were less likely to misdiagnose boys as slow learners and more likely to help them improve their skills (Costello, 2008). Moreover, teachers employing gender-based instructional strategies boosted test scores (Costello, 2008).

Second, African American male students’ success increased with higher teacher expectations.

Teachers who built caring relationships with students communicated higher expectations for the child's success (Walker-Dalhouse & Risko, 2008). Moreover, teachers with greater cultural awareness challenged students to have higher self-expectations for academic achievement. Miller & Satchwell (2006) found that teachers who followed challenging academic curricula and employed challenging instructional strategies had higher expectations and taught students more. In terms of the teacher's self-concept, those trained in general teacher self-efficacy had increased involvement and positive interactions with culturally diverse and low-income children (Tucker et al., 2005).

Third, African American males who had positive male role models experienced greater achievement and lower risky behavior. Kerrigan et al. (2007) asserted that those with adult male role models were also less likely to seek approval from male peers. Doss et al. (2007) added that African American males who had positive peer role models were less likely to engage in risky behaviors. Having a father as a role model was linked directly to greater classroom success ("Black Teenagers and Their Fathers," 2004).

Furthermore, African American males who had a strong self-identity had higher academic success. Small group counseling in schools fostered identity development, strengthened one's sense of self, and led to academic success (White & Rayle, 2007). Black males with a scholarly identity had an internal locus of control, greater self-awareness, high self-efficacy, had more pride in being Black, and did not equate intelligence with unmanliness (Whiting, 2006). Adolescents who resolved self-identity issues prior to occupational exploration had greater success (Simona, 2009). Increasing awareness of and correcting memory bias related to one's past self led to a greater positive self-perception of the current self (Broemer, Grabowski, Gebauer, Ermel, & Diehl, 2008). Adolescents who developed a focus on their possible or hoped-for selves rather than their feared selves experienced greater achievement (Simona, 2009). Having positive possible selves constructs negated current self-image limitations to predict achievement-oriented behavior (Quinlan, Jaccard, & Blanton, 2006).

Description of Selected Solutions/Calendar Plan

The solution, the Aware Academy for Gifted Leaders (AAGL) program, combined several approaches to increase the academic and occupational possible selves and meet outcome expectations in African American males under pretrial correctional supervision. The program model featured a task-

centered educational approach within a framework of team and tripartite mentoring that was realistically implemented (International Freedom Coalition, n.d.).

Following a team mentoring approach, defendants under pretrial supervision became Candidates in the program. Each Candidate selected a Personal Advisory Board consisting of a local and a virtual

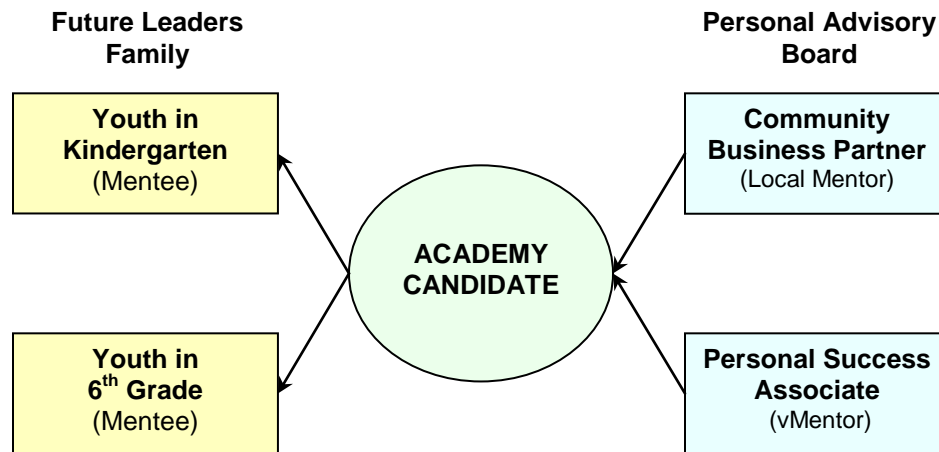


Figure 3. Team and tripartite mentoring framework for the Gifted Leaders Program.

mentor (vMentor) from a list of available mentors who served as their Community Business Partner and Personal Success Associate respectively. In line with tripartite mentoring, Candidates also headed a Family of Future Leaders comprised of his own children when applicable or other children identified by the program manager. For example, one child was in Kindergarten while the other was in sixth grade as illustrated in Figure 3. Candidates, as well as all members of the Future Leaders Family and the Personal Advisory Board, were African American males.

The Mentor-Candidate and Candidate-Mentee relationships developed naturally through a combination of personal transformation education, cultural identity exploration, and occupational discovery. Candidates completed activities in these areas as described below with the help of their Personal Advisory Board and, in turn, facilitated their Family's learning and personal growth. Personal Advisory Board members provided Candidates with positive, professional Black male role models whereas Candidates served as positive role models for their sons or matched mentees.

The following steps were taken per the weekly schedule outlined in Appendix B. Personal Advisory Board members received online training on the curriculum that included techniques for increasing self-awareness and resolving past selves identity issues by correcting memory bias and

developing a strong focus on possible selves. They began implementing these suggestions to guide program Candidates through the techniques and online, guided inquiries. Mentors contacted and scheduled weekly interviews between Candidates and professional African American males in the community and received weekly support from the organization's staff.

Candidates then completed a self-guided past selves identity curriculum and received instructional support from their Personal Advisory Board. An online journal or discussion forum was used to complete the guided, self-reflection inquiries four days per week. Candidates, in turn, instructed their sons/mentees on the techniques for increasing self-awareness, resolving past selves identity issues, and developing a strong focus on their possible selves.

Moreover, Candidates in the program developed a strong focus on possible selves through research. Each participant researched an accomplished, educated African American male, pre-1965, once per week. Candidates taught their sons about the researched historical African American male figure once per week and liaised with mentors to meet and interview one current African American male professional weekly.

Chapter V: Results and Recommendations

The problem was that African American males, ages 18-29, were overrepresented in prison and underrepresented in college when compared to the general population. The goal of this Action Research Project was to determine if participating in a 12-week mentor-guided, education-based, self-identity program would help Black males placed under pretrial supervision develop more academic and occupational possible selves.

Results

Two independent t-tests were performed to test the hypothesis and are summarized in Table 1. The independent variable was group (control or AAGL), and the dependent variables were academic possible selves (APS) and occupational possible selves (OPS). An alpha level of .05 was used.

Table 1. Independent t-Tests for control and AAGL groups on dependent variables.

	t-statistic	p (one-tail)	p<.05	Reject H ₀
Academic Possible Selves	-0.62	0.269	FALSE	NO
Occupational Possible Selves	0	0.5	FALSE	NO

Expected Outcome 1. Participants in the mentor-guided, self-identity educational program were expected to report a significantly higher number of academic possible selves than nonparticipants as measured by the Possible Selves Questionnaire in Appendix A. The outcome was not met, and the null hypothesis could not be rejected. The results graphed in Figure 4 confirmed that the control group ($N_a = 22$, $M = 2.27$, $SD = 1.49$) reported 50 APS while the AAGL group ($N_b = 22$, $M = 2$, $SD = 1.45$) reported 44 at post-intervention. However, the difference was not significant, $t(44) = -0.62$, $p > .05$. Nevertheless, Figure 4 revealed that a closer examination of the AAGL participants' overall growth in APS over the 12-week period compared to nonparticipants was warranted for practical purposes.

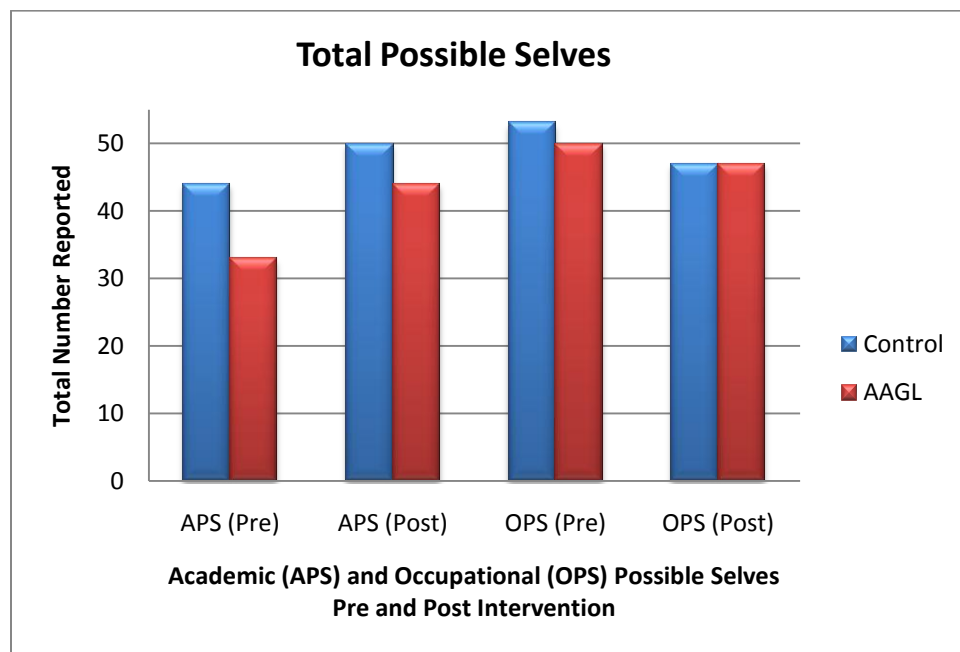


Figure 4. Comparison of outcome measures for the control and AAGL groups.

The net gains in the number of academic possible selves along with the percentage or straight-line growth rates (see Table 2) for each group highlighted changes worthy of special attention. Men participating in the AAGL program reported a group gain of 11 APS compared to six in the control group. Likewise, the AAGL group displayed a 33% increase in reported academic possible selves while the control group only experienced a 14% increase. Moreover, men in the control group started with a 29% advantage over the program participants, reporting 44 and 33 academic possible selves respectively. However, the men participating in the educational intervention narrowed the gap to only 13% by the end of the 12-week study.

Table 2. Straight-line APS growth rates over 12 weeks.

	APS (Pre)	APS (Post)	Gain	Growth	APG
Control	44	50	6	14%	59%
AAGL	33	44	11	33%	144%
Gap	29%	13%			

These increases translated to a 59% and 144% annual percentage growth (APG) respectively. Thus over the course of one year, men participating in the AAGL intervention would show increases in APS at a rate nearly 2.5 times greater than nonparticipants, assuming linear growth. If the investigation were continued, both groups would report the same number of APS in 26.4 weeks as charted in Figure 5.

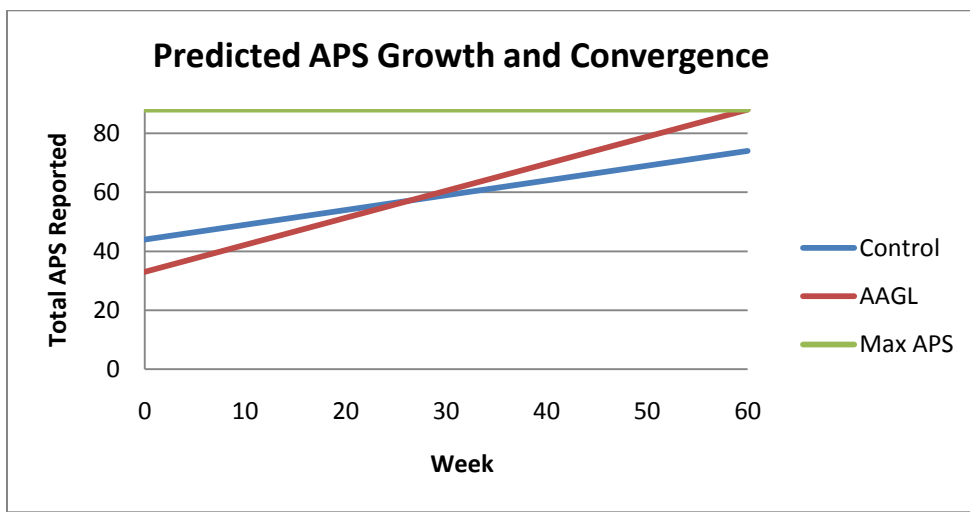


Figure 5. Predicted growth in academic possible selves for both study groups.

Although the AAGL participants started and ended with less academic possible selves than the control group, these men demonstrated an increased rate of growth over nonparticipants.

Reviewing the initial frequency distributions revealed another key finding with possible practical significance. Figure 6 illustrates that eight participants in the AAGL group reported zero academic possible selves at study start. At the end of the 12 weeks, that number was reduced by half. Examining the raw data set in Table C1, Appendix C, none of the eight men who reported zero APS before the intervention still reported zero at the end. In fact, half of those men reported the maximum of four academic possible selves. Checking the corresponding occupational possible selves for these select individuals unveiled a cause for concern however. For example, Participant 27 (coded P27) was scored as having four academic possible selves and two occupational possible selves post-intervention although the maximum allowed by the PSQ for APS and OPS combined was four.

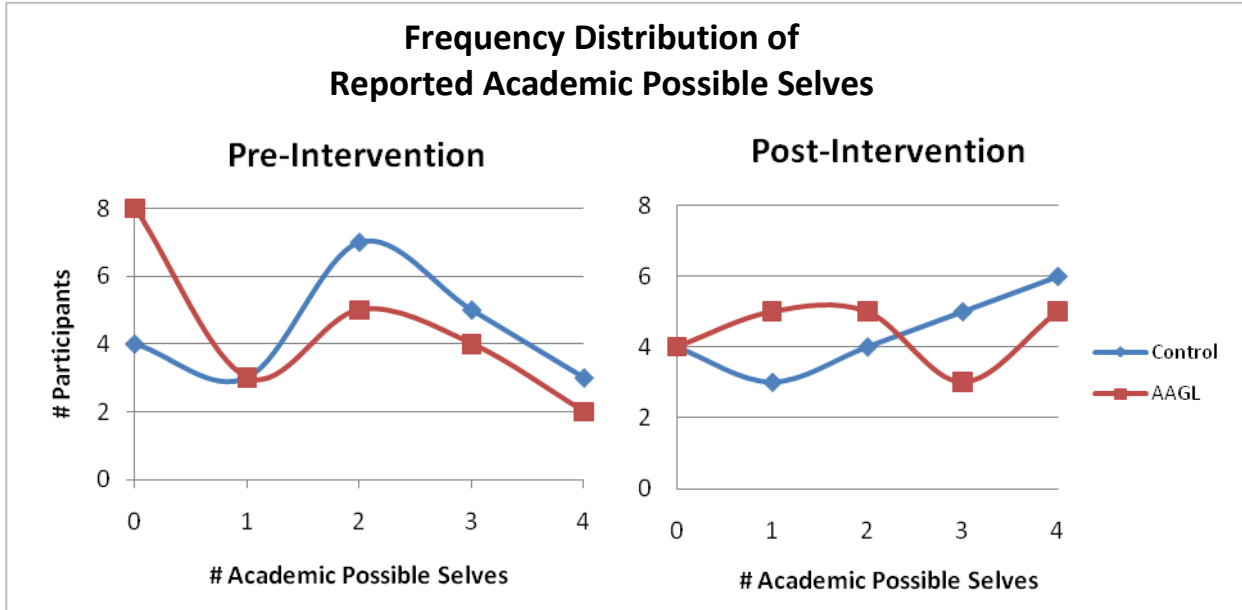


Figure 6. Frequency distribution of reported academic possible selves pre- and post-intervention.

Of final practical interest was the number of men in each group who reported a change in academic possible selves. Refer to Figure 7. A slightly greater percentage of AAGL participants experienced an increase in academic possible selves than did nonparticipants, 50% vs. 41% respectively, although a greater percentage also experienced decreases. The gap between the percentage of men reporting no change at all was significant, $\chi^2 (1, N=44) = 5.73, .01 < p < .05$. Twenty-seven percent (27%) of the men in the control group remained unmoved while only 5% of the AAGL men finished the program unaffected.

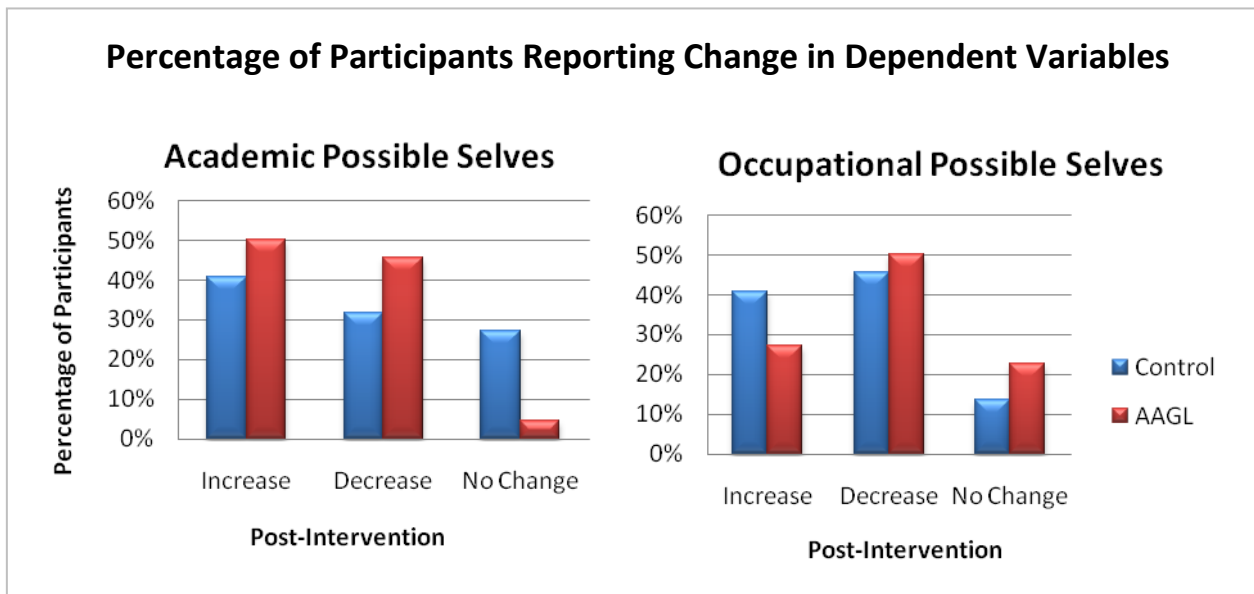


Figure 7. Percentage of men in control and AAGL groups reporting change in APS and OPS.

Expected Outcome 2. Participants in the mentor-guided, self-identity educational program were expected to report a significantly higher number of occupational possible selves than nonparticipants as measured by the Possible Selves Questionnaire in Appendix A. The outcome was not met, and the null hypothesis could not be rejected. Unexpectedly, both groups experienced a drop in OPS with each reporting 47 as illustrated in Figure 4. However, similar to the increased rate of growth the AAGL participants exhibited for academic possible selves, Table 3 shows that this cohort also exhibited a 61% reduction in the rate of decline for occupational possible selves when compared to the control group.

Table 3. Straight-line OPS reduction rates.

	OPS (Pre)	OPS (Post)	Growth
Control	53	47	-11%
AAGL	50	47	-6%
Gap	6%	0%	61%

Discussion

This Action Research Project was a practical success despite falling short of the expected outcomes. Participants surprisingly embraced most of the elements of the Gifted Leaders Program, particularly mentoring their sons or young students in their selected Future Leaders Family. Although participants were allowed to self-select the members of their Personal Advisory Board, they initially expressed doubts about working with the mentors. Likewise, most participants felt uncomfortable with the personal transformation education element at the beginning of the intervention. By week three, however, most doubts had subsided. In contrast, the occupational exploration part of the program emerged as the most popular component. From the beginning, participants showed excitement in researching African American males from history who excelled in the pre-determined industries and participant-selected occupations. The men especially reported enjoyment in teaching their Future Leaders Family about their findings. Similarly, the men embraced the interviews with current professional Black males in the selected occupations. Some insecurity existed regarding knowing how to conduct an interview. However, the mentors provided the additional guidance that they needed.

The mentors, on the other hand, showed full support and complete engagement in all aspects of the program elements from the beginning of the intervention. They exhibited professionalism, patience, and understanding when participants initially hesitated to receive their support. Mentors openly expressed these concerns during the weekly support meetings led by program staff and proactively collaborated with

other mentors in the program to find solutions. Many reported that this open exchange of ideas had a greater impact on their continued involvement than did the support from program staff. Although collecting pre- and post-implementation data with respect to the young mentees in grade school was beyond the scope of this project, teachers report anecdotal evidence in support of the positive impact the program had on these students' grades, level of classroom engagement, and enthusiasm for reading.

Despite the success indicated by these informal qualitative reports from participants, mentors, and mentees, the measured, quantitative outcomes did not meet the specified expectations, and the null hypothesis could not be rejected as stated. Yet, the results were encouraging. The outcomes of the control group signaled that a natural increase in academic possible selves and a natural decline in occupational possible selves occurs over time. The men in the AAGL intervention demonstrated an increased rate of growth in academic possible selves and a reduced rate of decline in occupational possible selves when compared to nonparticipants. As such, the program appeared to bolster a natural tendency to develop more APS over time while preventing natural losses in OPS.

Even though this researcher would expect both measures to increase, the design of the program and Possible Selves Questionnaire combined with the characteristics of the participants may provide an explanation. First, regarding the increases in academic self-expectations, close to 40% of the men did not have a high school diploma. Ergo, the participants may have instinctively placed a greater focus on school-related activities to better their career opportunities. Second, the PSQ asked the men to report what they saw themselves doing within the next year. Such time constraints on expectations possibly forced the participants to prioritize completing school-related activities before considering employment opportunities. Finally, the historical research and interviews with professional Black males could have increased participants' awareness of the impact education has on their lives while simultaneously increasing feelings of occupational inadequacy when compared to these gentlemen.

The legal issues and history of reduced employment opportunities for individuals with criminal backgrounds may offer more insight into the observed decline in occupational self-expectations. Nearly 70% of the participants had at least one prior conviction. As such, these results may be lower than the academic outcomes due to feelings of inadequate control over the hiring practices of employers, whereas participants have greater control over going to school. Moreover, Simona (2009) found that resolving self-identity issues before beginning career exploration had greater success.

One major finding in the individual raw scores across both dependent variables suggest a possible exaggerated rate of growth for the program participants. The PSQ only allowed the men to report up to four possible selves in any combination of academic, occupational, or other non-achievement categories. However, several of the individual scores showed sums of APS and OPS that exceeded four, which is impossible to attain with the questionnaire. Coding errors may account for these findings in that school-related expectations that closely resemble work-related expectations may have been double coded. Nonetheless, the significantly smaller percentage of men in the program compared to nonparticipants who remained unchanged signals that the AAGL intervention did move the men to give more thought to their futures. As such, the program may have affected participants' self-identity and self-expectations enough to increase community supervision compliance, reduce deviant behaviors, and ultimately make a difference in the safety of the community.

In sum, this Action Research Project aimed to increase the academic and occupational self-expectations of African American male offenders placed under pretrial community supervision by providing a framework for self-identity and occupational exploration. Matching these men with Black male mentors from the professional community and requiring them to mentor elementary and middle school students had a positive impact on the participants. The data collected from a professionally developed instrument measured the academic and occupational possible selves of participants. Descriptive and inferential analyses of the findings revealed positive gains and reduced losses in the dependent variables although those gains fell below researcher predictions. In all, this researcher finds the project outcomes practically significant and encouraging for further research.

Recommendations and Plans for Dissemination

This investigator offers the following recommendations for future research on the impact of a mentor-guided, self-identity education intervention on African American male probationers.

1. For researchers interested in replicating this study, this author recommends only sampling African American males with identified substance abuse issues. Including participants from additional sub groups such as those who receive referrals for mental health counseling or unemployment assistance may produce skewed results. However, doing so may help extend the literature on the program's effectiveness for these sub groups as discussed in a later recommendation.

2. The second recommendation for replicating this research is to ensure all participants enter the program via the same referring agent or judge. Constructing the sample of participants from multiple courts may induce possible participant bias resulting from repeated, poor interactions with the referring agent. Therefore, this researcher suggests selecting one referring agent to avoid skewed results.
3. Third, tightening the coding methodology to ensure that no more than four total possible selves are recorded per participant may produce more accurate results, particularly regarding growth rates and net gains/losses.
4. Fourth, including additional quantitative instruments to measure related constructs such as self-concept, self-efficacy, personal effectiveness, and locus of control may help identify the underlying causes of the observed trends. Specifically, determining why participants exhibit greater gains in the academic objectives compared to the occupational aspects would help provide guidance for improving the intervention.
5. Finally, to isolate differences in the growth/decline rates, this researcher recommends testing the intervention in two phases: first the transformational education followed by the full implementation with the occupational exploration.

The results of this study affect stakeholders at multiple levels and in various areas. The probationers, youth, teachers, business professionals, criminal justice officials, and the community at-large stand to gain from the promising impact of this intervention. As such, this researcher plans to host community forums to share the results and lessons learned from this study. Appropriate attendees include:

- representatives from the justice system, such as county judges, the sheriff, administrators of the Community Supervision Corrections Department, and decision makers with the Texas Department of Criminal Justice;
- representatives from local school districts, community colleges, universities, vocational schools, and Adult Basic Education providers;
- representatives from national civic and social service groups whose missions are to increase the success of Black men, such as 100 Black Men of America, National Association for the

Advancement of Colored People, National Urban League, National Action Network, National Association of Blacks in Criminal Justice, and National Black Child Development Institute; and

- representatives from the business community such as the Chamber of Commerce and other professional associations specifically geared toward African Americans.

Finally, this researcher plans to publish her research in a professional, peer-reviewed journal upon completion of the study. In line with the sample and intervention characteristics, appropriate journals include: Current Issues in Education, Educational Insights: Electronic Journal of Graduate Student Research, Interactive Multimedia Electronic Journal of Computer-Enhanced Learning, Criminal Behaviour and Mental Health, Applied Developmental Science, Journal of Educational Psychology, and Urban Education.

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Appendix A

Possible Selves Questionnaire

Who will you be next year? Each of us has some image or picture of what we will be like and what we want to avoid being like in the future. Think about next year—imagine what you’ll be like and be doing.

1. In the table below, write what you expect you will be like and will be doing next year. (Up to four)
2. In the space next to each expected goal:
 - a. mark **NO** with an (X) if you are not currently doing something about that expectation.
 - b. mark **YES** with an (X) if you are currently doing something to get to that expectation.
3. For each expected goal that you marked YES, use the space to the right to write what you are doing this year to attain that goal.

Next year, I expect to be:	Am I doing something to be that way?		If yes, What I am doing now to be that way next year	
	NO	YES		
(P1)			(s1)	
(P2)			(s2)	
(P3)			(s3)	
(P4)			(s4)	

In addition to expectations and expected goals, we all have images or pictures of what we **don’t** want to be like, what we **don’t** want to do, or what we want **to avoid** being. First, think a minute about ways you would **not** like to be next year -- *things you are concerned about or want to avoid being like*.

1. Write those concerns or “selves to-be-avoided” in the lines below.
2. In the space next to each concern or to-be-avoided self:
 - a. mark **NO** with an (X) if you are **not** currently working on avoiding that concern.
 - b. mark **YES** with an (X) if you are currently doing something so this will not happen next year.
3. For each concern or to-be-avoided self that you marked YES, use the space at the end of each line to write what you are doing this year to reduce the chances that this will describe you next year. Use the first space for the first concern, the second space for the second concern, etc.

Next year, I want to avoid	Am I doing something to avoid this		If yes, What I am doing now to avoid being that way next year	
	NO	YES		
(P5)			(s5)	
(P6)			(s6)	
(P7)			(s7)	
(P8)			(s8)	

Source: Oyserman, D., Bybee, D., Terry, K., & Hart-Johnson, T. (2004). Possible selves as roadmaps. *Journal of Research in Personality*, 38, 130-149.

Appendix B

WEEKLY IMPLEMENTATION SCHEDULE				
	Career Exploration	Personal Transformation		
WEEK	Occupation Focus	Controlled Breathing	Guided Visualization	Guided Self Examination
1	Architecture	Follow Your Breath	Progressive Relaxation	Freedom Law 1: Self Awareness
2	Engineering	Begin with Exhalation	Critical Incident Identification	Freedom Law 2: Root Cause ID
3	Bus/Finance	Squeeze More Air Out	Critical Incident Part II	Freedom Law 2: Root Cause ID
4	Mathematics	Stimulating Breath	Identifying Negativity	Freedom Law 3: False Assumptions (Self-Concept)
FEEDBACK: MONTHLY EVENT				
5	Computer	Deep, Slow, Quiet, & Regular	Letting Go of Resentments	Freedom Law 3: False Assumptions (Self-Concept)
6	Healthcare	Let Yourself Be Breathed	Negativity Release	Freedom Law 4: New Standards for Living
7	Legal	The Relaxing Breath	Access Highest Purpose	Freedom Law 4: New Standards for Living
8	Engineering	Stimulating/Relaxing	Clarity-Decide-Intentions	Freedom Law 5: Sharpen Your Edge
FEEDBACK: MONTHLY EVENT				
9	Life Sciences	Choose Any	Empower Goals	Freedom Law 6: Action Plan
10	Technology	Choose Any	Forgiveness	Freedom Law 7: Affirmative Action
11	Sales/Mktg	Choose Any	Focus Practice	Freedom Law 8: Environmental Reconstruction
12	Science	Choose Any	Focus Practice	Freedom Law 9: Instructional Manual for Living
FEEDBACK: MONTHLY EVENT				

Appendix C

Table C1. Raw data set of participants' reported academic and occupational possible selves.

Participants	AAGL?	PRE-INTERVENTION		POST-INTERVENTION		CHANGE	
	No=0, Yes=1	# APS	# OPS	# APS	# OPS	# APS	# OPS
P1	0	2	2	0	1	-2	-1
P2	0	4	0	1	4	-3	4
P3	0	3	3	4	3	1	0
P4	0	0	3	2	0	2	-3
P5	0	3	1	3	2	0	1
P6	0	3	2	3	4	0	2
P7	0	1	4	2	2	1	-2
P8	0	3	2	3	3	0	1
P9	0	2	0	0	3	-2	3
P10	0	3	4	2	2	-1	-2
P11	0	4	2	3	3	-1	1
P12	0	2	2	0	3	-2	1
P13	0	0	3	3	0	3	-3
P14	0	4	3	0	0	-4	-3
P15	0	1	4	1	0	0	-4
P16	0	0	0	4	3	4	3
P17	0	2	4	4	3	2	-1
P18	0	2	1	4	2	2	1
P19	0	1	3	1	1	0	-2
P20	0	2	3	2	3	0	0
P21	0	0	3	4	3	4	0
P22	0	2	4	4	2	2	-2
P23	1	2	1	0	3	-2	2
P24	1	4	2	2	2	-2	0
P25	1	0	3	2	1	2	-2
P26	1	2	3	2	0	0	-3
P27	1	0	4	4	2	4	-2
P28	1	1	2	0	1	-1	-1
P29	1	3	3	0	3	-3	0
P30	1	2	3	1	4	-1	1
P31	1	2	2	3	2	1	0
P32	1	1	1	0	4	-1	3
P33	1	0	1	4	1	4	0
P34	1	0	0	4	4	4	4
P35	1	4	3	1	4	-3	1
P36	1	3	0	2	4	-1	4
P37	1	3	4	2	2	-1	-2
P38	1	0	2	1	1	1	-1
P39	1	0	1	4	0	4	-1
P40	1	0	4	3	1	3	-3
P41	1	0	3	1	2	1	-1
P42	1	1	2	4	1	3	-1
P43	1	3	3	1	2	-2	-1
P44	1	2	3	3	3	1	0