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Understanding the Influences on the Homework Experiences of Low-Socioeconomic, African American, Kindergarten Students

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UNDERSTANDING THE INFLUENCES ON THE HOMEWORK EXPERIENCES OF
LOW-SOCIOECONOMIC, AFRICAN AMERICAN, KINDERGARTEN STUDENTS

by

SHERYL VENABLE

(Under the Direction of Dan Rea)

ABSTRACT

Mixed views exist on the benefits of homework for elementary students. The focus of this interpretive case study was to understand the influences on the homework experiences of 10 low-socioeconomic, African American kindergarten students. The general research question framed by Bandura's (1986) social cognitive theory was stated as followed: How do the students' personal processes, the parents' home and the teacher's school classroom environments, and the students' school academic behaviors interact to influence the homework experiences of low-socioeconomic, African-American kindergarten students? The data were analyzed using the constant comparative method.

Interviews and records of homework and quiz grades revealed that self-efficacy and high-performance expectations were influences exhibited by students noted to have positive homework experiences. They were motivated to complete their homework and earned moderately high grades on their homework accuracy scores and quizzes.

Other influences were noted. All of the students had a time and a place to complete their homework. Most of the parents had adequate resources to assist their children with their homework. All of the students' parents (all mothers in this study) assisted them with their homework and believed that the type and amount of homework were appropriate. Homework did not interfere with any of the students' family activities.

Most of the parents believed that students should spend about an hour per night on their homework, and all of the parents reported verbally praising their children when they completed their homework. The teacher's instructional method of distributed practice and practice homework appeared to benefit the students.

Educational barriers to the homework learning experiences for a small number of students included the need for more homework, the need to raise the difficulty level of the homework, the confusing wording of some homework assignments, the lengthiness of the teacher's lectures, and distracting manipulatives on the students' tables used for instruction. These barriers did not greatly impair homework success or academic progress.

INDEX WORDS: Homework, Readiness, African American kindergarten students, Low socioeconomic, Parental involvement, Social cognitive theory, Bandura

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DEDICATION

This dissertation is dedicated to my father, Robert Nathaniel Venable Senior. He supported my decision to pursue this endeavor. He passed away on March 11, 2005.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

The focus of this study is to understand the influences on the homework learning experiences of low-socioeconomic, African-American, kindergarten students. Several national, state, and local educational policies proclaim the importance of homework (Brewster & Fager, 2000; Butler, 1987; Cooper, 1989; 1994). However, little has been written on the influences on homework learning experiences of low-socioeconomic, African-American, kindergarten students. As far as socioeconomic status is concerned, Cooper, Robinson, and Patall (2006) reviewed homework research from 1983 to 2003 and stated the following: “nearly all the literature that we uncovered looked at the effect of homework on students who might be labeled ‘average,’ or examined broad samples of students but did not look for moderating effects of student characteristics” (p. 53). As far as achievement is concerned, they found that “no study that looked at students’ SES as a moderator of the homework-achievement link” (p. 55). The researcher believes that any activity that will strengthen students for future academic success is worthwhile. It is possible that homework might be one such activity.

Low-socioeconomic, African-American students have lower school readiness skills than other groups due to the following influences: summer loss (Bracey, 2003); insufficient parental readiness behaviors (Brooks-Gunn & Markman, 2005); poor attendance (Whitaker, 1996); poor quality preschool programs (Sachs, 2005); large family size (Duncan & Magnuson, 2005; Scott & Kobes, 1975); insufficient financial resources (Kafer, 2004); and low maternal education (Bushweller, 2004). African-American students specifically have lower readiness skills than other groups due to

racism (Swick & Brown, 1994); parental attitudes toward education; and low teacher expectations (Wright, Diener, & Kay, 2000; Ogbu, 2003).

Researchers' views differ regarding the benefits of homework for elementary students. Huntsinger, Krieg, and Jose (1998) noted that kindergarten students derive academic benefits from the completion of homework assignments. However, Cooper (1989; 1994), Cooper and Valentine (2001), and Cooper, Robinson and Patall (2006) found that homework has a negligible influence on the academic achievement of elementary students. Nevertheless, Cooper (1994) still recommended the assignment of homework to elementary students for nonacademic reasons such as fostering independence, promoting self-discipline, and developing time management skills.

Several researchers have found that low-socioeconomic, African-American parents want their children to perform well in school both academically and socially (Diamond, 2004; Drummond & Stipek, 2004; Lott, 2001). Epstein and Van Voorhis (2001) noted that teachers can facilitate the homework experience at all grade levels by designing homework that is "an effective teaching tool, a useful communication strategy, and a beneficial learning experience" (p. 191). Teachers should assign homework on a regular basis (Feldman, 2004), and they should provide clear homework instructions (Butler, 1987). Such home and school environmental influences are a part of students' homework learning experiences.

Therefore, homework appears to be important for various reasons, but there is no clear explanation of the influences on homework experiences of low-socioeconomic, African American kindergarten students. Little research has been done to investigate these homework influences. This research is important because low-socioeconomic

students may specially benefit from the additional skill practice afforded by homework because they tend to come to school with fewer skills than middle- or upper-class students (Bracey, 2003). Hence, understanding homework influences might lead to methods of enhancing the academic skill preparedness of low-socioeconomic, African-American students.

“The completion of a homework assignment involves the complex interaction of more influences than any other pedagogical technique” (Cooper, Jackson, Nye, & Lindsey, 2001, p.181). Because homework involves the complex interaction of multiple social and cognitive influences, Bandura’s social cognitive theory will be used to conceptualize and interpret the homework influences. According to Bandura (1986), learning may be conceptually modeled as the multiple interactions of a person’s psychological processes, his/her behavior, and his/her environment.

Statement of the Problem

Educators lack an in-depth understanding of the complex influences involved in the homework experiences of low-socioeconomic, African-American, kindergarten students. This lack of understanding of homework influences exists because very little research has been done at this grade level, especially for this type of student. Thus, influences for and barriers against positive homework learning experiences will be noted.

Additionally, controversy exists regarding the academic benefits of homework for kindergarten students. One study highlights the academic benefits of homework for kindergarten students; however, most studies note the lack of academic benefits of homework for kindergarten students.

Even though Cooper (2001) noted that homework has little influence on academic achievement, he noted that the relationship between homework and academic achievement increases when the topics require practice and repetition. He also noted that teachers should assign simple, clear-cut assignments to increase academic learning.

Thus, it is known that homework is a complex, controversial entity. Since there has been little research on kindergarten students, particularly on low-socioeconomic, African American kindergarten students, behavioral, environmental, and personal influences on the homework learning experiences of these students has received little attention.

Research Question

The general research question and specific sub-questions are framed by Bandura's (1986) social cognitive theory. Guided by this theory, the following three homework influences will be investigated: the psychological influences of the students' personal processes, the environmental influences of the parents' home and the teacher's classroom, and the behavioral influences of the students' school academic performances. By studying these three areas of influence, a dynamic understanding framed by social cognitive theory may be obtained. Hence, Bandura's theory helps educators and researchers to understand how the multiple homework influences of the parent, teacher, and student interact to create interrelated homework experiences for each of the involved persons.

Thus, the general research question and its sub-questions can be stated as followed: How do the students' personal processes, the parents' home and the teacher's classroom environments, and the students' school academic behaviors interact to

influence the homework experiences of low-socioeconomic, African-American, kindergarten students?

- A. How do the students' personal processes (including cognitive and affective processes) and the parents' home and the teacher's classroom environments interact to influence the homework experiences of the students?
- B. How do the students' personal processes and the students' school academic behaviors interact to influence the homework experiences of the students?
- C. How do the parents' home and teacher's classroom environments and the students' school academic behaviors interact to influence the homework experiences of the students?

Definition of Terms

Academic School Readiness: It means how well students are prepared for school work (Nurss, 1987). Baseline Georgia Kindergarten Assessment Program-Revised (GKAP) scores will be used to determine the extent of student academic readiness for kindergarten.

Georgia Kindergarten Assessment Program-Revised (GKAP): It is a performance-based measure used to determine the readiness of students entering the first grade. Throughout the year, teachers assess kindergarten students on a variety of assessment activities in the domain areas of literacy, mathematics, and social/emotional development. By May, teachers will have rated each student on 32 activities according to state standards. On individual student reports, students receive one of three overall

readiness ratings: Not Ready for First Grade, Needs Extra Instructional Assistance in First Grade, and Ready for First Grade (School Readiness, n.d.).

Homework: It is defined as work assigned to students by the school system that should be completed at home or outside of school (Dudley-Marling, 2003).

Practice Homework: It is defined as homework that requires students to repeatedly perform or exercise newly taught skills.

Parent: A parent is anyone who functions as a guardian or caretaker for the child.

Parent's Home Environment: Related to the homework experience, this consists of social influences within the home such as parental assistance or interference, sibling assistance or interference, and also physical influences such as supportive or non-supportive physical materials and spaces.

Students' Personal Processes: These are the student's internal cognitive and affective self-influences related to the homework experience. These self-influences may include personal beliefs, self-efficacy, attitudes, motivation, values, self-regulation, and expectations.

Student's School Academic Behavior: Related to the homework experience, this student behavior includes school academic achievements such as homework completion and accuracy and weekly homework quiz completion and scores.

Teacher's Classroom Environment: Related to the homework experience, this consists of the social influences within the school such as the teacher's homework instruction, assignments, directions, and feedback, and also any physical classroom conditions that may be supportive or non-supportive of homework learning.

Significance of Study

In an area lacking in research studies, this study will hopefully make a contribution to the study of homework involving low-socioeconomic, African-American kindergarten students, their parents, and the teacher. It will contribute to an in-depth understanding of the multiple influences of homework for a select group of low-socioeconomic, African-American kindergarten students, their parents, and the teacher. As a result, facilitative and detrimental homework influences may be discovered. A deeper understanding of these influences on homework learning experiences could possibly be used to sensitize and aid other parents and teachers in dealing with similar students' possible lack of school readiness. Kindergarten begins a child's formal educational process. Thus, educating students in the kindergarten years with better understood homework approaches may provide a stronger foundation for future grade levels. This goal is also relevant to the aspirations of the Curriculum Studies program at Georgia Southern University. This program seeks to promote educational equity to all students. Homework for low socioeconomic, African American kindergarten students may promote such equity.

This study is also significant because most school systems have homework policies that delineate the importance of homework. However, there is no consensus on the assignment of homework at the kindergarten level.

Another reason for this study's significance is the homework controversy in the research community. This study may contribute to a better understanding of the relationship of student cognitive and affective processes and school academic behavior.

Additionally, the academic and non-academic benefits of the early learning of kindergarten basic skills assisted by the homework process may help to prevent later learning difficulties and school dropout. Also, kindergarten homework may help to reduce the achievement gap between students who start school with high-readiness levels and those who start with low-readiness levels.

Therefore, studying the influences involved in homework learning experiences is important. Such knowledge will likely provide insight into homework and may also serve to enhance the educational process.

Organization of Study

Following the Introduction are Chapter 2: Review of Literature; Chapter 3: Methodology; Chapter 4: Results; and Chapter 5: Summary and Implications. The purpose of Chapter 2: Review of Literature is to discuss the theoretical perspective and different types of homework. Additionally, it documents researchers' studies related to student readiness, the home environment, the school environment, and school academic behavior. Discussed first is the study's theoretical perspective of social cognitive theory. This perspective involves learning through modeling and can be used to explain bi-directional homework influences between the home, the school, student behavior, and student personal processes. Following this section is a section on homework models. A significant finding in a model created and studied by Cooper, Jackson, Nye, and Lindsay (2001) revealed that constructive parental involvement in homework was the best predictor of student achievement. School readiness of low-socioeconomic students and African-American students is discussed to justify the need for this study. Since many low-socioeconomic, African-American students may enter kindergarten with lower levels

of readiness than other students, it is possible that homework may serve as a tool to improve the readiness skills of these students. Discussed next are homework policies. Such policies involve the role of parents and teachers in the homework process. The next section discusses the types of homework. The literature suggests that the most beneficial types of homework for kindergarten students are practice and completion. The section ends with six interactive influences on homework experiences. These include the student and home environment, the student and school environment, the home environment and the school environment, the student and school academic behavior, school academic behavior and the home environment, and school academic behavior and school environment.

Chapter 3 is the Methodology. An interpretive case study method was used to construct a detailed depiction of the homework learning influences. The participants were 10 low-socioeconomic, African-American students. Each week for seven weeks a different skill(s) was taught. Data were collected using semi-structured interviews, homework completion and accuracy scores, and quiz scores.

Chapter 4 is the Results chapter. The results of the study were documented in descriptive form in this section and organized in accordance with the research questions.

Chapter 5 is the Summary and Implications chapter. This chapter includes an explanation of the patterns and themes, which were discovered from the results. The researcher's interpretations of the findings and the research questions were discussed. Educational implications were elaborated, and potential future research was recommended.

Personal Context

As of 2007, I have taught Kindergarten for nine years. My students were low-socioeconomic, African-American students. Over the years, I have informally observed homework learning experiences appeared to increase the academic achievement of the students. Furthermore, I noticed that the students who received parental assistance performed the best. The next best performers were those who completed their assignments without assistance. The worst performers were those who completed none of their homework assignments.

I was attracted to the topic of homework because of Cooper's (1994) extensive research, which revealed that homework has little influence on the academic achievement on elementary students. Thus, I wanted to know more about the influences of a homework experience for the following reasons: My observation and belief is that the homework learning experience exerts a positive influence on the academic achievement of low-socioeconomic, African-American students. Many such students come to school without the academic and social skills needed for school success. Some low-socioeconomic parents fail to see the benefit of education. Others are trying to work several jobs to pay bills and their work takes priority over the education of their children. Still others do not have the parenting skills needed to raise their children. Thus, they may not spend adequate time talking to their children, reading to their children, or providing their children with learning opportunities through play. Therefore, I believe that studying homework's influences will provide me with a better understanding of my beliefs.

Limitations

Several limitations constrained this study. The possible data samples for the

multiple influences on homework experiences are so naturalistically rich that it may be difficult to select, collect, manage, and interpret a sufficiently rich and appropriately relevant range of samples for each of the homework influences. Moreover, the interpretive nature of the case study methodology will limit its objective application to other schools. The students and parents may give socially acceptable responses that do not truly reflect their homework experiences. The socially acceptable responses of kindergarten students as well as their developmental lack of self-awareness and inability to clearly articulate may make it difficult to use their responses to triangulate data samples. Finally, because the data is composed of parents, students, a teacher and a paraprofessional from a southwest Georgia school, the results may not be relevant and generalizable to all settings.

CHAPTER 2

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

In order to study the influences on the homework experiences of low-socioeconomic, African-American, kindergarten students based on Bandura's social cognitive theory, it is imperative that I review the literature on six topics. These topics include the theoretical perspective (social cognitive theory), homework models, school readiness of low-socioeconomic students and African-American students, homework policies, types of homework, and six influences on homework experiences.

Theoretical Perspective

The present study is based on Bandura's social cognitive theory (Bandura, 1986). Bandura's social cognitive theory evolved from and incorporates aspects from his earlier social learning theory (Bandura, 1977). Bandura's early social learning theory explained student learning as influenced by the interaction of students' behavior and the environment. Social cognitive theory explains student learning as influenced by the interaction of students' behavior and environment and adds the third interactive influence of students' personal qualities such as cognition and affect. Social cognitive theory similarly to social learning theory incorporates the social aspects of learning such as observation, imitation, and modeling but also adds cognitive and affective aspects of learning such as student self-regulation, self-efficacy, and beliefs. Aspects of social cognitive theory that will be discussed include modeling, expectations, reciprocal causation, and self-regulation.

Modeling

According to social cognitive theory, one of the key environmental influences on

student learning is the educational modeling provided by proficient peers, teachers or parents. Learning from a proficient model allows people to amass a great deal of information without going through the process of trial and error (Bandura, 1977). Bandura (1977; 1986) identified and explained four components of modeling: attention, retention, reproduction, and motivation. Concerning attention, Bandura noted that students need to pay attention to the model if they are to learn. Boeree (1998) noted that students will pay more selective attention to the model if the model is colorful, nice-looking, smart, and resembles them in appearance. He further noted that other factors included competence, prestige, and power of the model. Ormrod (2004) also identified the factors of power and relevance of behavior observed.

Concerning retention, students must be able to retain the information learned. Bandura (1977) indicated that observers use symbols to create the modeled behavior. He stated that “through the medium of symbols, transitory modeling experiences can be maintained in permanent memory” (p. 25). These symbols are verbal and visual. Bandura (1977) noted that the retention of modeled behavior can be aided by the technique of mental rehearsal. This technique allows the observed behavior to be brought into the mind and practiced.

Regarding reproduction, students must be able to repeat the observed behavior. Bandura (1977) describes the reproduction component as a process. First, the behavior is chosen. Second, a trial-and-error period is completed. Finally, the behavior is refined and perfected through feedback and self-correction. A successful reproduction method is distributed practice (Willingham, 2002). Willingham noted that distributed practice involves practicing concepts in spaced units as opposed to one single unit. In other

words, distributed practice for 15 minutes over four days is more beneficial than massed practice of 60 minutes in one day. Thus, the desired behavior is learned more effectively with distributed practice than with massed practice or what is more popularly known as cramming.

The fourth component is motivation meaning that students must have a desire to imitate the behavior. Boeree (1998) identified possible motives as past reinforcement, promised reinforcement, vicarious reinforcement, past punishment, promised punishment, and vicarious punishment. In addition to serving as motives, Bandura (1977) identified two results of reinforcements as the receipt of information and the strengthening of that information. In other words, when a person is reinforced, that person received the information and further reinforcements allow for intensification of that information.

Three types of models noted by Ormrod (2004) include symbolic (such as a television character), live (real person), and verbal instructions in the absence of a person. Bandura (1977) noted that modeling can be used to teach complex, new behaviors and increase the frequency of learned behaviors.

The relevance to homework is as follows: students can potentially improve academic skills by watching and imitating their parents' and/or siblings' modeling of how to do homework assignments. The reproduction component, which includes practice, is quite relevant since the distributed practice concept was used in the present study. Students were given small units of homework each night as opposed to one large unit of homework to complete the night before the test. Bandura (1977) stated "a model who repeatedly demonstrated desired responses, instructs others to reproduce the behavior,

prompts them physically when they fail, and then rewards them when they succeed, may eventually produce matching responses in most people” (p. 29). Thus, the modeling components (attention, retention, reproduction, and motivation) may contribute to positive homework experiences.

Expectations

Expectations are components of social cognitive theory that can be linked to the homework experience. Two types of expectations are outcome and efficacy (Ormrod, 2004). Outcome expectations are beliefs about what happens as a result of a behavior. “People select courses of action within their perceived capabilities and sustain their efforts partly on the basis of such outcome expectations” (Bandura, 1986, p. 230).

According to social cognitive theory (Bandura, 1986), self-efficacy is the key cognitive influence on student learning. Self-efficacy is “a person’s sense of being able to deal effectively with a particular task” (Woolfolk, 2004, p. 308). Efficacy expectations are belief expectations that serve as behavior motivators. “In activities that call upon competencies, perceived self-efficacy mediates how outcome expectations influence personal decisions and expenditures of effort” (Bandura, 1986, p. 231). Thus, when individuals believe that they will succeed based on past achievement with similar tasks, they will put effort and persistence in particular behaviors. Students with a high level of self-efficacy tend to achieve more than students without this characteristic. They will attend to a model, retain the behavior, reproduce the behavior, and respond to extrinsic and/or intrinsic motivators. Bandura (1997) indicated that self-efficacy is different from self-esteem. Self-esteem is concerned with how a person thinks of himself or herself

while self-efficacy is concerned with whether a person thinks she or he can perform a certain task.

Bandura (1986) noted that four factors determine a person's perception of his or her self-efficacy. This perception of self-efficacy does not have to be true to influence self-efficacy; it is enough that the person thinks it is true. "The factors include performance attainments, vicarious experiences obtained by observing the performances of others, verbal persuasion, and physiological states resulting from self-judgment" (p. 399). Past performance attainments have the most influence as far as efficacy is concerned because that person has actually performed the tasks. Verbal persuasion may be very important in the homework process if carried out in a realistic and believable fashion related to skill mastery.

One concept related to self-efficacy that could affect the homework process for some students is proxy control (Bandura, 1997). Proxy control is indirect control. Proxy control is acceptable when used appropriately. An example would be influencing public officials for positive changes in the community. However, some people give others control of things that they themselves should have control over. Such people have a low sense of self-efficacy. In the homework process, students with a low sense of self-efficacy might try to get others to do their homework because they do not feel that they are capable of doing it themselves. Bandura (1997) noted self-efficacy's role in the educational process.

Children with the same level of cognitive skill development differ in their intellectual performances depending on the strength of their perceived efficacy....
The efficacy beliefs that children form affect how consistently and effectively

they apply what they know. Perceived self-efficacy, therefore, is a better predictor of intellectual performance than skills alone. (p. 216)

Self-efficacy is quite relevant to the homework process. Students will likely attend to parental or sibling models of homework if they believe that they will be successful. This belief expressed as confidence also tends to lead to increased retention and the desire to perform the behavior (Bandura, 1997).

Bandura's (1997) ideas concerning the development of cognitive self-efficacy are related to homework influences. "The development of cognitive competencies requires sustained involvement in activities. If appropriately structured, such pursuits provide the master experiences needed to build intrinsic interest and a sense of cognitive efficacy when they are lacking" (p. 217). The assignment of homework may serve as a "sustained involvement" mechanism that has the purpose of creating a "sense of cognitive efficacy" and building "intrinsic interest." Goals are also a part of the process. Bandura (1986) noted that

goals not only provide direction and create incentives for actions. They also figure prominently in the development of self-efficacy. Without standards against which to measure their performances, people have little basis for judging how they are doing, nor do they have much basis for gauging their capabilities. (p. 479)

Thus teachers and parents may find it helpful to use goal setting in assisting students with the homework process.

Reciprocal Causation

According to social cognitive theory (Bandura, 1986), the interactive influences

on students' learning may be explained by the concept of reciprocal causation. There are three variables involved in reciprocal causation: the person, the behavior, and the environment (See Figure 2.1). Ormrod (2004) and Woolfolk (2004) noted that reciprocal causation means that these three variables can mutually influence each other. The person variable includes internal personal processes such as affective processes and cognitive processes. The affective processes may include the students' personal beliefs, attitudes, values, self-efficacy, and motivation. The cognitive processes may involve various cognitive strategies and mental self-regulation.

The behavior variable is academic achievement. Academic achievement may be indicated by student performance on homework assignments, quizzes, and classroom work. .

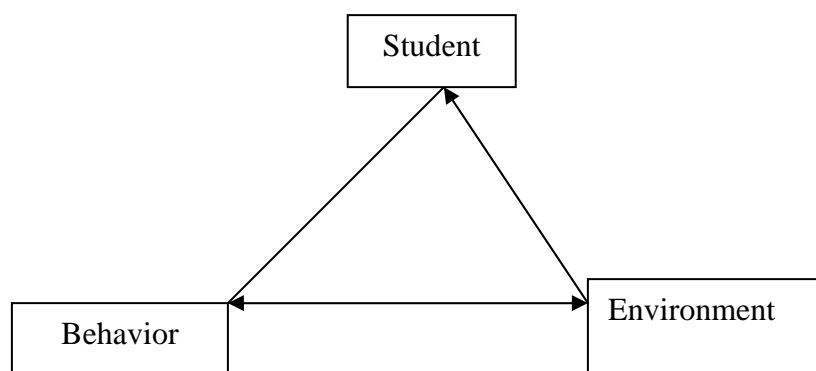


Figure 2.1. The three variables of Bandura's (1986) triadic reciprocal causation concept.

The environment variable includes the parent's home environment and the teacher's classroom environment. The parent's home environment consists of social influences

within the home such as parental assistance or interference, sibling assistance or interference, and also physical influences such as supportive or non-supportive physical materials and spaces.

The teacher's classroom environment consists of social influences within the school such as the teacher's homework, instruction, assignments, directions, feedback, and any physical classroom constituencies that may be supportive or non-supportive of learning.

Bandura (1977) noted that most traditional ideas acknowledge the relationship between the person (student) and behavior; however, the environment tends to be treated as a separate factor. He stated

the environment is only a potentiality until actualized by appropriate actions; it is not a fixed property that inevitably impinges upon individuals. Lecturers do not influence students unless they attend their classes, books do not affect people unless they select and read them, fires do not burn people unless they touch them, and rewarding and punishing influences remain in abeyance until activated by conditional performances. (p. 195)

Thus, in studying homework influences, students will not be influenced by their parents and/or siblings if their parents and/or siblings do not work with them.

Summarizing the three interactions, the person can influence the behavior and the environment; behavior can influence the person and the environment; and the environment can influence the person and the behavior. Bandura (1997) indicated that some influences will be stronger than others, and the influences do not necessarily happen at the same time but the influences are bi-directional because they can work both

ways. Schunk (1999) related reciprocal causation to the educational process. For example, a parent or sibling (environment) can model a homework skill that can be attended to by a student (person) who will complete a homework assignment and quiz (behavior). Social cognitive theory's concepts of reciprocal causation, modeling, and self-efficacy are applicable to the topic of homework. Parents can influence the behavior of their children. Likewise, children's responses can influence the behavior of their parents. If the children are responding well, it is likely that the motivations of both the parents and the children will be positive and the behavior will continue. If the children's responses are negative, hopefully the parents can facilitate positive behaviors, which will likely increase the children's self-efficacy or confidence for doing future homework assignments.

The present study proposed a modification of Bandura's triadic model to accommodate the dual environmental influences of both the classroom and home on the homework experience. This differentiation of the environments is necessary to account for both of their influences on homework. Figure 2.2 shows the components of the homework influences including the dual environmental influences. This modified model is a hexadic, bidirectional reciprocal causation model that includes the following influences: the student's cognitive and affective characteristics, the home environment, the classroom environment, and the student's academic school behaviors.

Self-Regulation

According to social cognitive theory (Bandura, 1986), self-regulation is a key personal process in directing learning. Furthermore, self-regulation is a complex phenomenon.

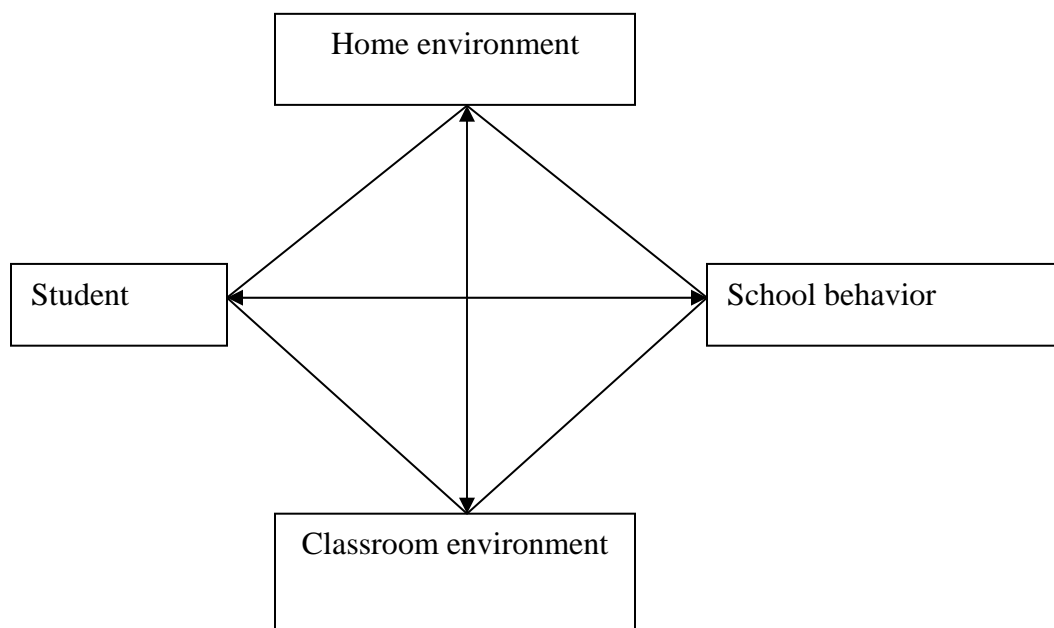


Figure 2.2. Reciprocal homework influences involving the student, school environment, home environment, and school behavior.

Self-regulation is not a generalized human trait, ability, or cognitive stage of development, but rather a complex interactive process involving not only metacognitive components but also motivational and behavioral components.

Like other forms of human functioning, self-regulated learning (SRL) is affected profoundly by variations in social-contextual variables, such as task features and setting conditions. (Zimmerman, 1995, p. 220)

Three components of self-regulation include self-observation, self-judgment, and self-reaction (Boeree, 1998; Ormrod, 2004; Schunk & Zimmerman, 1997). Boeree, Ormrod, and Schunk and Zimmermann defined self-observation as a person looking at his/her actions and monitoring them. Additionally, they defined self-judgment as comparing one's behavior with a standard that may be absolute or normative. Modeling is associated with normative standards. These researchers defined self-reaction as

rewarding or punishing oneself. Ormrod identified four methods of promoting self-regulation including self-instructions, self-monitoring, self-reinforcement, and self-imposed stimulus control.

Self-efficacy is a pre-requisite to self-regulation (Schunk & Zimmerman, 1995; Zimmerman, 1997). Students must feel that they can accomplish a skill before they can self-regulate. Schunk and Zimmerman (1995) stated that self-regulation operates in the following manner: Students first learn in a social manner involving the teacher or in the case of homework the parent. Both the teacher and the parent are social sources. The learning is transferred to the student in four steps: observationally, imitatively, self-controlled, and self-regulated. These four steps are related to academic learning. During the observational stage, the student watches and tries to accurately monitor the modeled behavior. During the imitation stage, the student's performance tries to copy the model's performance. During the self-controlled level, the student is able to work somewhat independently but is still dependent on the model's image and past verbalizations. At the self-regulatory stage, the learner independently understands the information and does not depend on the model.

In 1997, Bandura expanded his theory of self-efficacy. When considering self-efficacy and self-regulation, Bandura says that

...viewed within the framework of social cognitive theory people must develop skills to regulate the motivational, affective and social determinants of their intellectual functions, as well as the cognitive aspects. This requires self-influence to bear on every aspect of their learning experiences. (p. 221)

Homework Models

Social cognitive theory can be used to understand the homework model created by Cooper, Jackson, Nye, and Lindsay (2001). Cooper et al. reviewed homework models that relate to homework's influence on academic achievement. They found that these models were not tested on elementary students and created a plan to study elementary students. From the models, they selected the following key variables: student ability level, parental attitudes toward homework, homework norms formed by the classroom students, distractions in the home, parent facilitation, and the amount of time students spent in after school activities. They used these variables to create a model that could be tested on elementary students.

Cooper et al. followed 428 students and parents in the second and fourth grades. Twenty-eight teachers were also followed. The following results of their quantitative study were noted: Positive student norms were related to the removal of distractions by parents during student homework completion. Increased parent facilitation was associated with higher student ability and positive parental attitudes with regard to homework. Students' attitudes with regard to homework were related to parents' attitudes with regard to homework but unrelated to classmate norms, students' abilities, or home and community factors. The study concluded that positive parental involvement in homework was the best predictor of student achievement.

The findings of the model created by Cooper et al. can be explained using Bandura's model of reciprocal influences. Previously, Figure 2 identified these influences as the student, school environment, classroom environment and school behavior. The removal of distractions by parents (home environment) influenced the

likelihood of students (student) to complete their homework. Increased parent facilitation (home environment) was associated with higher student ability (student). Classroom grades (school behavior) were influenced by student ability (student). Positive classmate norms formed by the classroom students (school environment) were related to increased parent facilitation (home environment). Students' grades (school behavior) were related to the amount of homework completed (home environment). Thus, the findings presented by Cooper and his associates (2001) show multiple influences between the home environment and the student, school behavior and the student, the classroom environment and the home environment, and school behavior and the home environment.

School Readiness of Low-Socioeconomic Students and African-American Students

School readiness provides reasons for studying homework influences. Parker, Boak, Griffin, Ripple, and Peay (1999) define readiness as "how prepared a child is to begin kindergarten" (p. 415). Readiness can also be viewed as the preparedness of the school for the potential enrollees (Cooney, 1995). The kindergarten readiness of low-socioeconomic students and African-American students will be discussed.

Duncan and Magnuson (2005) noted that socioeconomic status is usually defined as a person's social position and the positive aspects associated with that person's economic and social situation. These researchers define socioeconomic status in terms of four factors: income, education, family structure (single never married parents, married parents, divorced parents), and neighborhood conditions (drug activity, violence, gangs). The school readiness of low-socioeconomic students tends to be low (argued Duncan and Magnuson) because of the lack of activities in the home that facilitate school readiness (Hearron, 1993). Wright, Diener, and Kay (2000) noted that many low-income children

are reared in families who fail to see the importance of such activities as reading and talking to their children. They noted that in many cases, parents of low-socioeconomic children believe that learning begins with the first day of school.

Kafer (2004) argued that low-socioeconomic students begin school with more limited math, reading, social, and vocabulary skills than middle-class students. Hoff (2003) indicated that there is an 18 percentage point gap between low- and middle-class students. Bracey (2003) stated that low-socioeconomic students do not have as many opportunities to read nor do they have as many books in their homes as their middle- and upper-class counterparts. According to Constantino (2005) high-socioeconomic children not only have more books in their home than low-socioeconomic children, school does not compensate for the difference. Bracey also elaborated on the topic of “summer loss” noting that during the summer, middle- and upper-class parents talk to their children more than low-socioeconomic parents and that middle- and upper-class children are more likely to participate in activities that teach math skills, sequences, and rules.

Wright, Diener, and Kay (2000) studied 885 low-socioeconomic students and their kindergarten teachers in the Salt Lake City School District. These students took the Pre-Kindergarten Assessment test during the first two weeks of school, and their findings indicated that 68% of the students did not understand the left to right or top to bottom progression skills that are needed for reading instruction. Furthermore, 25% of the students could not even identify the front of a book. Forty-eight percent of the students had either never been read to or were read to on rare occasions and could not identify whether two spoken words rhymed or whether two spoken words began with the same sound. Sixty-nine percent of the students could not recognize 10 numbers, and 22%

could not express themselves in recognizable words or sentences. These students also lacked social skills. These findings are in line with the views of Kralovec and Buell (2000) who stated that “test scores are tied directly to the wealth of a community; the more money, the higher the test scores” (p. 65).

Kafer (2004) argued that low-socioeconomic students never catch up with their middle-class peers. Her view is that no program can compensate for the results of a life of poverty. These views are shared by Bracey (2003) and Nelson (2005). Nelson noted that even when low-socioeconomic children attend preschool and efforts are made to enrich their home environments, they still perform lower than students from higher economic backgrounds.

Part of this problem might be attributed to the quality of preschool programs for low-socioeconomic students. Sachs (2005) found that the preschool programs attended by low-socioeconomic students were of a lower quality than those attended by high-socioeconomic students. The programs attended by high-socioeconomic students had better paid staff, staff with higher levels of education, and lower student to teacher ratios. Schweinhart, Montie, Barnett, Belfield, and Nores (2005) noted the benefits of high quality preschool programs for low-socioeconomic, African-American students. David Weikart directed the Perry Preschool project for 40 years. This study involved 123 low-socioeconomic, African-American students. It found that after 40 years, students exposed to high quality preschool programs were more likely to achieve a high school diploma, score higher on intellectual tests, be employed, have a higher income, own their homes, and not involve themselves in criminal activities.

Trained pre-school teachers appear to benefit low-socioeconomic students. Loeb, Fuller, Kagan, and Carrol (2004) found that the cognitive development of students was best facilitated by teachers with training beyond high school. This view is shared by Edwards (1999). In fact, Whitebook (2003) noted that one way to facilitate kindergarten readiness among poor students is to hire pre-kindergarten teachers with four years of college. She indicated that such teachers are more likely to institute the right combination of knowledge and skills in the classroom; have better teacher/child interactions; and have a larger vocabulary. Such factors, she contended, lead to high quality education for the students. Loeb and her associates (Loeb et al., 2004) noted that children attain greater cognitive gains from child-care centers than from home-based centers.

Parker et al. (1999) found that parents who assisted their children with academic skills at home achieved higher cognitive levels than those who failed to assist their children. Additionally, Nelson (2005) indicated the need for greater financial and social support of low-socioeconomic families. In fact, Duncan and Magnuson (2005) noted that an increase in family income is more beneficial to preschool children than to older children. Poverty stems from failure to attain a high-quality education and poverty has an effect on educational attainment (Arnold & Doctoroff, 2003). Thus, increasing the amount of time parents work with their children and increasing the income of families with preschool children appears to be associated with an increase in children's school readiness.

Several studies noted the role of the education of the mother in a child's cognitive development. Bushweller (2004) noted from a study conducted in California of 3000

families that the education of the mother as well as socioeconomic status predicts kindergarten readiness. In fact, the study revealed that when all factors are the same, children of well-educated mothers performed better on reading and mathematics assessments than children of less educated mothers. Parker et al. (1999) studied low-socioeconomic students who were part of the Head Start program. They also found higher cognitive levels among children of higher educated mothers. Additionally, Zill, Collins, West, and Hausken (1995) do not think that poverty is the key factor underlying low-school readiness. They cited low education of the mother, family structure, and non-standard English language status as factors that influence low-school readiness. However, Kralovec and Buell (2000) along with previously mentioned researchers believe that education of the mother and economics are the key factors that influence academic success.

Studies on African-American, low-socioeconomic students have revealed various findings. Zill et al. (1995) and Dickens (2005) noted that on emerging literacy tests, Black preschoolers scored lower than White preschoolers. Swick and Brown (1994) noted that low-socioeconomic, African-American students experience the societal problems of poor health care, poor nutrition, poverty, and low education of members of their environment more often than other groups. These factors interact to produce a less than positive environment. They argued that these problems, due to the effects of racism, are the underlying causes of low-school readiness of low-socioeconomic, African-American children. These researchers along with Nelson (2005) argued that financial support is crucial to improving the low-school readiness of these students. They also

noted the significant role played by parental support of educational endeavors in the home.

Brooks-Gunn and Markman (2005) noted that African-American parents' behaviors associated with students' school readiness are not as high as that of White parents. They argued that African-American parents neither talk nor read to their children as much as White parents. However, these researchers found that training African-American parents to help their children was beneficial. One of the benefits was improved school readiness.

Duncan and Magnuson (2005) and Scott and Kobes (1975) found that the family size of African-American, low-socioeconomic students' families influences academic readiness. Scott and Kobes studied 35 pairs of such students, aged two to three, who were members of large and small families. Readiness measures were tested on nine skill areas including receptive language, expressive language, large motor (pencil/paper) skills, manipulative use, visual memory, auditory memory, receptive skills, and expressive concepts. Results revealed that scores on visual memory, expressive language, and expressive concepts were much higher for students from the smaller families than students from the larger families. Downey (1995) explained the reason for the relationship between family size and academic achievement as a decrease in parental resources. In other words, as the number of children increases, the amount of resources decreases. He noted that the resources were financial and emotional.

African-American parents have noted the academic benefits of Head Start programs (McAllister, Wilson, Green, & Baldwin, 2005). Moore and Ogletree (2001) studied 106 first-grade students from the same Black community in Chicago. Half of

them had one full year of Head Start and the other half had no Head Start training. They found that the group that attended Head Start for one year scored notably higher on readiness skills and intelligence test performance than those who failed to attend Head Start for one year. It is noteworthy that even though McAllister et al. noted that Head Start students' parents acknowledged the academic readiness benefits of the Head Start program, they placed more importance on emotional and social readiness skills.

Whitaker (1996) studied the effect of attendance on African-American kindergarten students' school readiness. Whitaker found that the school readiness achievement levels were higher for the students with higher rates of attendance than they were for students with lower rates of attendance. Additionally, Ford and Sutphen (1996) noted the positive relationship between elementary school attendance and academic achievement.

Homework Policies

Homework policies are important because they tend to involve the student, the teacher, and the parent(s). Brewster and Fager (2000) defined homework policies as mechanisms for distributing expectations for and beliefs about homework. They identify the following benefits of homework policies:

Homework policies not only help define the parents' role in homework, but also ensure that students and parents are informed about the teachers' expectations.

Another benefit of homework policies is that they allow teachers to develop a consistent, schoolwide set of expectations for students, which is particularly helpful for students who have several different teachers throughout the day.

Developing a homework policy is also a good way for educators to get together,

review the research, and explore how homework can best be used to promote achievement engagement in school. (p.11)

Hopkins (2005) noted that in order to create a policy, the term “homework” must be defined. The amount of homework should be stated. Most researchers agree on the approximate completion time for homework of elementary students. Cooper (1994), Butler (1987), and Sullivan and Sequoia (1996) noted that students in grades kindergarten through second should have approximately 10 to 20 minutes of homework per night. According to Hopkins, the grading of homework is usually a teacher decision; however, some districts specify procedures.

From his extensive research, Cooper (1994) developed a homework policy for the typical American student. He suggested having policies at the district, school, and classroom level. Delineated should be reasons for completing homework, completion times, homework’s mandatory nature, teacher roles, and student roles. Cooper’s (1994) and Brewster’s and Fager’s (2000) ideas about homework policies have the goal of promoting a clear understanding of the process of homework.

Roderique and Polloway (1994) surveyed homework policies of 267 school districts in the United States. They found that 35.2% of the districts including elementary, middle, and high schools had formal homework policies. Thus, the researchers inferred that in the other districts either the individual schools had policies or homework was left to the judgment of the teachers. Some of their other findings included the following: Of the districts that specified frequency of homework assignments, 37.1% were elementary schools and their average homework frequency was 3.3 nights per week. The average amount of homework assigned was 41.5 minutes per night at the elementary

level. Fifty-eight per cent of the respondents indicated the roles parents were required to play in the homework process. Some of these roles included providing a place for homework completion, helping children with the assignments, and signing completed assignments. "Homework can involve parents in the school process, enhancing their appreciation of education and allowing them to express their appreciation of education and allowing them to express positive attitudes toward their children's achievement" (Cooper & Valentine, 2001, p. 46). Roderique and Polloway (1994) also noted that homework policies provide a means through which teachers, parents, and students can share and review expectations for the school year.

According to Swanson (1999), parents should want schools to have homework policies. When a policy is in place, students are more likely to have grade-level assignments that are appropriate in length. Additionally, teacher expectations and parental expectations will be clearly stated.

Types of Homework

The discussion now moves to types of homework. Five types of homework are preparation, practice, extension, completion, and review (Butler, 1987; Roderique & Polloway, 1994; Nuzum, 1998). Those relevant to kindergarten students include practice, extension, and completion. As far as preparation is concerned, Butler (1987) argued that preparation assignments do not benefit primary students. Because review homework requires students to organize, outline, and identify areas of strengths and weaknesses (Nuzum, 1998), it can be inferred that this type of homework would not be relevant for kindergarten students due to the fact that they are beginning their educational journeys.

Eddy (1984) and Epstein and Van Voorhis (2001) noted that practice assignments strengthened newly taught skills. This view is supported by Cooper (2001). Eddy stated that practice assignments are most helpful when distributed after a recently taught skill and matched with each student's capacity for completion. Sufficient practice will lead to mastery of a skill that can be used in various situations (Nuzum, 1998).

Extension homework assignments are usually long-term projects that require students to apply previously learned information (Cooper & Gersten, 2003; Eddy, 1984; Cooper, 2001). Nuzum's (1998) name for this type of homework is application homework. In many cases, students will have an interest in a certain topic and desire to delve further into the topic.

Another type of homework is completion homework (Roderique & Polloway, 1994). This type of homework is the result of a student's failure to complete assignments during class time. Completion homework along with extension exercises were identified in Indianapolis's homework policy as being appropriate for the primary students.

Six Influences on Homework Experiences

Influences between the Student and the Home Environment

Homework can facilitate positive interactions between parents and their children (Epstein & Van Voorhis, 2001). Most parents believe that they should assist their children with their homework and that their assistance will make a difference (Hoover-Dempsey, Battiato, Walker, Reed, DeJong, & Jones, 2001). However, one existing perception concerning African-American parents is that they do not assist their children with their homework and that their attitudes toward education and homework are negative (Lott, 2001). Contrary to this perception, Lott's literature review revealed that

this perception is a stereotype perpetuated by dominant views and that research studies do not support these views. Drummond and Stipek (2004) found that low-income parents of second grade students believed that parental assistance with academic work was very important. Lott noted that low-socioeconomic parents experience barriers to involvement with their children. They do not have the financial resources nor the communication skills necessary to be as effective with their children as middle-class parents can be with their children. Other barriers include odd work schedules, time issues, transportation issues, and weighty family responsibilities.

Interesting are the findings of Hoover-Dempsey, Bassler, and Brissie (1992) related to parent efficacy. They define parent efficacy (based on Bandura's 1977 & 1986 work) as a parent's belief that he/she is capable of effectively assisting his/her child with school endeavors. In their study, lower efficacy parents with high school educations spent more time assisting their children with homework than higher efficacy parents with college degrees. The researchers noted the following reasons for this finding: "the lower efficacy parents may be more determined to see their children succeed; they may use a set of less efficient helping strategies; or they may be responding to a pattern of greater school difficulty experienced by their children" (p. 291). Diamond (2004) noted that African-American parents permit extended family members as well as other adults to be involved in their children's education and encourage their academic behavior.

Sometimes parental homework assistance may be detrimental to students (Cooper, 1989). Kralovec and Buell (2000) noted that "the parents may confuse the child or be unqualified to help him or her, which causes stress between them" (p.22). Sometimes parents provide students with incorrect information that has to be corrected by the

teacher. Some “parents pressure students to complete homework assignments or to do them with unrealistic rigor” (Cooper, 2001, p. 9). Cooper noted that at times parental help may turn into giving answers or parental completion of homework assignments.

Dudley-Marling (2003) noted that parents of struggling students viewed homework as a disruption to their lives. He further noted that these parents believed that large amounts of homework contributed to their family’s stress and frustration. For these parents, homework resembled punishment. Kralovec and Buell (2000) noted that stress placed on such families can cause long-lasting problems. Dudley-Marling does not advocate the suspension of homework assignments to struggling learners. He suggests that parents, teachers, and administrators should work together to create homework that will be beneficial to struggling students.

Ratnesar (1999) studied elementary parents who believed that their children were assigned too much homework. The study’s findings included excessive family stress and a lack of sufficient leisure. However, middle-class parents had mixed feelings. On one hand, they favored the excessive amount of homework because they wanted their children to excel and go to high quality colleges and universities. On the other hand, the excessive amounts of homework left little time for extra-curricular activities. This parental conflict was also expressed by Kralovec and Buell (2000). These researchers also noted that homework interfered with parents’ desire to impart aspects of their culture and various life lessons to their children. However, Bempechat (2004) advocated parental acceptance of homework. She stated that

many parents do not realize that, in advocating for little or no homework, homework that is “not stressful,” or homework that does not become “their”

homework, their children will pay the price in the long run in lack of preparedness for the academic demands and obstacles that will eventually come their way.

These parents, in effect, rob their children of countless opportunities to develop adaptive learning beliefs and behaviors. Parents who actively protest a school's homework policy on the grounds that it is too demanding run the risk of communicating to their children both low expectations and a belief that they lack the ability to rise to a teacher's standards. (p. 194)

Finally, Kralovec and Buell (2000) noted that academic ability can be fostered by a student's parents or guardians.

Influences between the Student and the Classroom Environment

Teachers are a part of the student's classroom environment. Teachers should seek to assign enough homework to allow students to practice skills but not so much that it becomes excessive (Van Voorhis, 2004). Researchers have noted the importance of teachers assigning routine homework assignments that are clear and providing prompt feedback. Feldman (2004) noted that teachers should assign homework on a regular basis. Butler (1987) indicated that teachers should provide clear homework instructions. Students should understand the reason for the assignment. Teachers should also check students' homework and return it in a timely manner. Hinchey (1996) noted that one of the reasons students fail to submit homework assignments was that they do not see the value of homework when teachers do not return their assignments in a timely manner. She noted that when students fail to receive corrected homework assignments from the teacher, the students do not believe the homework is important. Columba (2001) stated

that teachers should collect and review homework in order to monitor students' progress and identify students' weaknesses.

Even though the present study used practice homework, not all researchers believe in its value. Begley (1998) believed that teachers should use creative homework assignments. She argued that one reason for the lack of a relationship between elementary students' academic achievement and homework is related to the difficulty of assigning creative application types of homework assignments in the lower grades. She was of the opinion that homework that duplicated class work was of no value to students. However, Huntsinger, Krieg, and Jose (1998) argued that drill and practice assignments were beneficial and should not be removed from the homework arena. They stated that many times teachers spend an enormous amount of time preparing creative assignments that do little to advance students academically.

Faulker and Blyth (1995) noted that teacher attitudes affect student completion of homework assignments. They argued that teachers need to be excited about homework. They need to collect it, check it, and return it in a timely manner. Students will therefore develop a positive attitude toward homework. However, Cooper, Lindsay, Nye, and Greathouse (1998) found that students whose teachers assigned more homework did not have attitudes that were as positive as students whose teachers assigned less homework.

An interaction exists between the student and the teacher's design of homework. Epstein and Van Voorhis (2001) noted that teachers should design homework that is beneficial to students. They argued that homework should effectively reinforce taught skills and promote communication with parents. Thus, students may benefit from homework and positive parental involvement may remain intact.

Margolis and McCabe (2004) noted that teachers can influence the academic success of struggling learners.

By matching task difficulty to struggling learners' instructional and independent levels, linking new work to recent successes, teaching them strategies that produce success, reinforcing effort and persistence, using peer models, stressing and teaching facilitative explanations for successes and failures, and helping them understand how schoolwork can help them achieve personally important goals, teachers can often strengthen struggling learners' self-efficacy. (p. 248)

Influences between the Home Environment and the Classroom Environment

An interaction exists between the parent's home and the teacher's classroom. The expectation for teachers to assign homework and for "parents to provide a quiet, well-lit place for the child to study" must consider "the parents' education, income, available time, and job security" (Kralovec & Buell, 2000, p. 7). Kralovec and Buell noted that the focus on high academic standards sometimes causes teachers to assign more homework so that parents will think they are tough and expect the best. Cooper (1989) noted that "homework can involve parents in the school process, enhancing their appreciation of education and allowing them to express positive attitudes toward their children's achievement" (p. 86). Feldman (2004) indicated that teachers should involve parents in the homework process by advising them as to the most helpful ways to assist their children. In fact, Hoover-Dempsey, Bassler, and Brissie (1992) noted that teachers "might regularly send home relatively specific instructions for parents about strategies for helping children with specific types of homework assignments" (p. 293).

Influences between the Student and School Behavior

Influences exist between the student and school academic behavior. Researchers have different views regarding the academic benefits of homework. However, “because the influences on homework are complex, no simple, general finding proving or disproving its utility is possible” (Cooper, 2001, p. XI). As previously mentioned, Huntsinger, Krieg, and Jose (1998) found that homework assigned to kindergarten and early elementary students improves academic achievement. They noted that students appear to benefit from practice on the basic skills outside of school hours. They also noted that students who completed more homework assignments attained higher academic levels than those who completed less homework.

On the other hand, Cooper (1994, 2001) and Muhlenbruck, Cooper, Nye, and Lindsey (2000) noted that homework at the elementary level does not affect academic achievement. However, he favors the assignment of homework at this level for the purpose of developing positive attitudes toward school. Additionally Cooper (2001) uncovered some interesting findings. The correlation between homework and academic outcomes “gets larger for subjects for which homework assignments are more likely to involve rote learning, practice, or rehearsal” (p. 29). He indicated that “students should be given simple assignments to improve achievement” (p. 61). Cooper also noted that homework should be assigned to younger students to “reinforce the basic skills learned in class” (p. 65).

Cooper, Jackson, Nye, and Lindsay (2001) found that elementary students’ attitudes toward homework were not associated with student grades or homework completion rates. In fact, Cooper, Lindsay, Nye, and Greathouse (1998) noted that

students who achieved low scores on standardized tests had more positive attitudes toward homework than those who achieved high scores on standardized tests. Cooper and his associates (Cooper et al., 2001) noted that a student could have a negative attitude toward homework and still achieve high grades and complete his/her homework

Influences between School Behavior and the Home Environment

An important influence exists between the school academic behavior and the home environment. Bempechat (2004) argued that many low-socioeconomic parents make sure that their children have a time and a place for homework completion. She also noted that they communicate their expectations for academic performance to their children. She further noted that they communicate their work situations to their children and their desire for their children to get an education so that their children will have a better life.

An article in *NEA Today* (“Helping your students...,” n.d.) stated that parents can facilitate the homework process by making sure that their children have well-balanced diets, get plenty of rest, and have a place to study which is free of distractions. This article along with Cooper, Lindsay, and Nye (2000), and Copper and Gersten (2003) stressed the importance of parental aid for young children. Cooper, Lindsay, and Nye (2000) studied parents’ involvement in the homework process. They found the existence of three phenomena: autonomy support, direct involvement, and elimination of distractions. They noted that low-socioeconomic students’ parents failed to promote as much autonomy or eliminate as many distractions as other groups.

Students who received parental help with their homework earned higher grades than those who receive no parental assistance (Fry, 2001). In fact, Cooper (2001) noted that parental assistance may be most beneficial to struggling learners in the early grades.

Hoover-Dempsey, Battiato, Walker, Reed, DeJong, and Jones (2001) found that parents' homework involvement, once engaged, includes a wide variety of activities, ranging from the establishment of home structures supportive of learning to complex patterns of interactive behavior intended to enhance the child's understanding of homework in particular and learning processes in general. The literature also suggests parents' involvement activities influence student outcomes through modeling, reinforcement, and instruction. (p. 206)

Ogbu (2003) noted that the parental involvement of African-American parents is a problem. Minorities

are mistrustful of schools and teachers, and they feel alienated. Their high aspirations and strong verbal endorsement of education are not matched with behavior that is conducive to school success. Parents and community members tend to hold teachers and schools, rather than their children, responsible for school performance. (p. 54)

Ogbu noted that insufficient homework assistance exists in low-, middle-, and professional African-American families with school-aged children. Wood (2003) summed the situation by stating that African-American parents verbally promote high achievement but do very little to help their children achieve it.

Trust is very important. As mentioned previously, minorities do not trust White schools and teachers (Ogbu, 2003). However, Ogbu noted that

pragmatic trust would make parents work more closely with teachers and other school officials because they would see the former as imparting useful skills and knowledge [sic] their children, things that they themselves could not provide. Children would observe their parents' attitudes and behaviors, internalize them, and approach their school learning as acquiring useful skills and information for their future. They would pay attention in class and do their schoolwork and homework. Rarely was schooling evaluated in terms of its instrumental or pragmatic function but more often was evaluated in the context of Black-White race relations. (p. 71)

Cooper and Gersten (2003) noted that parental involvement in the homework process could be helpful or harmful. They stated that parental involvement benefits are associated with the positive attitudes parents can portray to their children about education and its advantages. Involvement in the homework process also increased communication between the school and the home. Harmful effects identified by these researchers include parents doing homework for their children and parents' interfering with their children's learning process.

Influences between School Behavior and the Classroom Environment

Teachers have a role in the influence of student homework behavior. Teachers need to have performance standards for their assigned homework (Bempechat, 2004). Vockell (1993) and Willingham (2002) noted that homework should be assigned and coordinated in an appropriate manner. Vockell argued that homework should be related to material taught in the classroom. Willingham noted that students develop a better command of fact learning when the practice sessions are spaced or distributed over time

as opposed to crammed into one time period. Vockell delineated three ways teachers can make homework meaningful to students: assign practice homework after the students master the skill in class, make sure the students can complete an assignment before sending it home, and check homework and point out its value.

Willingham (2002) described an instructional method of spacing academic information that may be useful in schools. This method is distributed practice. The process involves identifying the facts and ideas that will be taught; preparing homework that includes recently taught material as well as material taught in the past; organizing tests in a manner that discourages cramming by exposing students to the material on the test several times so that the test is similar to practice opportunities; and using transitional time to question students about material previously taught. Also, skills should be taught in small portions that can be practiced through games, homework, and quizzes. Finally, the process should be explained to the students. Let them know that they will remember skills better if they return to them several times and avoid cramming.

Summary

Bandura's social cognitive theory (Bandura, 1977; 1986; 1997) was the theoretical perspective for the present study. Significant was Bandura's triadic, bidirectional, reciprocal causation model (Bandura, 1977). The present study proposed a modification of Bandura's triadic model to accommodate the dual environmental influences of both the classroom and home on the homework learning experience. This modified model was a hexadic, bidirectional reciprocal causation model that included the following influences: the student's cognitive and affective characteristics, the home environment, the classroom environment, and the student's academic school behaviors

(see Figure 2.2 for the six, bidirectional influences). Other relevant portions of this theory included modeling and self-efficacy.

From the literature, several relevant issues emerged. African-American and low-socioeconomic students may have lower readiness skills than other groups due to the following influences: summer loss; racism; parental attitudes toward education; insufficient parental readiness behaviors; poor attendance; poor quality preschool programs; large family size; insufficient financial resources and low maternal education (Bracey, 2003; Swick & Brown, 1994; Brooks-Gunn & Markman, 2005; Whitaker, 1996; Duncan & Magnuson, 2005; Sachs, 2005; Bushweller, 2004; Kafer, 2004). Because parental involvement positively influences academic attainments, homework may be beneficial to this group of children (Parker, Boak, Griffin, Ripple, & Peay, 1999; Hoover-Dempsey, Battiato, Walker, Reed, DeJong, & Jones, 2001). Because the education of the mother influences a child's readiness, educational interactions between the parents and the teacher may be helpful (Bushweller 2004; Parker, Boak, Griffin, Ripple, & Peay, 1999).

Homework policies are tools for communicating homework beliefs and expectations (Brewster & Fager, 2000). Such policies allow clearly defined interactions between the student, teacher, and parents (Cooper & Valentine, 2001).

The teacher's role in the homework process includes assigning the proper amount of homework to allow students to practice the skill (Van Voorhis, 2004). According to several researchers (Cooper, 1994; Butler, 1987; Sullivan & Sequoia, 1996), students in grades kindergarten through second may benefit from approximately 10 to 20 minutes of homework per night.

Five types of homework include practice, extension, review, completion, and extension (Butler, 1987; Roderique & Polloway, 1994; Nuzum, 1998). The present study employed practice homework because such homework may compensate for the students' lack of readiness skills.

Influences exist between the student and the home environment. Generally speaking, parental involvement positively influences students. However, one finding concerning low-socioeconomic, African-American parents is that lack of financial resources and communication skills, odd work schedules, time issues, and family responsibilities affect the quality of their involvement with their children (Lott, 2001). Another finding is that parental involvement in the homework process may be detrimental to students (Cooper, 1989; Kralovec & Buell, 2000). Therefore, homework completion may negatively influence school performance and it may disrupt the lives of the families of struggling learners.

Another influence is found between the student and the school environment. Teachers should have positive attitudes toward homework and promote self-efficacy to help struggling learners (Margolis & McCabe, 2004; Hoover-Dempsey, Bassler, and Brissie, 1992). Teachers need to assign appropriate amounts of homework to students (Van Voorhis, 2004) so as not to cause stress and take away from family time (Ratnesar, 1999). The assignment of practice homework (Huntsinger, Krieg, and Jose, 1998) and its return in a timely manner (Faulker and Blyth, 1995, Butler, 1987, & Hinchey, 1996) is beneficial to kindergarten students.

There is an influence between the home environment and the classroom environment. Even though teachers are expected to assign homework and parents are

expected to provide quiet, lighted areas for students' homework completion, teachers must consider parental barriers (such as income and time) to homework assistance (Kralovec & Buell, 2000). Teachers should involve parents in the homework process (Cooper, 1989, Feldman, 2004; Hoover-Dempsey, Bassler, & Brissie, 1992).

An influence exists between the student and school behavior. Some researchers believe homework learning experiences influence the academic achievement of kindergarten students (Huntsinger, Krieg, & Jose, 1998) and others do not (Cooper, 1994; 2001; Muhlenbruck, Cooper, Nye, & Lindsey, 2000). Elementary students' attitudes toward homework were not associated with homework completion or grades (Cooper, Jackson, Nye, & Lindsay, 2001).

The next influence is between school behavior and the classroom environment. Bempechat, (2004) believes strongly in the assignment of homework to promote academic development (Bempechat, 2004). Teachers need to have performance standards for students' completed homework assignments (Bempechat, 2004). Homework should correlate with classroom study. Distributed practice divides lessons into small amounts and exposes it to students several times before they are tested on it (Willingham, 2002).

The last influence is between school behavior and the home environment. Researchers noted the positive effects of parental involvement by low-socioeconomic parents (Bempechat, 2004; Cooper, 2001). However, some researchers noted that these parents failed to promote as much autonomy or eliminate as many distractions as other groups (Cooper, Lindsay, & Nye, 2000). One researcher (Ogbu, 2003) noted that African-American parents do not trust the educational system and that they tend to hold

the school and teachers responsible for their children's school success. They do, however, verbally endorse high academic standards. Thus, increased involvement in the homework process by African-American parents might influence school academic behavior.

CHAPTER 3

METHODOLOGY

According to Creswell (2002), a qualitative study should be conducted in natural settings, include the researcher as the data collection instrument, and involve an inductive analyzing of the data. The present study met the requirements for the qualitative approach based on the following reasons. The research took place in the natural settings of the students' classroom and the students' homes. The researcher was the primary data collection instrument. Finally, the researcher inductively analyzed the data collected from the expressed views of the students, parents, teacher and paraprofessional. More specifically, this study was well suited to a qualitative study because it explored how students' cognitive and affective processes, the parents' home and the teacher's classroom environments, and the students' school behaviors influenced the homework experiences of low-socioeconomic, African-American, kindergarten students. Given the lack of research on homework at the kindergarten grade level and for low-socioeconomic, African-American students, this exploratory study helped to develop an explanation of the homework learning experience for this population.

Research Method

The specific qualitative method used to conduct this study was the interpretive case study method (Merriam, 1998). Merriam noted that the interpretive case study is used to provide an intensive holistic description and an inductive working model for understanding why and how a phenomenon functions. This method is particularistic because the focus was on the multiple influences involved in the homework experiences of a specific group of low-socioeconomic, African-American, kindergarten students;

descriptive because a richly detailed depiction of the interactive homework influences resulted from the study; and heuristic because an inductively constructed working model was used to explain the interactive homework influences. This method was used so an in-depth understanding of some of the multiple influences involved in the homework learning experiences of a selected sample of low-socioeconomic, African-American, kindergarten students could be obtained.

Researcher's Role

The researcher collected and evaluated homework assignments; interviewed students, parents, the teacher and the paraprofessional; and analyzed homework assignments and weekly quizzes. Semi-structured interviews were used for the parents, the students, the teacher and the paraprofessional that consisted of a mix of more- and less-structured questions related to the research questions. Thus, the researcher was the primary research instrument for data collection and analysis for this qualitative study (Horsburg, 2003; Merriam, 1998).

Research Settings

The research settings consisted of the school including the students' classroom and the students' homes. The school contained grades kindergarten through five and some exceptional student classes. Of the approximate 450 students, about 98% were African-American and 2% are Caucasian. Seventy-five percent of the students were zoned to attend the school while 25% percent of the students were lottery identified fine-arts magnet students. The school zone was composed of rural and urban areas.

Based on the school profile obtained from the principal, 95% of the families of students enrolled in the school were in the lower-socioeconomic level. Also, 95% of the

students were transported to and from school by bus. A number of students resided in non-traditional settings with guardianships taken on by aunts, uncles, grandparents, and older sisters and brothers.

There were five kindergarten classrooms that were similarly constructed. The students were randomly chosen from one of the kindergarten classrooms. This classroom contained 20 low-socioeconomic, African American students. The students were seated at tables ranging from four to six students per table. There was a gathering area for whole group instruction. Small group work was carried out at the tables. There was an area for book bags and coats. Centers included reading, math, writing, science, and computer. Furthermore, two restrooms, a sink, and a water fountain were included in the classroom.

Participants

The participants for this study were 10 low-socioeconomic, African-American, kindergarten students and their parents, the teacher, and the paraprofessional. The 10 kindergarten students were in the preoperational stage of Piaget's (Huitt & Hummel, 2003) developmental process. Thus, they were egocentric nonreaders in process of developing their language skills. Five of the students possessed relatively low-school readiness as measured by the GKAP pre-test of skills administered at the beginning of the school year. The other five students possessed relatively high-school readiness as measured by the GKAP pre-test of skills administered at the beginning of the school year. A two-level purposeful sampling was used to select information-rich cases for in-depth study (Merriam, 1998). The first sampling level required the selection of students by preset criteria: low-socioeconomic, African-American, and kindergarten students. The

second sampling level required selection of a smaller sample to allow for an in-depth focus. Because variation in school-readiness may be important, the researcher selected five students with low-school readiness and five students with relatively high-school readiness. These students were selected using the baseline GKAP scores and eligibility for free or reduced lunch. The highest and lowest scoring students were omitted.

It is important to note that the low-readiness students and even the relatively high-readiness students may still possess lower readiness than the average middle-class student. Even though the researcher believed that all low-socioeconomic, African-American, kindergarten students would benefit from homework, it is possible that a certain minimum level of readiness may be necessary for students to experience the full benefit of homework.

The parents were in the lower socioeconomic bracket. Eight of the students qualified for free lunch and two qualified for reduced lunch. Five students were from two-parent homes and five were from single-family homes. As a whole, the parents were generally cooperative and showed signs of concern for their children's educations. All of the interviewed parents were mothers.

The kindergarten teacher was in the process of becoming certified in the state of Georgia. She has taught grades four and seven in the state of Florida. She holds a degree in business administration and is currently pursuing a master's degree in computer science. During this investigation, she was studying for the teacher certification test so that she can work as a certified elementary teacher in the state of Georgia. She was a dedicated, hard working individual. The other kindergarten teachers spoke highly of her. One teacher stated that she was "energetic and excited about teaching. She wants to do

everything right and doesn't procrastinate. The kids seem to be doing well. She has a good rapport with parents and is easy to work with." Another teacher stated that she was a "team player, easy to work with and has a positive attitude toward the children and the peer teachers. She knows the curriculum and how to implement it." Another kindergarten teacher stated that she was "doing a good job. She is motivated, dedicated, open to new ideas, and easy to get along with. She keeps up with everything." The kindergarten teacher stated that she loves teaching and plans to make teaching a lifetime career.

The paraprofessional is in her second year of employment at this elementary school. She was a former pre-kindergarten assistant at the vocational technical school. She is presently taking classes toward a degree in early childhood education. Her goal is to become a school principal.

Instruments

The instruments used included the GKAP (Georgia Department of Education, 2005) and county-mandated tests that assess skills not tested by the GKAP; homework assignments; the record of homework completion and accuracy and quizzes; and the semi-structured interviews. The GKAP pre-test consisted of items from the GKAP test. All pre-test items except one will be included on the first report card grading period. The remaining item will be included on the third report card grading period. The GKAP pre-test items have been designated as items that (when successfully performed) indicate readiness for kindergarten. The GKAP baseline tests included the following student assessments: correctly writing first name; correctly holding a book and demonstrating left to right/top to bottom progression; drawing a kindergarten appropriate picture and writing

about it using correctly spelled or correctly phonetically spelled words; correctly identifying all upper and lower case letters; blending sounds to form words; correctly counting by rote from zero to ten; recognizing numerals from zero to ten; identifying six basic geometric shapes (circle, square, oval, diamond, rectangle, and triangle); identifying physical relationships of an object (top, bottom, inside, outside, front, and back); and following the teacher's directions.

The GKAP was a state mandated test required of all students attending kindergarten in the state of Georgia. It was a performance-based test that is administered throughout the year. The inter-observer reliability rate of .83 was identified for this assessment (Cramer, Benson, & Kim, 1999). GKAP skills in addition to the pre-tested baseline skills included: blends sounds orally to make words; counts the number of elements in a set and writes the number; determines equivalence between two sets up to five; sorts geometric shapes by size, shape, and color; responds to literal, inferential, and evaluative questions; sequences pictures to tell a story and interprets pictures to predict logical outcomes; copies letters; associates sounds with letters; uses words indicating relationships; continues simple patterns; names and identifies coins and the dollar bill; compares lengths; constructs and interprets graphs; models, acts out, and uses a pictures to solve simple mathematical problems; and blends sounds orally to read words.

Academic skills were mandated by the county. These skills were taught along with the GKAP skills in this county. These skills included: identifying colors; identifying body parts; knowledge of personal information; printing last name; recognizing color words; recognizing number words; reciting the days of the week; reciting the months of the year; verbalizing short vowel sounds when shown the vowel letter; recognizing sight

words on the county word list; counting the number of elements in a set and writing the corresponding numerals between eleven and twenty; determining equivalence between two sets up to ten; using objects, pictures, numbers or words to create and solve story problems for two numbers that are each less than ten; sequencing and identifying ordinal numbers first through tenth; recognizing time on the hour; recognizing fractional parts of a whole; and identifying the value of coins.

The homework assignments were primarily paper and pencil practice assignments. Practice assignments strengthen newly taught skills and are most helpful when distributed after a recently taught skill (Sullivan & Sequoia, 1996). Each week one to two skills were covered. The content of the assignments corresponded to the GKAP and/or county skills. The homework was divided into small units for Monday through Wednesday; while Thursday's homework involved knowledge of all units taught that week.

The Friday quizzes were based on the skill(s) taught during a particular week. The quiz items were directly related to the GKAP and/or county skills. The state provides each school with GKAP quizzes, and the county provides each school with county quizzes. The quizzes were performance-based tasks that required students to actively demonstrate GKAP and county skills with primarily hands on activities.

The record of homework completion and accuracy and quizzes consisted of a list of the participants, documentation as to whether the assignment was completed, documentation of the accuracy of the completed assignment, and quiz grades. Percentage grades were assigned. For example, if the homework consisted of ten items, each item would be worth 10 points. Thus if the student missed one item, a grade of 90 would be

assigned. The instructional objectives were related to state or county requirements. Each parent received a list, explanation, and schedule of the instructed skills.

Semi-structured interviews for parents and students consisted of a mix of more- and less-structured questions related to the research questions (Merriam, 1998).

According to Merriam,

Usually, specific information is desired from all the respondents, in which case there is a highly structured section to the interview. But the largest part of the interview is guided by a list of questions or issues to be explored, and neither the exact wording nor the order to the questions is determined ahead of time. This format allows the researcher to respond to the situation at hand, to the emerging worldview of the respondents, and to new ideas on the topic. (p.74)

A student and her parent in a kindergarten classroom other than the one being studied were interviewed to determine the appropriateness of the questions. Based on that experience, the researcher found that most of the questions were appropriate. The parent interview lasted 40 minutes and the student interview lasted 30 minutes. The parent interview questions appeared appropriate and the parent had no trouble responding to them. Because the student interviewed appeared to be a high-readiness student, some of the student interview questions had to be revised for the lower-readiness students. Table 3.1 summarizes the instruments used according to the participants and time line.

Procedures

This study took place during the first twelve weeks of the 2006-2007 school year. Permission to conduct the study was obtained from the principal of the school. IRB approval was obtained (See Appendix A for IRB Approval Letter). During the first two

weeks, all students were given the GKAP baseline test. This test is not optional and is required of all kindergarten students who attend public schools in the state of Georgia. At the end of the two weeks, five relatively high readiness students and five relatively

Table 3.1

Data Collection Matrix

Data Source	Participants	Time Line
GKAP Baseline Tests	10 Kindergarten Students	First two weeks of the 2006-2007 school year
GKAP and County-Mandated Test Items	10 Kindergarten Students	Once per week during seven-week period
Record of Homework Completion and Accuracy and Quizzes	10 Kindergarten Students	Monday through Friday during seven-week period
Homework Assignments	10 Kindergarten Students	Monday through Thursday during seven-week period
Semi-structured Interviews	10 Kindergarten Parents	Once during the fourth, fifth, sixth, and seventh weeks
Semi-structured Interviews	10 Kindergarten Students	Once during the fourth, fifth and sixth weeks
Semi-structured Interview	Kindergarten teacher	Once during the seven week period
Semi-structured Interview	Paraprofessional	Once during the seven week period
Interview		

low readiness students were chosen. Parents of these students were contacted to determine their participation interest. Upon receiving an affirmative response, the parents were required to sign a consent form (see Appendix B for an example of the consent form). Once I received the signed consent forms, I read my assent form to the parents' children and had them print their names. (I read the form because the kindergarten students did not have the reading skills for independent comprehension and completion.) (See Appendix C for an example of the assent form.)

Students were given three weeks following GKAP baseline testing to become fully accustomed to the homework process. Homework was given Monday through Thursday, collected, graded and placed in each student's cubby for placement in the Friday folder.

The study began the sixth week of the 2006-2007 school year. The skills covered included: identifying uppercase and lowercase letters of the alphabet; recognizing and selecting the numerals from 0 through 10; determining equivalence between two sets up to five (same, equal; more, greater; and fewer, less); and sorting geometric shapes by color, shape, and size. Table 3.2 shows a breakdown of the skills and an example of one activity that was covered for the seven weeks. (Appendix D shows examples of a mathematics and a reading homework assignment.)

Each week for seven weeks, the activities were used for all students Monday through Thursday. Homework was assigned and collected for all students Monday through Thursday. All student participant homework was graded, noted in the record of homework completion and accuracy and quizzes, and sent home in the students' Friday folders. A quiz was given each Friday to all students on the activity (ies) taught for the

week. All student participant quizzes were graded and recorded in the record of homework completion and accuracy and quizzes.

Table 3.2

Skills Taught and One Activity Example for Seven Weeks

Week	Skill	Activity
Week 6	Identifying letters Aa – Ff.	Flash cards
	Identifying numbers 0-5.	Game
Week 7	Identifying letters Gg – Mm.	Alphabet Bingo
Week 8	Identifying letters Nn – Ss.	Flash cards
	Identifying numbers 6-10.	Game
Week 9	Identifying letters Tt - Zz.	Alphabet Bingo
Week 10	Sorting by color.	Placing different colored objects in correct piles
	Equivalence – Same	Using manipulatives to make two sets that are the same
Week 11	Sorting by shape.	Placing different colored shapes in correct piles.
	Equivalence – More	Using manipulatives to show more.

Week 12	Sorting by size. Equivalence – Fewer	Placing big and little shapes in piles. Using manipulatives to show fewer.
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The record of homework completion and accuracy and quizzes was organized as followed. Three items of information were included: one item was whether or not the student completed the homework assignment; a second item was the accuracy of the homework; and the third item was the quiz scores. This information was kept on all 10 participants.

Semi-structured oral interviews were used to gather parents' self-reports regarding homework and the methods parents used to assist their children with their homework (See Appendix E for a list of relevant questions). The researcher performed one home visit per participant during the fourth, fifth, sixth, and seventh week of the study. During each visit, the researcher greeted the parent(s), conducted the interview, and documented information about the home environment. The home environment information included the area where homework was completed, lighting, space, noise and other factors deemed relevant. A tape recorder was used to ensure completeness and accuracy. The interviews took between 40 and 45 minutes.

Semi-structured interviews were used to gather students' self-reports regarding homework. (See Appendix F for a list of relevant questions.) Each student was interviewed privately in his/her home either the same day or different day from that

particular child's parent interview. The researcher wrote each response in the students' words following each interview question and recorded relevant body language and facial expressions as they responded. A tape recorder was used to ensure the accuracy and completeness of student responses.

A semi-structured oral interview was used to gather the kindergarten's teacher's self-reports regarding homework attitudes, values, and procedures. (See Appendix G for a list of relevant questions.) One interview was done during the seventh week of the study.

A semi-structured oral interview was used to gather the paraprofessional's self-reports regarding homework attitudes, values, and procedures. (See Appendix H for a list of relevant questions.) One interview was done during the seventh week of the study.

Data Management

The two types of data collected in the present study included interview data and the record of homework completion and accuracy and quiz data. All data were kept in a locked cabinet that was only available to the researcher. As far as the interview data was concerned, notes and tape recordings were transcribed after each interview so that information relevant to the study could be remembered. This method is highly recommended by Merriam (1998) because it allows the researcher to become thoroughly acquainted with the data. Also, verbatim transcription afforded more information for analysis.

The record of homework completion and accuracy and quizzes data was documented daily. The homework completion and accuracy section was documented Monday through Thursday, and the quiz section was documented on Friday. The

accuracy of the homework and quizzes was based on one-hundred percent. For example, if there were five items, and the student correctly answered four of the five items, the quiz score would be eighty per cent.

To facilitate data analysis, the three types of data were coded using three colored pens. Orange was used to identify the personal processes; blue was used to identify the academic behavior; and green was used to identify the environmental influences. Coding facilitated retrieval of the data for analysis. Each student participant was given a pseudonym and his/her age and readiness level was included in his/her discussion of the findings. To facilitate analysis, interview data was placed on a Triadic Reciprocity form. (See Appendix I for Triadic Reciprocity forms.)

Data Analysis

The constant comparative method (Dick, 2005) was used to analyze the data (Boeije, 2002). The researcher continually compared the data collected (Dick) which contributed to on-going data collection. “Because the basic strategy of the constant comparative methods is compatible with the inductive, concept-building orientation of all qualitative research, the constant comparative method of data analysis has been adopted by many researchers who are not seeking to build substantive theory” (Merriam, 1998. p. 159).

In the present study, interview data was continually compared with interview data; and homework completion and accuracy and quiz data was continually compared with homework completion and quiz data. Also homework completion and accuracy and quiz data was continually compared to interview data.

Thus, continual comparisons led to provisional categories that were compared to each other and to additional pieces of data. The constant comparative method assisted in the determination of likenesses and variations as the data was collected (Merriam, 1998). In other words, the first set of data and notes were reviewed, and categories were made. After the second set of data and notes were reviewed, they were compared to the first set. Categories were added to or created when needed. This process continued until all data were collected.

The results of the constant comparative method allowed the identification of patterns and themes. This information led to the discussion of the homework influences.

Verification of Analysis

The data were verified by triangulation. “In triangulation, a researcher deploys “different methods”-such as interviews, census data, and documents-to ‘validate’ findings” (Denzin & Lincoln, 2003, p. 517). Two of the four types of triangulation (Patton, 2002) that are relevant to the present study include triangulation of methods and triangulation of sources. Triangulation of methods involves “checking out the consistency of findings generated by different data collection methods” (p. 556). An example relevant to the present study would be checking interview data with quiz data. Triangulation of sources involves “checking out the consistency of different data sources within the same method” (p. 556). An example relevant to the present study would be checking student interview data with parent interview data.

Constant comparison and purposeful sampling promoted external validity in the present study. “Constant comparison is connected with external validity. When the sampling has been conducted well in a reasonably homogeneous sample, there is a solid

basis for generalizing the concepts and the relations between them to units that were absent from the sample, but which represent the same phenomenon” (Boeije, 2002, p. 393). External validity will be further promoted by the researcher’s provision of a “rich, thick description” of the research in order to allow readers to compare their situations to this investigation (Merriam, 1998, p. 211).

Summary of Methodology

The qualitative study employed the interpretative case-study method to understand the influences on the homework learning experiences of 10 low-socioeconomic, African-American, kindergarten students. After receiving permission from the principal at the selected school to conduct this study, IRB approval was obtained. The students’ homes and the students’ classroom served as research settings. The participants were 10 low-socioeconomic, African-American, kindergarten students and their mothers, the kindergarten teacher, and the kindergarten paraprofessional. Five of the students possessed relatively high school readiness according to the GKAP pre-test, while five of the students possessed relatively low school readiness according to the GKAP pre-test. Instruments included the GKAP and county-mandated tests; homework assignments; the record of homework completion and accuracy and quizzes; and the semi-structured interviews of the parents and the students.

The GKAP pre-test was administered during the first two weeks of school and the student participants and their parents were selected. The highest scoring and lowest scoring students were omitted. Signed consent forms from the parents and signed assent forms from the students were obtained. Three weeks later began the seven-week period of homework collections Monday through Thursday and quiz collections on Friday. During

this period the parents (all mothers), students, teacher and paraprofessional were interviewed; and the record of homework completion and accuracy and quiz grades were kept.

During the data collection phase, the data were coded, and the constant comparative method was then used to analyze the data. Patterns and themes were extracted. The data were verified by triangulation, two-level purposeful sampling, and the writing of a “rich, thick description” (Merriam, 1998, p. 211) of the findings.

CHAPTER 4

RESULTS

Based on Bandura's social cognitive theory, this case study of kindergarten students' homework learning experiences investigated three interactive homework influences including personal processes, environmental conditions, and school behavior. First, the student data is presented in two major sections: student data and homework analysis. The student data section consists of the findings for each of the 10 students. The following results are provided for each of the students: student description including readiness levels from the GKAP, teacher, and paraprofessional; personal processes related to homework; personal processes related to grades; home environmental resources and environmental barriers; and environmental facilitators. Additionally, teacher data and paraprofessional data will be presented.

Second, the section on the analysis of homework experiences across students is presented. For this section, three areas of homework influence organize the information, and emergent patterns for each of these areas are revealed.

Presentation of Student Data

Devantae

General Description of Student

Devantae is an African American male who as of August 21, 2006 is five-years and three months old. He is from a single-parent home and receives reduced lunch. He is a low-readiness student per GKAP testing. The paraprofessional rated him two on a one to four readiness scale with one as the lowest readiness level and four as the highest readiness level. The teacher rated him three. He appeared calm and alert during the

interview; however, the teacher and paraprofessional described him as sleepy during classroom instruction.

Personal Processes Related to Homework

Devantae believes that homework is helpful. He stated that homework helps him learn by “writing alphabets, writing sentences, writing words, [sic] reading.” This view is shared by his mother and his teacher. However, the paraprofessional stated that as far as homework is concerned, “he would rather not have it.” Even though Devantae voiced a positive attitude about homework, his mother described his attitude as merely “OK” and the paraprofessional identified his attitude as neutral. Devantae voiced little motivation for completing his homework. This view was shared by his mom, the teacher, and the paraprofessional. In fact, his mother stated that “he feels ...that he has to do his homework or his teacher gonna [sic] say something to him about not doing his homework.” Devantae and his mom spoke of his high value of homework. His mother stated that his rating would be “10 out of 10.” However, the teacher and paraprofessional believe his value of homework is low. In fact, the paraprofessional described it as “real low.” Devantae’s mother believes he can work independently. This view is not shared by the teacher or the paraprofessional. Devantae and his mother both believe that he can do the homework and all parties believe that he expects to be able to complete his homework accurately.

Personal Processes Related to Grades

Devantae stated that he believes that homework helps him make better grades and that he is “happy” when he makes good grades. His mother, teacher and the paraprofessional confirm his belief. His mother stated that

I'd say both of them [homework completion and grades] kind of go in together.

When you do one, like if he does his homework, then he'll come with 'I did that at home but this look like my homework did' with his schoolwork. So homework does help out.

Devantae wants good grades, believes he can make good grades and expects to make good grades if he does all of his homework. Devantae voiced that he expects to get "happy faces" if he does all of his homework. His mother, the teacher and the paraprofessional support his belief and expectation.

Homework Accuracy and Quiz Data

Devantae's homework accuracy grades ranged from weekly averages of 73 to 100 and his quiz grades ranged from 88 to 100 (A: 100–90, B: 89–80, C: 79–70, D: 69–60, F: below 60). Spelling was not a part of the present study; however, the teacher indicated that he failed every spelling test administered during the seven-week period.

Home Environmental Resources and Environmental Barriers

Devantae's mother indicated that she could assist her child better with an encyclopedia and a computer. She voiced three barriers to homework success. Devantae's "sister might come in and ask for a pencil or a crayon or something. The telephone may ring. Someone may knock at the door." Devantae indicated that he does his homework late at night after television and play despite the fact that his mother voiced that he does his homework "right after school." Barriers to homework success expressed by the teacher and paraprofessional included the temperature in the room, misbehavior of other students, attending to other students' conversations, the intercom, and persons entering the classroom.

Environmental Facilitators

Several homework facilitators were uncovered. Devantae's mother stated that homework does not interfere with other activities and that it is completed in a quiet environment right after school. She assists her child between 45 minutes to one hour each evening and believes that the amount of homework is adequate and that its level is appropriate. She believes that parents should spend about one hour per day helping their children with their homework. Devantae's mother indicated that the teacher feels comfortable assigning homework and that she supports homework completion by the students. His mother stated that one of the benefits of homework is "I can actually see what he is doing in school and we can go over what he has done in school." Devantae's mother reported praising him ("Good job") when he completes all of his homework. Devantae stated that his mother helps him with his homework and that what he learns in class helps him.

The following is an example of how Devantae's mother might assist him with his homework.

I tell him to put his name on it and date it. Then I read the directions and I let him read them so he can understand them. Then we go on to the first question and so forth until we finish. If he has another sheet, we start on the other sheet. I make sure his letters are neat and on the line.

The teacher and paraprofessional identified several homework facilitators. These included going over skills several times, praise, individual attention, and use of firmness when assisting him.

Devantae's mother stated that he completes his homework in either the kitchen or the living room. In the kitchen, he completes it at the kitchen table surrounded by four chairs. In the living room, he completes it at the coffee table sitting on his little sofa. In addition to the living room and the kitchen, Devantae stated that he sometimes completes his homework in his room.

Tavarius

General Description of Student

Tavarius is an African American male who as of August 21, 2006 is five-years and five months old. He is from a two-parent home and receives reduced lunch. He has two older siblings. He is a low-readiness student per GKAP testing. The paraprofessional rated him a one on a one to four readiness scale with one as the lowest level and four as the highest level. The teacher rated him three. Tavarius seemed calm and alert during the interview; however, the teacher and paraprofessional described him as sleepy and lethargic during classroom instruction.

Personal Processes Related to Homework

Tavarius stated that he feels "good" about homework. His mother shares his views; however, the teacher stated that "he just does it but has no real understanding of it." The paraprofessional described his attitude as "neutral." Nevertheless, Tavarius indicated that the teacher helps him with his homework by reading the instructions on the homework that will be returned the next day. The teacher and paraprofessional indicated that Tavarius has no motivation to complete his homework. However, his answer to the question "What would happen if you did not do your homework?" was "You would get it wrong. You wouldn't learn." Tavarius expects to be able to complete his homework

accurately, believes that he has been doing well on his homework, and that he has improved. His mother and paraprofessional share this view. Tavarius's mother indicated that as far as his value of homework is concerned, "sometimes he sees it as good and sometimes not." This view was shared by the teacher and the paraprofessional. The teacher, the paraprofessional, and Tavarius's mother believe that Tavarius can not work independently.

Personal Processes Related to Grades

Tavarius feels "good" about making good grades and stated that he would get "good" grades if he completed all of his homework. He believes that making good grades is important and that homework will improve his grades. These views are shared by his mother and the paraprofessional. However, as previously stated, the teacher does not believe that he has a full understanding of the homework process and its value.

Homework Accuracy and Quiz Data

Tavarius's homework accuracy grades ranged from weekly averages of 73 to 100 (A: 100–90, B: 89–80, C: 79–70, D: 69–60, F: below 60), while his quiz grades ranged from 21 to 100. His four failing grades were quiz grades. They were 21, 59, 64, and 65. It is noteworthy that Tavarius's mother was interested in helping him remember his spelling words despite the fact that spelling is not a part of the kindergarten curriculum until January.

Home Environmental Resources and Environmental Barriers

Tavarius's mother indicated that she needed additional materials to better assist him. However, she failed to attend her scheduled parent conference. At this conference, additional materials were distributed to the parents by the teacher. His mother voiced

two barriers to success. One was “if his sister is finished with her homework and gets to go outside, he’s distracted by that.” Another was that she has a problem helping him remembering words for the spelling test. Tavarius indicated that the homework was “too long.” Barriers expressed by the teacher included someone walking in the door, someone talking out loud, and any noise. Additional barriers noted by the paraprofessional included the intercom, lecturing too long, and the manipulatives on the table used for instruction.

Environmental Facilitators

Several homework facilitators were uncovered. Tavarius’s mother stated that when she helps Tavarius, “he gets a better understanding” and “it improves his grades.” Tavarius stated that he gets homework help from his mother, father, grandma, and granddad. Both Tavarius and his mother stated that homework is completed after school before play or TV. However, it is noteworthy that the while the student and his siblings are completing homework, his mother stated that “the TV may be on.” Tavarius’s mother stated that the amount of homework Tavarius completes each day is two to three pages and that this amount is adequate. No one bothers him while he’s doing his homework. His mother also stated that the type of homework was appropriate. Tavarius’s mother spends about 10 minutes each day helping her child with homework. She stated that it takes him about 45 minutes to complete the homework and that homework completion should take “no longer than one hour.” She helps her child by teaching him how to stay on the lines (when writing), pronouncing his words, reviewing letters by using flash cards with the letter and picture on it, and writing words over and over for spelling tests. Tavarius’s mother encourages Tavarius to complete his homework with treats and when

he finishes his homework, she reported saying “Good job.” She also stated that homework does not interfere with family activities. His mother stated that she believes that the teacher thinks homework is important and that she supports homework completion by the students. This response is correlated by Tavarius who stated that the teacher goes over the instructions for the homework.

The teacher and the paraprofessional voiced several facilitators. These included extensive repetition, extensive one-on-one assistance, extensive hands-on work, small group work, and firmness.

Tavarius’s mother indicated that Tavarius completes his homework at the kitchen table. The table was a neat glass table with four chairs. This answer was not completely correlated by the child who stated that he completed his homework in the living room, his mother’s room, and the kitchen. When asked where he completed it most of the time, he said the living room. The living room contained a sofa, love seat, coffee table and large television set.

Shaneeka

General Description of Student

Shaneeka is an African American female who as of August 21, 2006 is five-years and two months old. She is from a single parent home and receives free lunch. She has two older siblings and is a low-readiness student per GKAP testing. The paraprofessional rated her three on a one to four readiness scale with one as the lowest level and four as the highest level. The teacher rated her four. It is noteworthy that both the teacher and the paraprofessional shared with me their feelings that the research study motivated Shaneeka’s mother to work with her and that they saw a significant amount of

improvement in her academic accomplishments during the data collection phase.

Shaneeka appeared calm during the interview. Both the teacher and the paraprofessional stated that at the beginning of the year, the student was sleepy, but now she is alert and on task.

Personal Processes Related to Homework

Shaneeka believes that homework is important for learning and she feels “good” about it. She is highly motivated to complete her homework because she wants “to pass to the first grade.” She believes that she is doing well on her homework and that she has improved. She expects to perform better on future homework assignments. Shaneeka’s mother, the teacher, and the paraprofessional agree with these views. Her mother also indicated that she believes that homework helps her child with her school work.

Shaneeka’s mother, the teacher, and the paraprofessional stated that Shaneeka is able to work independently.

Personal Processes Related to Grades

Shaneeka likes making good grades and believes that making good grades is important. She also believes that completing her homework assignments helps her make better grades. Her mother stated “for example, her spelling words [sic]. She likes to go over her spelling words so she makes sure she’ll have a 100 on Friday.” Thus Shaneeka expects to make better grades if she completes all of her homework, and believes her grades will continue to be high. She stated that she knows she is doing well on her homework because she gets “happy faces.” Her mother, the teacher, and the paraprofessional are in agreement with these factors.

Homework Accuracy and Quiz Data

Shaneeka's homework accuracy grades ranged from weekly averages of 67 to 100 (A: 100–90, B: 89–80, C: 79–70, D: 69–60, F: below 60), and her quiz grades ranged from 86 to 100. Generally speaking, her grades improved over the seven-week period.

Home Environmental Resources and Environmental Barriers

Shaneeka's mother stated that she has adequate resources to assist Shaneeka with her homework. She further stated that right now there is nothing difficult enough to require additional resources. Barriers to Shaneeka's homework experience are relatively nonexistent. Her mother stated that the only problem is that sometimes Shaneeka does not want her help. The teacher and the paraprofessional voiced no barriers to her success in the classroom environment and indicated that she is not bothered by distractions. Shaneeka stated that the only thing that bothers her when she does her homework is "something [an insect] crawling" on her.

Environmental Facilitators

Several homework facilitators were discovered. Shaneeka stated that she gets help from her mother, sister, and brother. Her mother gives her practice spelling tests every other day. When Shaneeka has to study her spelling words, her mother uses repetition. "Like her spelling words...I write them myself and have her write them five times behind my words." Her mother also pronounces the words and lets Shaneeka spell them. She helps Shaneeka with sounds by sounding-out words. She helps her learn vowels by saying the sound of the vowel and letting Shaneeka repeat it.

Shaneeka's mother stated that when she helps Shaneeka, it makes it easier on Shaneeka because she can intervene if there are any problems. Shaneeka's mother

believes that the amount of homework assigned and the homework assignments themselves are appropriate. Her mother stated that she thinks the teacher likes to give homework so the students will have something to do. She continued by stating that “when they [the students] come back the next day, they will have improved a little bit.” Thus, she believes that the teacher supports homework completion by the students.

Shaneeka takes about 30 to 45 minutes to do her homework and her mother stated that homework should not take longer than one hour in this grade. Homework is done before TV or play. Shaneeka’s mother encourages her to complete her homework by giving her the opportunity to engage in an activity of her choice when she finishes. When Shaneeka finishes her homework, her mother reported saying “Good job.”

The teacher and paraprofessional indicated homework facilitators. They noted that Shaneeka participates in class, attends to the lessons taught, asks questions, and learns from her mistakes. They further stated that she is mastering the skills taught. The teacher stated that she only needs to “hear instructions one time” and she is able to successfully complete her class work.

Shaneeka’s mother stated that she usually completes her homework at the kitchen table or in the living room. The kitchen table is a small table with four chairs. The table cloth had been moved up possibly indicating the place where homework was done. The living room is small. There is a small coffee table with items moved to the center indicating that homework may have been completed here. These places of homework completion matched Shaneeka’s responses.

*Eldridge**General Description of Student*

Eldridge is an African American male who as of August 21, 2006 is five-years and six months old. He is from a two-parent home and receives free lunch. He has no siblings and is a low-readiness student per GKAP testing. Both the teacher and the paraprofessional rated him four on a one to four readiness scale with one as the lowest level and four as the highest level. It is significant that the teacher and the paraprofessional spoke of the high level of support provided to Eldridge by his mother. He appeared calm and cooperative during the interview.

Personal Processes Related to Homework

Eldridge feels “great” about the homework assigned by the teacher and does his homework so he can “get an education.” His mother believes that homework helps Eldridge understand his school work. She stated that when he gets home, she asks “What did you learn in school today?” She makes sure he works on these skills at home. Eldridge’s mother indicated that he is capable of working independently; however, the need for supervision depends on the task. Eldridge believes that he is doing well on his homework, that he has improved, and that he will do well in the future. His mother stated

right now he thinks it’s [homework] very important because he sees that I get on him about it. In the beginning of the school year he didn’t think it was about nothing [sic]. He was like “Oh, I’m just going to school mama.” But I had to show him the value of it.

The teacher and paraprofessional agree that Eldridge likes homework and is eager to learn.

Personal Processes Related to Grades

Eldridge likes making good grades, believes that making good grades is important, and believes that homework helps him perform well on his tests. In fact, he completes his homework so that he “can get 100’s” on his tests and he expects to make 100’s on his tests. His mother stated that he has made “100 on every spelling test.” She believes that Eldridge believes that homework is important and that there is a positive relationship between his enthusiasm to complete his homework and his grades. However, she voiced that his grades are better than his attitude toward homework. The teacher and the paraprofessional believe that Eldridge likes good grades and believes that homework improves his grades. They disagree with his mother about his attitude. They believe his attitude toward homework is positive. It is possible that his mother is relating his distractibility to his attitude.

Homework Accuracy and Quiz Data

Eldridge’s grades are very good. His homework accuracy grades range from 73 to 100 while his quiz grades range from 94 to 100 (A: 100–90, B: 89–80, C: 79–70, D: 69–60, F: below 60). He made 100 on every quiz except one.

Home Environmental Resources and Environmental Barriers

Eldridge’s mother has adequate resources at home to help him with his homework. She has paper, pencils, writing tablets, crayons, Leap Frog, and flash cards. As far as barriers to success are concerned, Eldridge’s mother stated that more homework should be assigned to the students. However, she compensates by creating work for her child. Eldridge indicated that he cannot accurately complete his homework when the directions are not read to him. He also voiced that sometimes he does not always “pay

attention.” He stated that when he is completing his homework and his mother and father are talking, he asks them to “be quiet.” The teacher and paraprofessional stated that barriers in the classroom include someone talking loud, the intercom, someone coming in the classroom, and the length of the lecture. The paraprofessional stated that he distracts other students. The teacher and the paraprofessional indicated that he is easily distracted. His ease of distraction is also a problem at home. His mother stated

sometimes, he’ll come in here and he’ll pretend like he don’t [sic] realize that he’s supposed to be over here doing his homework...he wants to go and play with his toys but I have to bring it back to his attention.

Environmental Facilitators

Several facilitators in the home environment were identified. Eldridge’s mother stated that her child is more motivated since she has been helping him. “He has gotten more motivated. He’s doing a lot more. Participating, paying attention, following directions cause [sic] he had a bad habit of not following directions...wanting to do whatever he wanted to do but I’m getting it under control.” Both Eldridge and his mother stated that homework is done right after school. His mother indicated that the assignments were appropriate and that she had no problems assisting her child. She spends one and one-half hours per day helping her child with his homework and believes that parents should take as much time as necessary to assist their children with their homework. The student stated that his mom’s help and having the instructions read are helpful. Eldridge’s mom praises him (“Good job!”) when he finishes his homework.

These are some of the things Eldridge’s mother does with her child.

You know they got to know all those 50 words and I wrote them all down here so he can pick a page and he write [sic] them out and I help him pronounce them. Everyday it's like this. I fill up one page with his sight words and I flip the page and it has his date of birth, phone number, address, and lunch number. I have different stuff... it varies because we just moved...that's our old address there so on another sheet it got this address and then in this book, I think it's the sentence book ... yes it's the sentence book, are the sight words and for each sight word, I made a sentence out of the sight words. I was looking at the sight words and made a sentence for him so if he just take [sic] a page out of each tablet, he [sic] got about 8 of them. I got the shapes in one, the numbers in one, so each day, he take a page out of each one of them and he got a clean sheet tablet that he just write in. He writes what, I tell him quick, "Write what you see" and and and [sic] I hyphen the words. I put a hyphen between each letter so he can sound it out because he [sic] learning more about the sounds and sounding a word out and putting it together and he have problem [sic] with that and we working on that. It's coming.

Eldridge's mother stated that she thinks the teacher believes that homework completion is very important. The teacher will write "incomplete" on some of the sheets Eldridge did not finish and make him do it for his next day's homework for a grade. She believes that the teacher supports homework completion by the students.

Classroom facilitators were indicated by the teacher and the paraprofessional. These include small group instructions, one-on-one assistance, educational games, and the language master.

Eldridge completes his homework in the living room. The student has an old student desk given to the family by an aunt. In the living room are a sofa, loveseat, and coffee table. The room is neat, clean, and quiet. The child's response to the place of homework completion matched the mother's response.

Joseph

General Description of Student

Joseph is an African American male who as of August 21, 2006 is five-years and eleven months old. He is from a two-parent home and receives free lunch. He has a younger brother and a younger sister. He is a low-readiness student per GKAP testing; however, both the teacher and the paraprofessional rated him four on a readiness scale of one to four with one being the lowest and four being the highest. He appeared calm during his interview. The paraprofessional indicated that he is always alert and very attentive.

Personal Processes Related to Homework

Joseph believes that homework helps him "learn things." He voiced "I like homework" and believes that he has been doing well on his homework and that he has improved. Joseph expects to do well on his homework in the future. He is motivated to complete his homework because "it's important and you won't miss out on nothing" [sic] or you will not "get kicked out of school." His mother corroborated his homework beliefs and values. The teacher and the paraprofessional indicated that he had a high level of motivation to complete his homework and that he likes it and believes he is able to complete it accurately. His mother, teacher, and the paraprofessional voiced that he is

able to work independently. His mother stated “the only thing I have to do is read the directions....he does everything else by himself.”

Personal Processes Related to Grades

Joseph completes his homework in order to make good grades and he likes making good grades. In fact, when asked what he would do if he made a bad grade, his response was “try to get my grades up.” His mother agrees with these expressions and stated “he knows that he needs homework in order to get better grades in school. As far as his spelling tests, we go over them every night until he can get them on his own.” The teacher and the paraprofessional voiced that Joseph is self-motivated. He wants to make good grades, likes making good grades, and expects to make good grades. The paraprofessional stated that he believes that homework helps him perform better on his tests.

Homework Accuracy and Quiz Data

Joseph’s grades are quite good. His homework accuracy grades range from 89 to 100 (A: 100–90, B: 89–80, C: 79–70, D: 69–60, F: below 60), and he scored 100 on every quiz.

Home Environmental Resources and Environmental Barriers

Joseph’s mother indicated that she has adequate resources to work with him since he is “just in kindergarten.” She voiced that she might need more when he matriculates through the upper grades. Joseph voiced three barriers to his successful homework completion. These included his little brother watching television; times that the teacher fails to give homework instructions; and the fact (in his mind) that “homework is hard.”

It is noteworthy that his mother, teacher, and the paraprofessional did not indicate any barriers to Joseph successfully completing his homework.

Environmental Facilitators

Several home environment facilitators were discovered. Joseph's mother stated that homework does not interfere with family activities. She believes that the amount of homework as well as the homework itself is appropriate. She spends about an hour each day helping him with his homework and believes that parents should spend an hour to an hour and a half each day assisting their children with their homework. She has no problems assisting him and encourages him to complete his homework with the reward of watching cartoons. When he finishes his homework, she reported saying "Good job." Other persons who assist him with homework include his dad and his uncle. He completes his homework before television or play.

Joseph's mother helps him by reading the instructions. The following is one example of the way she helped Joseph. She read the instructions. She made sure he stayed in the lines with his crayons, and she made sure his letters were formed correctly. Also, she goes over the spelling words, goes over Joseph's completed homework, and uses flash cards to teach and review skills. Joseph indicated that his mother helps him with spelling by telling him the words and letting him tell her the letters. His mother explained the importance of parental support in the following way. "I have to help him in order for him to know what to do because he can't read. But some words he knows but I still have to go over stuff with him to make sure he understands it." Joseph's mother believes in repetition as a means of helping her son learn to write his letters. She stated "I show him how to write it and I make him write it three or four times."

School environment facilitators were discovered. The teacher voiced that the class work including the instruction, manipulatives, the language master, the computer, and rotating centers help Joseph to complete and understand his homework. The paraprofessional voiced that parental support, extended family support, and attendance at a quality pre-K program contributed to Joseph's success. His mother indicated that the teacher likes homework because she sends so much of it. She also believes that the teacher supports homework completion by the students.

Joseph completes his homework in his room on his bed. His mother described the atmosphere as "quiet and comfortable."

Monaska

General Description of Student

Monaska is an African American female who as of August 21, 2006 is five years and seven months old. She is from a single-parent home and receives free lunch. She has an older and a younger brother. She is a high-readiness student per GKAP testing; however, the teacher and the paraprofessional rated her two on a readiness scale of one to four with one being the lowest and four being the highest. She appeared calm and cooperative during the interview. Nevertheless, the teacher and paraprofessional stated that she is sleepy and hungry in the classroom.

Personal Processes Related to Homework

Monaska indicated that she feels "good" about homework and completes it because her teacher and mom tell her to do it. She stated that she "might get in trouble and get a sad face" if she did not do it. She appeared to not really care about doing her homework. Monaska's mother stated that Monaska "don't [sic] like to do" homework,

does not value it, and does not “understand the meaning of why she have [sic] to have homework.” She says that sometimes Monaska will say “Mama, why we got homework?” She further stated that Monaska cannot work independently and is easily distracted. Sometimes she has to admonish her to complete her homework several times. Monaska voiced that she was doing well on her homework, has improved, and will do better in the future. However, Monaska’s mother indicated that Monaska does not view her ability to complete her homework in a positive manner. The teacher and the paraprofessional’s views were similar to the mother’s views. They stated that Monaska has no beliefs about homework, no motivation to complete her homework, and does not value homework. Both agree with the mother that she cannot work independently and that she is easily distracted.

Personal Processes Related to Grades

Monaska’s mother voiced that Monaska does not believe that homework helps her make better grades and that she has an “I don’t care attitude” toward grades. She stated that Monaska does not understand the relationship between homework and grades but she expects to make better grades when she does her homework. Monaska stated that homework helps her with her spelling tests. She said that she feels “good” about making good grades. (It seems that she wants good grades but does not want to work for them and believes that if she is made to do homework, she should automatically get good grades.) The views of the teacher and the paraprofessional are in line with the mother’s views.

Homework Accuracy and Quiz Data

Monaska's grades fluctuated during the data collection period. Her weekly averaged homework accuracy grades ranged from 50 to 100 while her quiz grades ranged from 29 to 100 (A: 100–90, B: 89–80, C: 79–70, D: 69–60, F: below 60). Her homework accuracy grades improved in a positive direction with the exception of week six, but her quiz grades fluctuated throughout the seven-week period.

Home Environmental Resources and Environmental Barriers

Monaska's mother stated that she has everything she needs to assist Monaska with her homework. She voiced four barriers to her success that included Monaska's lack of understanding of the meaning of homework and its value; her child's "I don't care" attitude; her child's short attentions span; and the fact that her child is easily distracted. Monaska stated that sometimes her big brother, her little brother, and her dog bother her while she is trying to complete her homework. The teacher and the paraprofessional indicated that Monaska is distracted in the classroom by the television, the intercom, people coming into the classroom, people walking by the classroom, and people talking. The paraprofessional stated that the actual teaching materials distract her. Instead of waiting for instructions or waiting for the appropriate time of use, she plays with them. The teacher indicated that once she is off of a task, it is hard to bring her back to the task. The teacher and paraprofessional stated that her failures are due to not paying attention, not listening, and not participating in class. Thus, she does not learn from her mistakes.

Environmental Facilitators

Several facilitators were uncovered. Monaska stated that her mom and dad assist her with her homework. She completes her homework before television or play. This

statement was confirmed by her mom. She is helped when her mother and the teacher read the homework instructions. Her mom stated that the amount and type of homework were appropriate, and she reported praising her child (“Good job!”) when she finishes her homework. Monaska’s mom stated that she believes the teacher thinks homework is important and that the teacher supports the completion of homework by the students. Monaska’s mom voiced that she spends 45 minutes to one hour helping Monaska with her homework. She believes that parents should give their children as much homework help as their children need. When I told her about the research that stated that kindergarten students should spend 10 to 20 minutes per day on homework, her response was “you can’t learn nothing [sic] in 10 minutes.” Monaska’s mother tells Monaska that “homework is important because it helps you go to the next grade” if your grades are satisfactory. She stated that she explains the reasons for homework and seeks to convey to her child a better understanding of homework. Monaska’s mother encourages Monaska to complete her homework by telling her

This is not Pre-K. You have to do your homework cause [sic] if you don’t do your homework, you’ll have to stay back. And sometimes I’ll tell her that if I feel like she’s not ready to go to the next grade, I’m going to hold her back.

The following are examples of ways Monaska’s mom helped the Monaska:

Like with the counting worksheet, I have her count all of them, like if they [sic] looking for how many has eight, I’ll have her count and she’ll count and I’ll say “Does it have eight in it?” and sometimes she’ll say “no” and (if wrong) I’ll say “count it again.” And I’ll say “Did you count eight?” and she’ll say “Yes”...and I

have her count another one and she'll say "six...and I'll say "Does that have eight in it" and she'll say "yes" and I'll have her count it again...like that."

Monaska indicated that she likes to count. She also stated that if she does not know how to write a letter, her mother writes it and then she writes it.

The teacher and paraprofessional indicated that Monaska is helped by small group instruction and one-on-one assistance. They voiced that repetition and the use of incentives have produced some success.

Monaska's mom stated that Monaska completes her homework at the kitchen table with the door open. The kitchen table is large and has four chairs around it. She stated that sometimes she might have the television on in the living room and that she may cook or go back and forth in the room. Monaska stated that she does homework in the kitchen or living room. The living room contains a sofa, loveseat, coffee table and large television set.

Ellen

General Description of Student

Ellen is an African American female who as of August 21, 2006 is five years and four months old. She is from a two-parent home and receives free lunch. She has four older siblings. She is a high-readiness student per GKAP testing. Both the teacher and the paraprofessional rated her four on a readiness scale of one to four with one being the lowest and four being the highest. She appeared calm and was cooperative during the interview.

Personal Processes Related to Homework

Ellen likes homework and believes that homework is necessary for learning. She voiced that she believes that she has been doing very well on her homework, that she is improving, and that she will do well in the future. This information was corroborated by Ellen's mother who believes that Ellen "likes to do homework," values homework, and believes and expects to complete it accurately. As far as the value of homework is concerned, her mother stated "it's real important because she bring [sic] it to me and sit it on the table so I can check over it." She voiced that she tells Ellen

to do her homework so she'll, you know, go to school and learn how to read and spell. She brought her spelling words...I told her you learn the spelling words, you'll learn how to read. Like count [sic], you go to school, you'll learn how to count.

Her mother also stated that Ellen is able to work independently. This information was corroborated by the teacher and the paraprofessional.

Personal Processes Related to Grades

Ellen likes to make good grades and believes that it is important to make good grades. She stated that she does her homework so she can make 100 on her spelling tests and "get a candy." She believes that she can make good grades and expects to make good grades if she completes all of her homework. Ellen's mother stated that she believes that homework helps Ellen make better grades and that Ellen "has high motivation to make good grades." Ellen stated that if she made a bad grade on a test, she would "make 100" the next time. Both the teacher and the paraprofessional stated that homework helps Ellen make better grades and that she is motivated to make good grades.

Homework Accuracy and Quiz Data

Overall, Ellen's grades are good. Her homework accuracy grades (averaged each week) ranged from 64 to 100 while her quiz grades ranged from 79 to 100 (A: 100–90, B: 89–80, C: 79–70, D: 69–60, F: below 60). It is noteworthy that her homework accuracy grade of 64 was earned during the first week of the investigation. After that, her lowest homework accuracy grade was 89. Generally speaking, her grades improved each week.

Home Environmental Resources and Environmental Barriers

Ellen's mother stated that she has everything she needs to help her child with her homework. She has crayons, flash cards, shapes, learning books, pencils, and paper. She also stated that she and Ellen "go to the library to check out books." No noteworthy homework barriers were noted. Ellen's mother stated that she has trouble helping Ellen with shapes because she confuses the oval and the circle. Ellen stated that sometimes "her friends want to play" when she is doing her homework but she does her homework first. The teacher and paraprofessional stated that there were no barriers to her homework success in the classroom environment.

Environmental Facilitators

Numerous homework facilitators were noted. Ellen voiced that she receives homework help from her sister, her friend, her mom, and her dad. She provided examples of ways each of them assists her. My sister "writes a letters and I write it." My friend "writes the word" and I spell it. My mom writes "something" and "I write or draw." My dad helps me with my numbers.

Ellen's mother indicated that homework is completed before television or play and that her child completes all homework assigned by the teacher. When Ellen has

difficulties with the homework, her mother explains it and clarifies it. Ellen's mother gave the following example of a time she helped her child with homework regarding beginning sounds.

I read the directions for her. And then, you know, go over it to see if any animals in it she doesn't understand so I tell her the name of the animals. Beginning sounds like lion and tiger, they look just alike.

Ellen's mother stated that homework helps her child remember what she learned in school. When Ellen completes her homework, her mother reported saying "Good job!" and allows her to watch television. Ellen's mother believes that the teacher thinks it is very important for Ellen to complete her homework and her mother also believes that the teacher supports homework completion by the students.

Ellen's mother stated that homework does not interfere with family activities and that the amount and type of homework assigned is appropriate. She spends about 40 minutes each day helping Ellen with her homework and believes that students should spend 30 minutes each day on their homework. Ellen's mom voiced that her assistance is beneficial. "She know [sic] that I help her to understand when she don't understand her work. She knows that I want her to achieve."

The teacher stated that songs, educational games, and the language master facilitate Ellen's success. The paraprofessional noted that Ellen "grasps the material taught the first time" and that "there is no need for additional assistance." The teacher and the paraprofessional voiced that Ellen listens carefully and pays attention, follows directions well, participates in class, and learns from her mistakes.

Ellen's mother stated that her child does her homework in her bedroom at her desk. Ellen has a little black desk and a brown chair. Her sister is usually in the room with her.

Jeffrey

General Description of Student

Jeffrey is an African American male who as of August 21, 2006 is five-years and eleven months old. He is from a single-parent home, has one younger sister and receives free lunch. He is a high readiness student per GKAP testing. Both the teacher and the paraprofessional rated him four on a readiness scale of one to four with one being the lowest and four being the highest. He appeared calm and was cooperative during the interview.

Personal Processes Related to Homework

Jeffrey likes homework and believes that homework helps him learn. He made the following comment. "I love homework. Homework is good for you." He indicated that homework is easy because "they send the right homework." He indicated that sometimes noise bothers him when he does his homework but he does nothing about it. He believes that he is doing well on his homework, that he is improving, and that he will do well in the future. Jeffrey's mom voiced that Jeffrey enjoys homework. She stated "he comes in the house and says 'Mama I got homework, let's do it.' He's ready to do it when he walks in the door." She stated that homework helps Jeffrey with his schoolwork, that he is confident, and that he is able to work independently. This information was supported by the teacher and the paraprofessional. They voiced that Jeffrey likes homework and values its relationship to learning. They stated that he is self-

motivated; works independently; retains information well; and expects to be able to complete his assignments.

Personal Processes Related to Grades

Jeffrey stated “I love good grades and I don’t want to get an F.” He believes that homework improves his grades. Jeffrey’s mom said “he knows that he needs homework in order to get better grades in school. As far as his spelling tests, we go over them every night until he can get them on his own.” “He’s happy to do it [his homework] to take back to his teacher to see what he did at home.” He is highly motivated to make A’s and B’s on his tests and does not want to make any failing grades. He voiced that if he made a failing grade, he would work harder next time. Jeffrey’s mother supported this information. She stated that Jeffrey feels “happy and ecstatic” about making good grades. The teacher and the paraprofessional supported this information. They voiced that he likes, values, and expects to make good grades. The teacher noted that if Jeffrey fails to perform well, he will cry.

Homework Accuracy and Quiz Data

Jeffrey’s grades are quite good. The weekly averages of his homework accuracy grades ranged from 78 to 100, while his quiz grades ranged from 92 to 100 (A: 100–90, B: 89–80, C: 79–70, D: 69–60, F: below 60). It is noteworthy that 78 was the only C that he earned on his homework accuracy grades. The other grades were 92 and above. It is also noteworthy that 94 was his lowest quiz grade and this was for the first week of the investigation. He earned 100 on the quizzes administered during the remaining six weeks.

Home Environmental Resources and Environmental Barriers

Jeffrey's mother has adequate resources to assist Jeffrey with his homework. She stated "I get it. I buy it all. I don't think I need anything extra. He has books, flash cards, math and reading games, alphabets, numbers, and Leap Frog." As far as barriers are concerned, Jeffrey's mom indicated that sometimes the wording of the homework is confusing and that some of the homework is too easy. Jeffrey voiced that sometimes noise bothers him while he is doing his homework but he does nothing about it. According to the teacher, there are no real barriers to Jeffrey's success in the classroom. The paraprofessional stated that conversations in the classroom, someone walking in the room, and the intercom distract him but he is able to get back on task.

Environmental Facilitators

Several facilitators were uncovered. Jeffrey's mother indicated that the correlation between the lessons taught at school and the homework is helpful. She voiced that one of the benefits of homework is that Jeffrey will "know that what he does at school, he has to do also at home...that we are working together, the teacher and myself, to make sure that he gets the proper education and that he's paying attention in class." She also stated that she is a caring parent and that she makes sure Jeffrey completes his homework. She believes that the amount of homework assigned is adequate and stated "I like that they send a lot of homework and not just one or two pages." She stated that homework does not interfere with family activities. Her comment was "nothing comes before homework unless he's sick." She spends about one-hour per day helping him. When he finishes his work, she reported telling him "Good job." Jeffrey stated that his mom helps him by reading the instructions and telling him what to do. He also stated that

he does his homework as soon as he gets home from school. Jeffrey's mom believes that the teacher sees homework as being helpful to the students. She also believes that the teacher supports homework completion by the students.

Jeffrey's mom described the way homework is helpful to the teacher. She said what they teach them, we turn around and we really teach it to them again... so the next day if they want to do a follow-up on that same homework, whatever they had, they will already know it and they will know what's going on. So when test time come, [sic] they will have a double dose of it. It won't be just what's going on in school."

The teacher voiced that going over the homework before it is given, practicing the skills all week, and using manipulatives contribute the Jeffrey's success. The paraprofessional stated that Jeffrey needs no additional assistance from her. He is able to grasp the material taught the first time. The teacher and the paraprofessional indicated that he listens, pays attention, and participates in class activities. He learns from his mistakes. The teacher said that for him, "practice makes perfect."

Jeffrey's mother stated that Jeffrey completes his homework in the kitchen. He sits at a large table with six chairs. The environment appears comfortable. The colors are calm and there are words on the wall that he can read. Jeffrey corroborated this information.

Dayshawn

General Description of Student

Dayshawn is an African American male who as of August 21, 2006 is five-years and eight months old. He is from a single-parent home and receives free lunch. He is a

high-readiness student per GKAP testing. The teacher and paraprofessional view Dayshawn's readiness level differently. The teacher rated him four while the paraprofessional rated him two on a readiness scale of one to four with one being the lowest and four being the highest. It is possible that the teacher is rating him according to what he is capable of doing and the paraprofessional is rating him according to what he actually does without encouragement. He seemed fine during the interview, but the teacher and paraprofessional voiced that he is sleepy and lethargic in class. The teacher and the paraprofessional stated that Dayshawn does not always listen and pay attention. He does not follow directions well and does not learn from his mistakes. His progress is inconsistent and sometimes he does not submit his homework.

Personal Processes Related to Homework

Dayshawn stated that he likes homework but when he was asked how he felt about it, his answer was "I don't know." He voiced that he does homework because "your teacher wants you to learn." He believes that he has been doing well, that he is improving, and that he will do well in the future. Dayshawn's mother does not think that he believes that homework helps him with his schoolwork. She indicated that he does not mind doing his homework as long as it does not interfere with his playtime; however, he does not value homework. As far as working independently is concerned, she voiced "once he gets started, he'll go ahead and complete it on his own. He does it on his own." However, she stated that "he has to have a task master to crack the whip." She believes that Dayshawn has the ability to complete his homework accurately; "he just doesn't want to complete it." The teacher and the paraprofessional agree with Dayshawn's mother that he has to be pushed to complete his work. They stated that Dayshawn

completes his homework because he has to complete it, that he places little value on homework, and he fails to understand the importance of homework.

Personal Processes Related to Grades

Dayshawn stated that homework helps him perform better on his tests, and that he likes making good grades. However, he voiced that when he makes a bad grade, he does not “worry about it or cry.” He indicated that he believes he can make good grades on his quizzes and that he expects to make good grades if he does all of his homework.

Dayshawn’s mother believes that there is a relationship between homework and grades. She stated “if he go [sic] ahead and complete his homework, then he knows that he knows it and he is ready for the test because most of the time their homework is on what they will be tested on.” She voiced that the more time Dayshawn spends on his homework, the better he performs on his quizzes. She said

he knows that the more time he spends on his homework, the better he does... like most of the time, he have [sic] spelling homework every week and if he concentrate [sic] on his words 4 times, he usually does real good on his spelling test. If he slacks, he doesn’t.

She stated that his attitude plays a role in the process. “Sometimes he’s extremely stubborn...[if] he doesn’t want to do anything, he won’t.” The teacher and the paraprofessional stated that Dayshawn has a nonchalant attitude toward his grades and places little value on them.

Homework Accuracy and Quiz Data

Dayshawn’s grades are good. His homework accuracy weekly averaged grades ranged from 75 to 100, while his quiz grades ranged from 86 to 100 (A: 100–90, B: 89–

80, C: 79–70, D: 69–60, F: below 60). It is possible that had he turned in all of his assignments that his weekly averaged homework accuracy grades would have been 95 and above.

Home Environmental Resources and Environmental Barriers

Dayshawn’s mother has the resources she needs to assist Dayshawn with his homework; however, she stated she would like a guideline as to how much help to give Dayshawn. Other barriers she voiced included his sisters talking or “bickering” and friends wanting to play during Dayshawn’s homework completion time. She believes that more homework would facilitate better grades. Dayshawn stated that his sisters “screaming,” “hollering,” and fussing plus his baby cousin crying interfere with him doing his homework. The teacher and the paraprofessional indicated that classroom environment barriers include people talking, someone coming in the room, the intercom, someone accidentally brushing up against him, and someone opening the door. The paraprofessional indicated that the teacher’s lecture (circle time teaching activities) is too long for him.

Environmental Facilitators

Several facilitators were discovered. Dayshawn’s mother indicated that the repetition is helpful. She further stated that homework does not interfere with other activities and that nothing is going on while her child is completing his homework. She voiced that the type of homework assigned is appropriate for his grade level. She indicated that she spends as much time as needed to assist her child with homework but that it should take him about 20 minutes to complete his homework. In addition to the mother, at times, the child’s cousin, grandmother, and uncle assist with the homework.

The mother verbally encourages her child to complete his homework and reported praising him (“good job”) when he finishes. Dayshawn said that he does his homework before he watches television or plays. Dayshawn’s mother does not believe that the teacher gives much homework but that she supports the completion of homework by the students.

Dayshawn’s mother made the following comments about the benefits of homework.

I know right off the bat what he has problems with, so I know what to expect when he gets his progress report or report card or when a test come [sic] home...I already know what he need help on.

She believes in repetition. Homework is “very useful because I don’t know if they don’t go over the spelling words every day but he gets to do them every night and is prepared for them.”

The teacher and the paraprofessional voiced several classroom facilitators. Dayshawn sits next to the teacher so she can reinforce the skills taught. She prepares extra work for him. They stated that he has had success with manipulatives, the language master, and small group instruction.

Dayshawn completes his homework at the kitchen table with six chairs. His two older sisters are usually completing their homework along with him. The table is located at the back of the kitchen.

Lisa

General Description of Student

Lisa is an African American female who as of August 21, 2005 is five-years and

five months old. She is from a two-parent home and receives free lunch. She has two older siblings. She is a high-readiness student per GKAP testing. Both the teacher and paraprofessional rated her four on a readiness scale of one to four with one being the lowest and four being the highest. She appeared calm and was cooperative during the interview.

Personal Processes Related to Homework

Concerning homework, Lisa said “I like it.” She is ready to do it when she comes home. She believes that she is doing well on her homework, that she has improved, and that she will do well in the future. She indicated that she does homework so she can “learn how to write.” She stated that if she failed to do her homework, the paraprofessional “would put it back in your folder and let you do it at home,” and that if she failed to do her homework at home, her mother would make her do it. Lisa’s mother believes that Lisa likes homework and enjoys doing it. Her mother stated that Lisa can work independently. Lisa stated that nothing bothers her while she is completing her homework. The teacher and the paraprofessional believe that Lisa has a great attitude toward homework, works independently, and expects to be able to complete her homework.

Personal Processes Related to Grades

Lisa voiced that she feels “happy” about making good grades and “sad” about making bad grades. Her mother indicated that when Lisa makes good grades, she is proud and happy and wants to show them to everyone. Lisa stated that she expects to make “100” if she completes all of her homework. Lisa’s mother voiced that she believes

that homework improves her child's academic ability. The teacher and the paraprofessional stated that Lisa expects to make good grades and wants to perform well.

Homework Accuracy and Quiz Data

Lisa's grades are outstanding. Both her weekly averages of the homework accuracy grades and her quiz grades range from 93 to 100 (A: 100–90, B: 89–80, C: 79–70, D: 69–60, F: below 60). She scored 100's on 11 out of 14 grades.

Home Environmental Resources and Environmental Barriers

Lisa's mom voiced that she has adequate resources to assist Lisa with her homework.

The PTO, the parent conference that I had, they gave us a lot of new and most of the requirements for her, you know, to be able to graduate or go on to the next class, so since I have that work, she gave me a folder with all the extra work, I can, you know, keep her busy or try something new...you know, different stuff like that with her so, you know, I make copies and flash cards and stuff, we work on stuff like that and you know, with shoe tying and body parts, it gives me a lot more to, you know, work with her. So I cut out and then I let her paste the flash cards on construction paper, stuff like that. I make it more interesting instead of just the sheets of paper and we'll make projects and study with them.

A few homework barriers were voiced by Lisa's mother. She indicated that sometimes she is unable to identify some of the pictures on the homework sheets. She believes Lisa should have more homework than the amount assigned and states that sometimes during homework, her children argue over erasers or needing a pencil. Lisa

did not voice any barriers. The teacher and the paraprofessional voiced no barriers to Lisa's homework success.

Environmental Facilitators

Several facilitators were uncovered. Lisa receives homework help from her mother, brother, and sister. She completes her homework before television or play. Lisa spends about 45 minutes on her homework each day and her mother believes that Lisa should spend about one hour on her homework each day. Homework does not interfere with family activities her mother said because "we make time for homework. If I have to go...I try to be here when they come off the bus, but if I have anything to do, we still make that time for homework. It's always number one." The following is an example of how Lisa's mother might assist her with her homework.

She'll come inside and if she have [sic] homework, she'll give me her book bag. So I take out the planner and I go inside the pocket and I pull her homework out and I ask her "Did you get a book today?"...stuff like that and then I'll look over it to see if she need any help and I'll go ahead and sit her down and if I have to explain or I read over it to make sure if it have [sic] direction, I'll explain it to her or as she finish [sic] the things she already know [sic] how to do, she'll let me know when she' ready for me to read [sic] instructions if she don't [sic] understand.

Lisa's mom encourages her to complete her homework by providing her the opportunity to go to Bible study on Tuesdays, Wednesdays, and Thursdays. When she completes her homework, Lisa's mother may take her to Chucky Cheese or the Skating Ring. Lisa's mom believes that the teacher thinks homework is important because the

students can pick up skills they may have missed during class if they were not paying attention. She further stated that homework may facilitate understanding of a skill that a child may not have understood during classroom instruction. Thus, she believes that the teacher supports homework completion by the students.

The teacher and the paraprofessional indicated that Lisa benefits from circle time instruction, small group instruction, the use of manipulatives, and educational computer games. They stated that she pays attention, participates, learns from her mistakes, works hard and is a good listener.

Lisa's mother believes in the value of repetition. When asked whether or not she thought homework helps Lisa make better grades, her reply was "yes, because she gets to practice it." When asked about the usefulness of homework in helping Lisa improve what she learns in school, her reply was "I truly believe that repetition, you know the repetition of homework/class work, you know, it helps them to remember or develop skills."

According to Lisa and her mother, Lisa completes her homework at the kitchen table or the bar in the kitchen. The area is neat, clean, and adequate for homework completion.

The Teacher

The following is an example of the way the teacher conducted the lesson on letters A – F. The students came to the circle for whole group instruction. Using large cards with the capital and small letters a-z and pictures, she flashed the cards out of order so the students could verbally identify the capital and small letters, the beginning sound of the picture and the picture. Next she focused on letters A – F. She mentioned items

beginning with these letters. Next was the letter module. She chose to concentrate on C and E. She wrote Cc on a piece of construction paper and the students had to verbalize words that began with Cc. She wrote the words on the construction paper. Next she said words and the students had to clap if the word began with Cc. Third, she had three students to go to the chart and write Cc. She followed the same procedure for Ee. This portion of the lesson took about 20 minutes. Then the students went to their groups. There were four groups. The teacher conducted the guided reading group. She gave each student a book. She read the book and the students picked out all the words that contained Cc's and Ee's. The paraprofessional conducted the skills groups. In this group the students drew pictures of items that began with Cc's and Ee's and colored the pictures. The card master was an independent group. The students put on ear phones and participated in the activities involving Cc's and Ee's. The fourth group (an independent group) was the computer group. The students worked on a site that contained alphabet activities for the letters Cc and Ee. After group time, the students returned to the circle. One student from each group had to tell the class what he/she learned.

From the teacher's interview, I learned that she believes the students feel good about the homework assignments. Due to the fact that she reads the homework instructions to the students, goes over the assignments numerous times, and allows the students to practice in class, she believes that the students are capable of completing the assignments and completing them independently. The teacher voiced that because she makes the learning fun, the students' motivation to complete their homework assignments is so high that they want to complete their homework assignments in class.

The teacher stated that she returns homework and goes over it. When the homework goes home in the Friday folder, the students as well as their parents can see their progress.

Numerous learning materials fill the learning environment. These learning materials are used to impart knowledge necessary for the students to learn their skills as well as complete their homework. She stated that when she teaches the skills needed to complete their homework assignments, “it opens up their minds to have a better understanding to do the work.” Her homework assignments help the students on their quizzes. She voiced that the homework assignments help “them to have a better understanding of what’s going on so when test time comes, they can breeze right through it.” The teacher also noted that the feedback she gives the students on their homework assignments motivates them to work harder and their quiz scores improve.

The Paraprofessional

The paraprofessional assists the teacher. During the lesson involving Cc’s and Ee’s, the paraprofessional sat with the students in the circle during circle time and made sure the students were on task. During group time, she conducted the skills group and provided individual attention to those students who needed it.

From the paraprofessional’s interview I learned that she believes the students “like homework and feel great about it.” She voiced that all of them expect to be able to complete their homework but that only 30% believe they can complete it accurately. She believes that the students can independently complete their homework because of the similarity between the homework and the class work. Praise and incentives are used by the paraprofessional to motivate the students to complete their homework. The

paraprofessional informs the students as to the reasons for homework and solicits their feelings about it. The learning environment is structured so that the student can acquire the skill(s) they need to independently complete their homework. The students have adequate working space and the materials needed to learn and practice their skills. The paraprofessional believes that there is a relationship between homework and quiz scores. She stated “they (the quiz scores) are higher, they are much higher when the students are actually doing the class work and having to do it at home as homework. Their scores are much higher.” The paraprofessional made this statement about homework: “I believe the homework is really helping build their cognitive skills as well as their gross motor skills and it’s repetitious. It coincides with the class work. So it’s being repeated, repeated, repeated where they can grasp and understand.”

Analysis of Homework Learning Experiences across Students

This section analyses how three influences affect the homework learning experiences across students. These influences include personal processes, school behavior, and classroom and home environments. These influences are defined by Bandura’s social cognitive theory (Bandura, 1986). This theory proposes that the mutual influences of students’ personal processes, their environments, and their performances interact to affect their learning experiences including homework-learning experiences.

Personal Processes

Personal processes include beliefs, attitudes, motivation, values, self-regulation, self-efficacy, and expectation. In this section, personal processes are divided into personal processes related to homework and grades.

Personal Processes related to Homework

Low-readiness students Shaneeka, Eldridge, and Joseph liked homework and believed that it helped them understand their school work. They valued homework, were motivated to complete their homework, and were capable of working independently. Their parents, the teacher and paraprofessional shared their views.

Low-readiness students Devantae and Tavarius claimed to like and value homework but neither the teacher nor the paraprofessional supported these views. Devantae voiced a positive attitude about homework but this was not confirmed by his mother, the teacher, or the paraprofessional. Neither the teacher nor the paraprofessional believed that Devantae or Tavarius could work independently. This view was shared by Tavarius's mom but not Devantae's mom. Neither Devantae nor Tavarius voiced much motivation for completing his homework. This view was shared by the teacher and the paraprofessional.

All five low-readiness students believed that they could complete their homework and that they have improved since the beginning of the school year. They also indicated that they expected to do well on their homework in the future. Their mothers, the teacher and the paraprofessional agreed that these students had these beliefs. Shaneeka, Eldridge, and Joseph were able to work independently.

High-readiness students Ellen, Jeffrey, and Lisa liked homework and enjoyed doing it. They believed that they could complete their homework accurately and that they were improving. They also expected to be able to perform well on their homework in the future. This information was corroborated by the students' mothers, their teacher, and the paraprofessional. Ellen, Jeffrey, and Lisa were also capable of working

independently. The teacher, the paraprofessional, and the mothers of Lisa, Ellen, and Jeffrey agreed that they like homework, value it, and that it helps them with their schoolwork. Dayshawn stated that he liked homework but his mother voiced that he likes it as long as it does not interfere with playtime. Monaska's mother, the teacher, and the paraprofessional indicated that Monaska does not like homework, does not value it, does not like to do it and does not have a full understanding of homework. Dayshawn's mother, the teacher and the paraprofessional agreed that Dayshawn does not value homework and that he does not understand the importance of homework.

Interestingly, three students in both groups appeared to have had primarily positive experiences and two did not. Three low-readiness (Shaneeka, Eldridge, and Joseph) and three high-readiness students (Ellen, Jeffrey, and Lisa) liked and valued homework, were motivated to complete it, and could work independently. All of the students believed that they were doing well, that they had improved and that they would perform well on future homework assignments except two high-readiness students (Monaska and Dayshawn).

Thus, several patterns emerged. Six students had a positive attitude toward homework that was supported by the parent, teacher, and paraprofessional. These students showed evidence of positive attitudes toward homework by stating that they liked homework, that homework was great, and that they felt good about homework. One student stated that he loved homework and that it was good for you. Four students voiced a positive attitude that could not be corroborated. The four students who voiced a positive attitude toward homework likely did so because they thought it was the right thing to say. One of these students did not care for homework, two did not understand

the meaning of homework, and the fourth student stated that he did not know how he felt about homework.

Eight of the students valued homework or believed that it was worthwhile. Reasons provided included homework's helpfulness in the learning process especially for writing alphabets, words, and sentences; and a child placing homework in a location that can be checked by the parent. One student believed that sometimes homework is helpful and sometimes it is not. Two students did not value homework. One did not believe that homework helps him with his schoolwork. The other student did not fully understand the homework process.

Seven of the students were motivated or had incentives to do their homework. One student was motivated to pass to first grade. Another student was motivated to get an education. One parent stated her child's motivation increased when she started helping him with his homework. Another student was motivated to complete his homework so he would not miss anything or get put out of school. Another student was motivated to do his homework because he had to do it. Two students enjoyed homework and were ready to do it as soon as they come home. One student was motivated to do her homework when her mother worked with her. Of the students who were not highly motivated, one did not mind doing homework as long as it did not interfere with his playtime. The second one only did it to keep his teacher from admonishing him to do it. The third one was not motivated to complete his homework, but he believed if he did not do it, he would not learn.

All of the students possessed self-efficacy or the belief that they were able to complete their homework accurately. Bandura (1986) noted that the perception of self-

efficacy does not have to be true to influence self-efficacy; it is enough that the student thinks it is true. The subjects' stated self-efficacy may be due to the egocentricity of kindergarten students.

Seven of the students could work independently. For kindergarten students, this basically means that once the directions are read, the students can complete their homework without any help. The three students who could not work independently exhibited low motivation for completing their homework. Two of these three students did not have a high value of homework. Six of the seven students who were motivated to complete their homework also valued homework. The seventh student who did not value homework was motivated to complete his homework as long as it did not interfere with his playtime. Thus values, motivation, self-efficacy, and the ability to work independently are different but related. Six of the students have a positive attitude toward homework, value homework, are motivated to complete their homework, possess self-efficacy, and are able to work independently. Contrariwise, some students who were not motivated to complete their homework, actually value homework, while likewise others who were not motivated to complete their homework did not value homework.

Overall, the students liked and value homework and were motivated to complete it. Self-efficacy was prevalent among all 10 students because their performance expectations were high. Seven of the students were able to work independently. There were no noteworthy differences between the high and low readiness students.

Personal Processes related to Grades

All five low-readiness students liked making good grades and believed that homework helps them make better grades. They expected to make good grades. The

students' mothers and the paraprofessional were in agreement with these items. The teacher agreed with all of the students except Tavarius. She did not believe that Tavarius had a full understanding of homework and its value.

Ellen, Jeffrey, and Lisa (high-readiness students) liked making good grades and believed that homework helped them make good grades. They believed that they could make good grades and that they would make good grades if they complete all of their homework. This information is supported by their mothers, the teacher, and the paraprofessional. Dayshawn (high-readiness student) stated that he believes that homework helps him make better grades and that he likes making good grades. However, if he fails to make a good grade, he does not fret over it; and if he does not want to do his homework, he will not do it. The teacher and the paraprofessional stated that he puts little value on his grades. Monaska seems to want good grades but does not want to do the work needed to get them. Her mother, the teacher, and the paraprofessional do not believe that Monaska understands the relationship between homework and grades.

All of the students like making good grades, expect to make good grades, and believe homework helps them make better grades except two high-readiness students (Monaska and Dayshawn). Monaska does not appear to understand the relationship between homework and grades and Dayshawn voiced that he likes making good grades but does not get upset over bad grades.

Based on these findings, some common patterns emerged. All of the students liked making good grades. Five of the 10 students indicated that they like making good grades. Considering the first theme, one stated that she likes the reward of getting candy

in exchange for earning good grades; another stated that she wanted to pass to the first grade; another liked to get 100's on his tests; another indicated that if he made a bad grade on a test, he would try to improve his grade the next time; and even though the fifth student stated that he liked making good grades, he said that he would not cry if he got a bad grade. Two of the 10 students stated that they were happy about making good grades. Two of the 10 students felt good about making good grades and one stated that he loved good grades and does not want to earn an "F."

Another theme was all of the students expected to make good grades if they did all of their homework. One of the students expected to get "happy faces" on his homework when he completed it. One student did not understand the relationship between homework and grades; however, she stated that she expected to make better grades when she did her homework. She believed that if someone made her do her homework, she should automatically receive good grades. It is possible that all of students expected to make good grades because they have noticed a relationship between homework completion and grades and the fact that they get praised for homework completion and good grades.

A third theme was homework helped students make better grades. All but one of the students believed that homework improved their grades. Two students' mothers indicated that there was a relationship between homework and grades because the content of the quizzes consists of similar material practiced by the child. One of these mothers used the example of spelling tests. When her child goes over the spelling words for the spelling test on Friday, she is able to score 100 because she has previously practiced the words at home. The other mother stated that when her child completed and understood

his homework, he was ready for the Friday quizzes because the skills practiced at home comprised the Friday quizzes. Three students stated that homework helps them get 100's on their tests. Another student's mother stated that her child knew he needs homework to make better grades. She reviewed over his spelling words every night until he knew them. One of students did not believe that homework helps her make better grades. This belief was mostly likely true because of her lack of a true understanding of the relationship between homework and grades.

These three themes appeared to be related. The students who believed that homework helps them make good grades also expected to earn good grades and liked good grades. It is possible that the praise the students were reported to have received when they make good grades influenced their expectations for good grades and their understanding of the relationship between homework and grades. For some of the students, parental involvement appeared to influence the students' feelings, knowledge, and expectations about homework and grades. There did not seem to be any noteworthy differences between the high and low readiness students. The student who appeared not to fully understand the relationship between homework and grades was a high readiness student.

School Behavior

A record of homework accuracy grades and quiz grades for seven weeks was kept. Homework was assigned Monday through Thursday for seven weeks. Grades were assigned based on the percentage of items answered correctly. Appendix J shows weekly homework averages for each student for each of the seven weeks. Appendix K shows homework averages for the entire seven weeks for each student. Quizzes were

administered on the seven Fridays of the investigation. Appendix L shows the quiz grades for each of the students for each week in the seven week period. Appendix M shows the quiz averages for each student for the seven week period. Joseph, Lisa, and Eldridge scored the highest homework grades (99, 99, 98). They also scored the highest quiz grades (99, 99, 100). However, Jeffrey (fourth highest homework grade of 95) scored the same quiz grade (99) as Joseph and Lisa. Shaneeka and Ellen improved their homework accuracy and quiz grades during the seven-week period. The low-readiness students had a 93 homework accuracy average while the high-readiness students had a 91 average. The low-readiness students had a 92 quiz average while the high-readiness students had a 93 quiz average. Thus, there was not much difference in the scores of the two groups.

As previously mentioned, the collective homework accuracy average of the low readiness students was 93. The grades ranged from 88 to 91. The collective quiz average of the low-readiness students was 92. The grades ranged from 70 to 100. Devantae, Eldridge, and Joseph all had weekly homework accuracy grades and quiz grades above 70. Tavarius had four quiz grades out of seven weekly quiz averages below 70 and Shaneeka had one homework accuracy grade below 70. The quiz grades of Devantae, Shaneeka, Eldridge, and Joseph either improved and/or were high throughout the seven-week period. Tavarius's homework accuracy and quiz grades fluctuated throughout the seven-week period; however, he performed relatively well during the last three weeks of the period.

As previously mentioned, the collective homework accuracy average of the high-readiness students was 91. The grades ranged from 83 to 99. The collective quiz average

of the high-readiness students was 93. The grades ranged from 75 to 99. The homework accuracy and quiz grades of Lisa, Jeffrey, and Dayshawn were all 70 and above. Lisa's grades were all above 90; Jeffrey had one grade of 78 and the rest were above 90; and Dayshawn had two grades of 75 and 86 while the rest were above 90. Ellen had two grades of 64 and 79 while the rest were above 85. Generally speaking, the homework accuracy and quiz grades of Lisa, Jeffrey, Dayshawn, and Ellen improved or remained constant throughout the period. Monaska's homework accuracy and quiz grades fluctuated throughout the period. She had four failing grades, one grade of 73, and rest were above 80.

Overall, the students achieved high grades. The homework accuracy grades collectively averaged 92 and ranged 83 to 99; and the quiz grades collectively averaged 93 and ranged 70 to 100. It is noteworthy that the lowest quiz average of 70 over the seven-week period was earned by a high-readiness student (Monaska) while the highest quiz average of 100 was earned by a low-readiness student (Joseph).

Thus, patterns emerge. The students achieved high grades on both homework accuracy and quizzes. There were no sizeable differences between the grades of the high-readiness and low-readiness students. There were no sizable differences between the average homework accuracy scores or the average quiz scores of the high and low readiness students. The students who earned the highest homework accuracy scores on the average also earned the highest quiz scores on the average. Of the two students who earned the lowest homework accuracy grades on the average, one earned one of the two lowest quiz averages. Two students who improved their homework accuracy grades also improved their quiz grades. Thus, it appears for this small sample that there is direct and

fairly consistent correspondence between the magnitude of the homework accuracy scores and the quiz scores.

Home and Classroom Environments

Home Environmental Resources and Environmental Barriers

Shaneeeka's, Eldridge's, and Joseph's (low-readiness students) moms voiced that they had adequate resources to assist their children with their homework. Devantae's (low-readiness student) mother stated that she needed a set of encyclopedias and a computer to better help her child. Tavarius's (low-readiness student) mother stated that she would benefit from additional materials; however, she failed to attend her parent conference and receive additional materials.

Barriers to homework success were uncovered. Tavarius stated the homework is too long. Eldridge was distracted when his mother and father talk while he is doing his homework, and he asks them to be quiet. He also stated that he cannot accurately complete his homework when the directions are not read to him and that he does not always pay attention. Devantae and Shaneeeka voiced no real barriers. Joseph stated that he is distracted by his little brother watching television. He also voiced that he has trouble completing his homework when the teacher fails to read the instructions. Additionally, in his mind, homework is hard. Barriers or lack of barriers were expressed by the mothers. Shaneeeka's mother and Joseph's mother expressed no real barriers to their children's homework success. Devantae's mother voiced the barriers of someone entering the room, a ringing telephone, and a knock at the door. Eldridge's mother indicated that the students should receive more homework. Tavarius's mother stated that she has trouble helping Tavarius remember his spelling words and that Tavarius is

distracted when his sister finishes her homework before he does and she gets to go outside. The teacher and the paraprofessional voiced barriers for some of these students. No barriers to success were voiced for Shaneeka or Joseph. Barriers experienced by Tavarius, Eldridge, and Devantae included someone walking in the door, conversations and the intercom. Tavarius and Eldridge were distracted by the length of the lecture. Devantae was distracted by the temperature in the classroom and the misbehavior of other students while Eldridge distracted other students. Tavarius was distracted by the manipulatives on the table used for instruction.

All the parents of the high-readiness students had adequate resources to assist their children with their homework. No significant barriers to success were uncovered in Ellen's homework experiences. A few barriers were uncovered in the homework experiences of Jeffrey and Lisa. Jeffrey stated that noise sometimes bothers him while he is completing his homework. Jeffrey's mother and Lisa's mother voiced that sometimes the wording of the homework is confusing. Jeffrey's mother noted that some of the homework is too easy while Lisa's mother and Dayshawn's mother indicated that there was a need for more homework. The teacher and the paraprofessional voiced no classroom barriers to Lisa's, Ellen's, or Jeffrey's success. Dayshawn's mother stated that she would like to have a guideline as to how much homework help to give her son. Dayshawn stated that noise interfered with him completing his homework. The teacher and the paraprofessional indicated that noise distracts him and Monaska in the classroom and that the lecture was too long for them. Monaska stated her brothers and her dog distracted her while she completed her homework. Monaska's mother indicated that her lackadaisical attitude and short attention span were barriers to her success.

Therefore, all of the students' parents had adequate resources to assist their children except two low-readiness students (Tavarius and Devantae). Tavarius's mother failed to attend her parent conference where materials were distributed. Devantae's mother needs a set of encyclopedias and a computer.

Additionally, one high-readiness student (Ellen) and one low-readiness student (Shaneeka) revealed no barriers to success. One low-readiness student (Eldridge) and two high-readiness students (Dayshawn and Lisa) have parents who believe that there is a need for more homework. One high-readiness student's (Jeffrey) mother believes that some of the homework is too easy. Two high-readiness students' (Jeffrey and Lisa) mothers' indicated that sometimes the wording of the homework is confusing. Noise is a barrier for three high-readiness students (Jeffrey, Dayshawn, and Monaska) and three low-readiness students (Tavarius, Eldridge, and Devantae). The lecture is too long for two high-readiness students (Dayshawn and Monaska) and two low-readiness students (Tavarius and Eldridge). One low-readiness student (Devantae) is distracted by the temperature in the classroom. This student (Devantae) is also distracted by the misbehavior of other students in the classroom. A low-readiness student (Eldridge) distracts other students in the classroom. Finally, one low-readiness student (Tavarius) and one high-readiness student (Monaska) are distracted by the instructional manipulatives on their classroom tables.

Several patterns were uncovered. Eight of the parents have adequate resources to assist their children with their homework partly because the classroom teacher provides many homework resources. Some students revealed no barriers to homework success; however for the other students, several barriers to homework success were found. The

home environment barriers included noise (television, and conversations) and the length of the homework. Length of the homework means that the homework is too long. The school environment barriers can be divided into physical barriers, human barriers, and educational barriers. The physical barriers included noise (intercom, air conditioner) and the temperature of the room. The human barriers included the misbehavior of other students as a distracter for the studying students or the studying students as a distracter for other students. Conversations were also distracters for some students. The educational barriers included the need for more homework, a need to raise the difficulty level of the homework, the confusing wording of some of the homework, the lengthiness of the lecture, and the manipulatives on the students' tables used for instruction.

Environmental Facilitators

Various facilitators were discovered among the low-readiness students. All the students stated that their mothers and sometimes others assist them with their homework. Joseph, Tavarius, Eldridge, and Shaneeka complete their homework after school before television or play. The mothers of Devantae, Tavarius, Joseph, and Shaneeka stated that they believed that the type and amount of homework were appropriate. Devantae's, Shaneeka's, Joseph's, and Eldridge's mothers spent about one hour or more helping them with their homework each night while Tavarius's mother spent about 10 minutes. The mothers of Joseph, Tavarius, Shaneeka, and Devantae believed that parents should spend about an hour assisting their children with their homework. (It is noteworthy that Tavarius's mother said that parents should spend an hour helping their children with their homework but that she only spends 10 minutes.) Eldridge's mother believed parents should spend as much time as it takes for their children to be successful. All the mothers

stated that homework does not interfere with family activities. All reported verbally praising their children when they completed their homework. All students had a time and a place to complete their homework. Eldridge and Joseph had one place of homework completion while Devantae, Tavarius, and Shaneeka had two or three places of homework completion. Eldridge completed his homework in the living room at an old-fashioned student desk. This area seemed appropriate for him because it kept him from becoming distracted. The lighting and temperature of the room seemed adequate. Joseph completed his homework in his bedroom on his bed. According to his mother, this quiet comfortable area worked well for him. Devantae and Shaneeka had more than one place of homework completion but their primary place of homework completion was at the kitchen table. Devantae's kitchen table was averaged sized and appeared adequate for writing and studying. It seemed that the lighting could be improved. Shaneeka's table was small and appeared most appropriate for completion by one or two persons. It seemed that the lighting could be improved. Tavarius and his mother disagreed on the primary place of homework completion. The mother identified that kitchen table but Tavarius identified the coffee table in the living room. The coffee table was very small and appeared as if it would not be the most comfortable place for homework completion. The lighting was very poor. The kitchen table was adequate for homework completion and the lighting appeared adequate.

The teacher and the paraprofessional voiced facilitators. Shaneeka and Joseph listened, paid attention, and participated in classroom activities. Eldridge paid attention sometimes. Devantae and Tavarius needed extensive repetition, one-on-one assistance and firmness. The teacher's instructional method of going over a skill, allowing students

to practice the skill in class, and assigning material incorporating that skill for homework appeared to be beneficial for the students.

Several facilitators were revealed among the high-readiness students. All the students in the high-readiness group received assistance with their homework. Homework did not interfere with their family activities and was completed before television or play. Lisa's, Dayshawn's, Ellen's, and Monaska's mothers indicated that the type of homework assigned was appropriate. Jeffrey's, Ellen's, and Monaska's mothers voiced that the amount of homework was appropriate. Ellen's mother spent about 40 minutes per day helping her child with her homework; Jeffrey's mother spent about one hour; and Lisa, Dayshawn and Monaska's mothers spent as long as it took. Jeffrey's and Lisa's mothers believed that students should spend about one hour per night on their homework. Dayshawn's mother believes that students should spend 20 minutes on their homework while Ellen's mother voiced 30 minutes. Monaska's mother believed parents should spend as much time as needed. All reported verbally praising their children when they completed their homework. All of the high-readiness students had places for homework completion. These places included the kitchen, living room, and bedroom. Monaska had two place of homework completion while the other students had one place of homework completion. The kitchen was the primary place of completion for Monaska, Jeffrey, Dayshawn, and Lisa. Monaska, Jeffrey, Dayshawn, and Lisa had large kitchen tables with plenty of room and good writing surfaces. The lighting was adequate. Lisa's kitchen was small and she and her sisters alternated working at the table and the kitchen's bar. The lighting was adequate. Ellen completed her homework at her desk in

her bedroom. She had a small black desk with a little brown chair. The lighting was adequate.

Facilitators were voiced by the teacher and the paraprofessional. They indicated that Lisa, Ellen and Dayshawn benefited from songs, educational games, and the language master. Lisa, Ellen, and Jeffrey listened, paid attention, followed directions, participated in class, and learned from their mistakes. Dayshawn and Monaska derived benefit from repetition and practice. Monaska benefited from one-on-one instruction and extra work. These students appeared to benefit from teacher's instructional method of going over a skill, allowing the students to practice the skill in class, and assigning material incorporating that skill for homework.

Several facilitators were common to both groups. All of the students received assistance from parents, siblings, or other relatives with their homework. Except for one low-readiness student (Devantae), all the students completed their homework before television or play. The mothers of four low-readiness students (Devantae, Shaneeka, Joseph, and Eldridge) and two high-readiness students (Ellen and Monaska) believed that the type and amount of homework are appropriate.

All the parents stated that homework did not interfere with family activities. The mothers of all of the low-readiness students and three high-readiness students (Lisa, Monaska, and Jeffrey) believe that parents should spend an hour per day or as long as it takes assisting their children with their homework. All the parents reported praising their children by saying "Good job" when they finished their homework. The primary area of homework completion for the students was the kitchen. Six students primarily completed their homework in the kitchen, two students primarily completed their homework in the

bedroom, one student primarily completed his homework in the living room and one student and his mother disagreed on the primary place of homework completion (kitchen versus living room).

The teacher and the paraprofessional indicated that three low-readiness students (Shaneeeka, Joseph, and Eldridge) and three high-readiness students (Lisa, Ellen, and Jeffrey) listened, paid attention, and participated in classroom activities. Two low-readiness students (Devantae and Tavarius) and two high-readiness students (Jeffrey and Monaska) benefited from repetition and one-on-one assistance. The teacher's instructional method appeared to be beneficial to all the students.

Thus, the emerging patterns were as followed: All the students received assistance with their homework. Nine students completed their homework before television or play. Six parents believed that the type and amount of homework were appropriate. Homework did not interfere with family activities. Eight parents believed that parents should spend one hour per day or as long as it takes to assist their children with their homework. Six students' primary area of homework completion was the kitchen. Homework success was heightened when students paid attention, listened, and participated in class. Students benefited from repetition and one-on-one assistance. The teacher's instructional method appeared to support homework completion.

CHAPTER 5

SUMMARY AND IMPLICATIONS

Using the interpretive case study method, an investigation of the influences on the homework experiences of 10 low-socioeconomic, African-American kindergarten students was conducted over a 12-week period. Based on GKAP scores, five low-readiness students and five relatively high-readiness students were selected by purposeful sampling. Consent and assent form signatures were obtained. Following two weeks of GKAP testing and three initial weeks of becoming accustomed to daily homework, seven weeks of data collection began. The participants included 10 kindergarten students, their parents, the kindergarten teacher, and the paraprofessional. Data collection methods consisted of interviews, records of homework completion and accuracy, and records of quiz scores. This information was used to answer the research questions.

Research Question

The general research question was as followed: How do the students' personal processes, the parents' home and the teacher's classroom environments, and the students' school academic behaviors interact to influence the homework experiences of low-socioeconomic, African-American, kindergarten students?

- A. How do the students' personal processes (including cognitive and affective processes) and the parents' home and the teacher's classroom environments interact to influence the homework experiences of the students?

- B How do the students' personal processes and the students' school academic behaviors interact to influence the homework experiences of students?
- C. How do the parents' home and teacher's classroom environments and the students' school academic behaviors interact to influence the homework experiences of students?

Discussion of Research Findings

The discussion of the research findings is organized by the three sub-questions of the general research question. These sub-questions include three areas of influence on the student's homework learning experience: personal processes, school behavior, and the home and classroom environments. According to Bandura (1986), personal processes are an area of influence on the learning experience of students that includes beliefs, attitudes, motivation, values, self-regulation, self-efficacy, and expectations. Bandura stated that school behaviors are an area of influence on the learning experience of students that may include homework completion rates, homework accuracy scores, and quiz scores. He defines environment as an area of influence on the learning experience of students that may include homework assistance or interference and supportive or non-supportive material and space in the home; and the teacher's homework instruction, assignments, feedback, reinforcement, punishment, and physical conditions of the classroom.

The discussion of the homework influences was derived from the interview responses of the students, their parents, their teacher and the paraprofessional, and from information concerning the homework completion and accuracy scores and quiz scores.

The influences were elaborated, and the findings summarized by noteworthy similarities and compared with existing research.

Homework Influences of Students' Personal Processes and Their Home and School Environments

According to the findings of this study, the personal process of motivation influenced the homework experiences of a majority of the students (three high-readiness and three low-readiness). Two motives discovered by the present study included a desire to not miss out on anything and a desire to avoid being admonished to complete homework by the teacher or the parent. These motives are consistent with Bandura's social cognitive theory (1986). According to this theory, students are motivated by past reinforcements, promised reinforcements (incentives), and vicarious reinforcements to imitate their teachers' and parents' modeling of homework skills. Students are also motivated to imitate models by past punishments, promised punishments (threats), and vicarious punishments. Hence, the desire not to miss out on anything (motive extracted from the present study) may be interpreted as a promised reinforcement, while the desire to avoid being admonished to complete homework (motive extracted from the present study) may be interpreted as the avoidance of a promised punishment (negative reinforcement). According to Bandura (1986), seeing and recalling other students being punished (e.g., admonished) for not completing their homework (present study) is a vicarious (indirect) punishment for the observing students.

Parental assistance was also a motive in this study. One student's mother stated that her child became more motivated as she continued to assist him with his homework.

According to Bandura (1986), models and their reinforcements and punishments may environmentally influence students but students are not merely passive recipients of this external motivation. Their personal processes of self-efficacy and also their self-regulated behaviors of homework completion have an active influence on the teacher's, the paraprofessional's and the parents' external motivations. Consistent with these influences of student self-efficacy and self-regulation on external motivations, the present study found that environmental influences of the modeling, reinforcements, and punishments provided by the teacher and the parents contribute to a positive homework experience.

The majority of the students (three high-readiness students and three low-readiness students) in the present study worked independently on their homework as reported by their parents. Furthermore, the teacher stated that these students were able to work independently on class assignments. The ability to work independently is an expression of self-regulation (Boeree, 1998; Ormrod, 2004; Schunk & Zimmerman, 1997). Consistent with Bandura's social cognitive theory (1986), these six students were able to monitor their work. They listened to directions and completed assignments in a timely manner without having an adult present to direct them.

Illustrative of the interactive influences between the students' personal processes and the environments of the home and school, the present study found that self-regulation was influenced by the educational modeling provided by the teacher and the parents. The students gradually learned how to independently complete their homework assignments (self-regulation) by observing and imitating the modeling of their parents and the teacher. Their greatest dependence on the models was during the observation and imitative stages

when they initially learned how to do homework assignments with the modeling and assistance of their parents and the teacher. This dependence gradually lessened as students learned to do their homework with minimal assistance from their parents and teacher and developed self-regulation skills for independently completing their homework. This finding is consistent with Schunk and Zimmerman (1995) who found that learning is transferred in four steps: observationally, imitatively, self-controlled, and self-regulated. These four steps are related to academic learning. During the observational stage, the student watches and tries to accurately monitor the modeled behavior. During the imitation stage, the student's performance tries to copy the model's performance. During the self-controlled level, the student is able to work somewhat independently but is still dependent on the model's image and past verbalizations. At the self-regulatory stage, the learner independently understands the information and does not depend on the model.

Homework Influences of Students' Personal Processes and Their Academic Behaviors

As documented, the students' grades for homework accuracy and quizzes were relatively high. The grade averages ranged from 86 to 99 on the homework accuracy and 70 to 100 on the quizzes. It is interesting that a high-readiness student earned the lowest quiz average of 70 while a low-readiness student earned the highest quiz average of 100.

Most students (eight of 10) reported strong self-efficacy and high-performance expectations. Because the students in the present study believed that they could do the homework (strong self-efficacy) and do it well (high expectation), they tended to work hard and experienced success with their homework. This finding is consistent with Bandura's theory: "In activities that call upon competencies, perceived self-efficacy

mediates how outcome expectations influence personal decisions and expenditures of effort” (Bandura, 1986, p. 231). Furthermore, according to Bandura (1986), there is an interactive relationship between students’ self-efficacy and their homework achievement. On the one hand, the stronger or the weaker the homework self-efficacy of students, the more likely they are to achieve success or failure on homework. On the other hand, the greater or lesser their successful achievement, the stronger or weaker their self-efficacy becomes. In support of the influence of student achievement on student efficacy and performance expectations, the present study found that the majority of the students possessed strong self-efficacy and high-performance expectations that influenced their high grades. In turn the high grades increased their self-efficacy and high performance expectations. In general, their grades either increased or remained high throughout the seven-week period. The two students who did not possess strong self-efficacy and high-performance expectations had fluctuating homework accuracy grades. One of these students also had fluctuating quiz grades while the other student earned high quiz grades.

A majority of the students (three high-readiness and three low-readiness) were motivated to complete their homework and make good grades. Three motives relevant to the present study included a desire to pass to the first grade, a desire to get an education, and a desire to obtain extrinsic rewards such as candy. These motives are consistent with Bandura’s social cognitive theory (1986). According to this theory, students are motivated by past reinforcements, promised reinforcements (incentives), and vicarious reinforcements to imitate their teachers’ and parents’ modeling of homework skills. In the present study, promised reinforcements (such as passing to first grade,

getting an education, and getting candy) motivated the students to complete their homework and achieve good grades.

A minority of the students (two high-readiness and two low-readiness) had attitudes toward homework that were not completely positive. However, the grades and homework completion rates for these four students did not appear to be notably affected by their attitudes. It appeared that these students completed their homework to merely obtain a reward or to avoid the admonishment of the teacher. Cooper, Jackson, Nye, and Lindsay (2001) found that elementary students' attitudes toward homework were not associated with student grades or homework completion rates. They noted that a student could have a negative attitude toward homework and still achieve high grades and complete his/her homework. Four of the students in the present study appeared to have negative or neutral homework attitudes that were overridden by extrinsic motives.

In general, there did not appear to be noteworthy differences in homework performances between the low-readiness students and the high-readiness students. Overall, both groups performed equally well. However, as a result of their equal performances the low-readiness students appear to have benefited the most because they had the most to gain.

Hence, the personal processes of self-efficacy, high performance expectations, and motivation interacted with the students' school behaviors of homework completion and accuracy rates and quizzes to mutually reinforce each other. Furthermore, the present study revealed that less than positive attitudes toward homework were not necessarily associated with student grades or homework completion rates.

Homework Influences of Students' Academic Behaviors and Their Home and School Environments

In the home environment, all the students had a time and a place to complete their homework. Likewise, Bempechat (2004) noted that many low-socioeconomic parents make sure that their children have a time and a place for homework completion. Places of homework completion associated with the present study included the kitchen, living room, and bedroom. The primary area of completion for the students was the kitchen. Six students primarily completed their homework in the kitchen, two students primarily completed their homework in the bedroom, one student primarily completed his homework in the living room, and one student and his mother disagreed on the primary place of homework completion (kitchen versus living room). Because all of the students had an adequate place to complete their homework (environment), the students' academic behaviors appeared to be positively supported.

In the classroom environment, the teacher assigned homework Monday through Thursday. She graded it and returned it in a timely manner. She went over the homework instructions several times and tried to make sure the students understood it. Several researchers uphold this procedure. Feldman (2004) supports the assignment of routine homework and Butler (1987) supports providing the students with clear homework instructions. Hinchey (1996) supports the return of homework assignments in a timely manner. Hinchey noted that when students fail to receive corrected homework assignments from the teacher, they do not believe the homework is important. The students in the present study did not comment on the usefulness of receiving corrected homework, but several liked to show off their graded homework to relatives and other

adults. Thus, routine homework assignments and clear homework instructions (classroom environment) appeared to contribute to the students' high homework completion rates (students' academic behavior).

In general, most parents indicated that they had adequate resources for providing homework assistance. Specifically, eight (five high-readiness and three low-readiness) of the ten students' parents indicated that they had adequate resources to assist their children with their homework. During parent/teacher conferences, the teacher provided the parents with materials and suggestions of ways they could assist their children. This kind of support is recommended by Feldman (2004) who indicated that teachers should involve parents in the homework process by advising them as to the most helpful ways to assist their children. Thus, adequate resources (home environment) appeared to provide helpful support for high homework completion rates (students' academic behaviors).

Several barriers to homework success were uncovered. The home environment barrier or distracter was primarily noise from various sources such as people, pets, and televisions. An article in *NEA Today* ("Helping your students..."n.d.) stated that one way parents can facilitate the homework process is by making sure that their children have a place to study, which is free of distractions. This finding was supported by Cooper, Lindsay, and Nye (2000), and Kralovec and Buell (2000). Most parents in the present study appeared to make efforts to keep their children's homework environments free of distractions by having them complete their homework before television or play. Distracting noises (home environment) may have negatively influenced some students' homework accuracy and completion rates and/or their quiz grades (students' academic behaviors).

The school environment barriers were categorized into three types: physical barriers, human barriers, and educational barriers. As previously stated, physical barriers included noise and the temperature of the room. Human barriers involved the misbehavior of the students, and educational barriers included such distracters as confusing wording on the homework assignments, the need for more homework, and the need to raise the difficulty level of some of the homework. Noise was a noteworthy physical and human barrier (reported by parents and students) for three high-readiness students and three low-readiness students. Sources of noise included other persons, the intercom, the television, and the air conditioner. The educational barriers, sometimes expressed as concerns (reported by the parents), included an expressed need for more homework, an expressed need to raise the difficulty level of the homework, the confusing wording of some of the homework, the lengthiness of the lecture, and the distraction of instructional manipulatives on the students' tables. The need to raise the difficulty level of some of the homework was expressed by one high-readiness parent. Also the need for more homework was expressed by the parents of one high-readiness student and one low-readiness student. These parents compensated for their perceived lack of homework quantity by preparing extra work for their children. According to Van Voorhis (2004), teachers should assign enough homework at the appropriate level to allow students to practice skills. Another educational barrier was the confusing wording on some of the homework. This barrier was expressed by the parents of two high-readiness students. Therefore, students' quiz grades and homework accuracy and completion rates (students' academic behavior) may have been negatively influenced somewhat by occasional noise and confusing homework's directions (classroom environment). Butler (1987) noted the

importance of clear homework instructions for ensuring a more successful homework experience.

All the students in the present study stated that their mothers assisted them with their homework. Some students sat with their parents throughout the entire homework process and assisted them. When these students became more independent, their parents read the directions and let the students complete the work on their own. Other parents gave their children the assigned homework to complete independently and then checked it afterwards. Some parents created additional assignments for their children. Kralovec and Buell (2000) noted that academic ability can be fostered by a student's parents or guardians. One existing perception concerning African-American parents is that they do not assist their children with homework and that their attitudes toward education and homework are negative (Lott, 2001). Contrary to this perception, Lott's literature review revealed that this perception is a stereotype perpetuated by dominant views and that research studies do not support these views. Drummond and Stipek (2004) found that low-income parents of second grade students believed that parental assistance with academic work was very important. Since all the parents (African-American) in the present study assisted their children with their homework, the views of Kralovec and Buell, Lott, and Drummond and Stipek are supported. Additionally Parker, Boak, Griffin, Ripple, and Peay (1999) found that parents who assisted their children with academic skills at home achieved higher cognitive levels than those who failed to assist their children. A similar finding by Fry (2001) was that students who received parental help with their homework earned higher grades than those who received no parental assistance. In fact, Cooper (2001) noted that parental assistance may be most beneficial

to struggling learners in the early grades. Consistent with these studies, the parents' homework assistance (home environment) in the present study appeared to positively influence the students' homework accuracy and completion rates and quiz grades (students' academic behavior).

Most parents also allowed others to assist their children with homework. Specifically, seven of the students' parents (three low-readiness and four high-readiness) allowed siblings and other family members and friends to assist their children with homework. Diamond (2004) noted that African-American parents permit extended family members as well as other adults to be involved in their children's education and encourage their academic behavior. The present study did not investigate the quality of this homework assistance.

Most parents reported that the amount and type of homework was appropriate for kindergarten students. Specifically, seven students' (four low-readiness and three high-readiness) parents stated that the amount of assigned homework was appropriate. Nine students' (five low-readiness and four high-readiness) parents stated that the type of assigned homework was appropriate. According to Van Voorhis (2004), teachers need to assign appropriate types and amounts of homework to students. In the present study, the type and amount of assigned homework (school environment) appeared to have positively influence the students' homework completion rates (students' academic behavior).

All the parents in the present study stated that homework did not interfere with family activities. Dudley-Marling (2003) noted that parents of struggling students viewed homework as a disruption to their lives. His study included primarily middle-

class Black, White, and Asian parents whose struggling learners ranged in age from eight to fifteen. These parents believed that large amounts of homework contributed to their family's stress and frustration. Kralovec and Buell (2000) noted that the stress placed on such families can cause long-lasting problems. Ratnesar (1999) studied elementary parents who believed that their children were assigned too much homework. These were primarily middle-class parents of students of various grade levels. The findings of Ratnesar's study revealed that the results of too much homework included excessive family stress and a lack of sufficient leisure. In the present study, the parents of the kindergarteners made time for homework, and it was viewed as a positive necessity as opposed to a negative disruption. None of the parents voiced or exhibited any signs of stress about the amount of homework or its completion time. The parents in present study believed in putting homework first. One parent stated that the fact that homework is only assigned Monday through Thursday allowed time for leisure activities on the weekends. The families in the present study were low-socioeconomic, African American with kindergarten students while the families of Ratnesar's and Dudley-Marling's studies were primarily middle-class Americans with students in elementary grades above kindergarten. The fact that homework did not interfere with family activities for the participants of the present study (home environment) at least made homework completion easier (students' academic behavior).

Most mothers in the present study reported parents should spend an hour or more assisting their children with homework. Specifically, eight out of 10 of the parents (five low-readiness and three high-readiness) stated that parents should spend one hour or as long as it takes assisting their children with homework. However, existing research

recommends 10 to 20 minutes of homework per night for kindergarten students (Cooper, 1994; Butler, 1987; Sullivan & Sequoia, 1996). The finding of the present study support the findings of Bempechat (2004), an advocate and researcher of homework for kindergarten students, who supports parents who contribute to their children's academic readiness for future activities.

It is possible that the parents in the present study were low-efficacy parents as defined by Hoover-Dempsey, Bassler, and Brissie (1992). Low-efficacy parents' beliefs about their ability to effectively assist their children with their homework are not high; however, they want their children to succeed. Therefore, they spend more time helping their children with homework than high-efficacy parents. In the present study, one hour of parental assistance of homework per night (home environment) appears to have positively influenced homework completion rates (students' academic behavior).

One parent of a low-readiness student stated that parents should spend an hour helping their children with their homework; however, she reported only spending 10 minutes helping her child. She was the only example out of 10 parents of Wood's (2003) claim that African-Americans parents verbally promote high achievement but do very little to help their children achieve it.

All the parents in the present study reported praising their children by saying "Good job" when they finished their homework. One parent also said "high five." Praise is positive reinforcement that tends to strengthen desired behaviors (Bandura, 1977). Bandura identified two results of positive reinforcements: it signals the receipt of information and strengthening the information. In other words, when a student is reinforced for completing homework accurately, that student receives information about

the accuracy of his/her skill and the positive reinforcement intensifies that information. Thus parental praise (home environment) appeared to reinforce homework completion and accuracy rates and quiz scores (students' academic behavior). However, the type of praise given by the parents can be improved. According to Needlman (2004), the parents in the present study used global (general) praise such as "Good job" or "Good boy." This global praise was too general and did not communicate the specific tasks performed well by the children. Needlman stated that specific praise should be used to descriptively inform students about what they did that was well done. In other words, parents should be specific and descriptive about the noteworthy tasks accomplished by their children.

The teacher and the paraprofessional indicated that the majority of students (three high-readiness and three low-readiness) listened, paid attention, and participated in classroom activities. According to social cognitive theory (Bandura, 1977; 1986), one of the key environmental influences on student learning is the educational modeling provided by proficient peers, teachers, and parents. In the classroom, the teacher and the paraprofessional are the primary models of academic skills. One of the components of modeling is attention. The motivation to pay attention is facilitated by the models' competence, prestige, and power (Boeree, 1998). In the present study, the teacher's and the paraprofessional's power and prestige appeared to have positively influenced the attention of the students.

The paraprofessional stated that one student's homework success was due to previous attendance in a quality pre-school. Schweinhart, Montie, Barnett, Belfield, and Nores (2005) noted that high-quality preschool programs especially benefit low-socioeconomic, African-American students.

All the students in the present study appeared to benefit from the teacher's instructional method of distributed practice. Two high-readiness and two low-readiness students especially benefited from repetition and one-on-one assistance. According to the teacher and the paraprofessional repetition and one-on-one assistance helped these students learn the skills necessary to accurately complete their homework. Two of these students experienced an upward trend in their homework accuracy grades. The other two students' progress went up and down which may have indicated that these influences were more beneficial for some skills than for others or that more repetition was needed. The teacher's instructional method corresponded to the reproduction component of modeling in social cognitive theory (Bandura, 1977; 1986). The teacher used the reproduction method of distributed practice (Willingham, 2002) in which the instruction was taught and practiced in several spaced sessions as opposed to a few massed sessions. The type of assigned homework was practice homework. This homework was assigned after a skill was taught. Eddy (1984), Epstein and Van Voorhis (2001), and Cooper (2001) noted that practice assignments strengthened newly taught skills. Eddy stated that practice assignments are most helpful when distributed after a recently taught skill. Eight students' parents (four low-readiness and four high-readiness) commented on the importance of repetition in the homework process. One parent stated that she was able to see what her child studied in school and go over that material at home. Another parent stated that when the students (she was referring to her child and generalizing) completed their homework and return to school, the teacher could note improvements. Two parents stated that the correlation between the school lessons and homework was helpful. The other four parents acknowledged that they used repetition to help their children learn

academic skills at home. It was interesting that the two parents who did not comment on the usefulness of repetition had children who especially benefited from repetition and one-on-one assistance in the classroom. Based on the students' high homework accuracy and completion rates and high quiz grades (students' academic behavior), it appeared that distributed practice was effective (school environment).

The research community differs on views concerning homework and academic achievement. Huntsinger, Krieg, and Jose (1998) noted that kindergarten students derive academic benefits from the completion of homework assignments. However, Cooper (1989; 1994), Cooper and Valentine (2001), and Cooper, Robinson and Patall (2006) found that homework has a negligible effect on the academic achievement of elementary students. The present study found that kindergarten students benefited academically on basic skills when they were given homework practice to strengthen those basic skills. Interesting are Cooper's (2001) findings. He noted that the correlation between homework and academic outcomes "gets larger for subjects for which homework assignments are more likely to involve rote learning, practice, or rehearsal" (p. 29). He indicated that "students should be given simple assignments to improve achievement" (p. 61). Cooper also noted that homework should be assigned to younger students to "reinforce the basic skills learned in class" (p. 65). The results of the present qualitative study are consistent with his quantitative findings. Also, it appears that the low-readiness students benefited the most from the regular practice because they had the most to gain from it. Thus, homework practice (home environment) appeared to strengthen academic skills (students' academic behavior).

Conclusions

A positive homework learning experience for low-socioeconomic, African American students may be influenced by personal factors, home and classroom environmental factors, and school behavior. Relevant personal factors included the presence of self-efficacy, self-regulation, motivation to complete homework, high expectations, and positive personal beliefs. Relevant home environmental factors included students having a time and a place (free of distractions) to complete their homework, parents having adequate resources to assist their children, parental assistance with homework, and positive parental views of homework. Classroom environmental factors included the teaching method of distributed practice, use of practice homework, clear homework instructions, small group instruction, use of educational manipulatives, the assignment of homework Monday through Thursday, and the distribution of educational materials to parents by the teacher. School behavior included documentation of homework accuracy grades on homework assigned Monday's through Thursday's; and documentation of quiz grades administered on Friday's.

Parental involvement appeared to be very important to the success of the homework process. Homework at this age seems to best benefit the children when parents or other concerned individuals are involved. The parents in this study were willing to put in the time needed to assist their children. The parents also praised their children when they completed their homework and thus motivated them to continue completing their homework.

Educational Implications

Positive homework learning experiences for low-socioeconomic, African

American students may enhance the educational development of young children who lack basic readiness skills. The following educational implications were derived from the homework influences identified in this study. It is beneficial for teachers to communicate their homework expectations to parents. Students who lack academic readiness may academically profit from teachers who assign practice homework Monday through Thursday following the teaching of skills by the teaching method of distributive practice. Ideally, the homework should be checked and returned in a timely manner to further reinforce mastery of skills. When needed, teachers should advise parents concerning effective ways to assist their children with homework and provide parents with supportive materials to use with their children. These materials should be related to curriculum and to grade promotion requirements.

It is imperative that parents (family members, and/or friends) assist their children with their homework. To further reinforce academic readiness, they may also read to their children about 10 to 15 minutes each day (Reading tips, 2004). After students complete their homework, parents/caretakers should verbally reinforce skill mastery with specific praise.

The limitations of this qualitative study prevent definitive recommendations about the generalized benefits of homework for all kindergarten students. However, educators and parents working with kindergarten students from similar backgrounds and conditions as the students in this study may find the educational recommendations informative and useful.

The present study can make a contribution to the curriculum studies program at

Georgia Southern University. One of the goals of this program is to promote educational equity among all students. The assignment of practice homework on a regular basis to low-socioeconomic, African American, kindergarten students may improve the academic achievement of these students and help to close the achievement gap that stares in the early years. By providing an equitable educational foundation in kindergarten, students are more likely to have a fair change to succeed in their schooling.

Future Recommendations for Research

According to Cooper (2001) parental assistance may be most beneficial to struggling learners in the early grades. If I were to do further study in this area, I would like to study the homework progress of a small group of three to four students for an entire year and focus on the parents' involvement in the homework process.

It would also be interesting to follow the 10 students in this study throughout their educational career and study their levels of academic achievement. It would be interesting to know whether or not they meet, exceed, or fall below grade-level at the various levels of their academic journeys.

Dissemination

This information will be disseminated to the Parent-Teacher Organization (PTO), kindergarten teachers, and the kindergarten-parent workshop. During the PTO meeting, an explanation of homework and the role of the parent in the homework process will help to inform the parents. During a meeting with kindergarten teachers, an explanation of the role of the teacher in the homework process will likely benefit the teacher.

During a kindergarten parent workshop, teachers may use this research to provide parents with information to work with their children. Teachers may present the

information to parents and offer implementation suggestions. Parents may ask questions and clear up any misunderstandings about their role, the information, or implementation of the information.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX A
IRB APPROVAL LETTER

Georgia Southern University Office of Research Services & Sponsored Programs		
Institutional Review Board (IRB)		
Phone: 912-681-5465		Administrative Annex
		P.O. Box 8005
Fax: 912-681-0719	Ovrsight@GeorgiaSouthern.edu	Statesboro, GA 30460

To: Sheryl Venable
1401-B Westwood Drive
Albany, GA 31721

CC: Dr. Dan Rea, Faculty Advisor
P. O. Box 8144

From: Office of Research Services and Sponsored Programs
Administrative Support Office for Research Oversight Committees
(IACUC/IBC/IRB)

Date: August 3, 2006

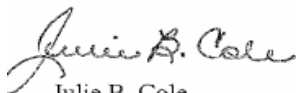
Subject: Status of Application for Approval to Utilize Human Subjects in Research

After a review of your proposed research project numbered: **H06241**, and titled "**Understanding the Influences on the Homework Experiences of Low-Socioeconomic, African-American, Kindergarten Students**", it appears that (1) the research subjects are at minimal risk, (2) appropriate safeguards are planned, and (3) the research activities involve only procedures which are allowable.

Therefore, as authorized in the Federal Policy for the Protection of Human Subjects, I am pleased to notify you that the Institutional Review Board has approved your proposed research.

This IRB approval is in effect for one year from the date of this letter. If at the end of that time, there have been no changes to the research protocol, you may request an extension of the approval period for an additional year. In the interim, please provide the IRB with any information concerning any significant adverse event, **whether or not it is believed to be related to the study**, within five working days of the event. In addition, if a change or modification of the approved methodology becomes necessary, you must notify the IRB Coordinator **prior** to initiating any such changes or modifications. At that time, an amended application for IRB approval may be submitted. Upon completion of your data collection, you are required to complete a *Research Study Termination* form to notify the IRB Coordinator, so your file may be closed.

Sincerely,



Julie B. Cole
Director of Research Services and Sponsored Programs

APPENDIX B
PARENTAL INFORMED CONSENT

COLLEGE OF EDUCATION

DEPARTMENT OF CURRICULUM, FOUNDATIONS AND READING

Parental Informed Consent

Dear Parent or Guardian:

I am Ms. Venable. I am a graduate student at Georgia Southern University and I will be conducting a homework study at your child's school in the next few weeks. Its purpose is to study influences on the homework experiences of African-American kindergarten students.

If you give permission, I will be studying your child's feelings about homework and his/her performances on weekly quizzes. I will gather information about your child's feelings toward homework by interviewing him/her. I will also be conducting a home visit. During this visit, I will interview you and your child.

Participation in the study is completely voluntary for you and your child. The risks from participating in this study are no more than would be encountered in everyday life; however, you or your child may stop participating at any time without penalty. You must be at least 18 years of age to participate.

I hope this study will contribute to the world of education. Current research states that homework is not academically beneficial to kindergarten students. I believe that homework is academically beneficial to kindergarten students and serves as a foundation for further learning.

This study will last approximately seven weeks. In order to protect the confidentiality of you and your child, numbers will be used on all information. All information obtained will be locked in a cabinet. Interviews will be taped and kept in a locked cabinet. Only I and the faculty advisor will have access to the tapes. They will be destroyed by the year 2008.

If you have any questions or concerns about this study, please feel free to contact me at 431-3495. You can reach my advisor, Dr. Dan Rea at (912) 871-1547. For questions concerning your rights as a research participant, you may contact the Georgia Southern University Office of Research Services and Sponsored Programs at 912-681-0843.

If you wish to give permission for you and your child to participate in this study, please sign below. Your child will be read a simplified version of a consent form. A copy of

this form is provided for you. You will be given a copy of this consent form to keep for your records.

Title of Project: Understanding the influences on the homework experiences of low-socioeconomic, African-American, kindergarten students

Principal Investigator: (Ms. Venable, 229: 431-3495)

Faculty Advisor: (Dr. Rea, 912: 871-1547)

Participant Signature

Date

I, the undersigned, verify that the above informed consent procedure has been followed.

Investigator Signature

Date

APPENDIX C
MINOR'S ASSENT

COLLEGE OF EDUCATION

DEPARTMENT OF CURRICULUM, FOUNDATIONS, AND READING

MINOR'S ASSENT

Hello Student's Name,

As you know, I am Ms. Venable. I am a graduate student at Georgia Southern University conducting a study on homework.

I would like for you to help me with this study. I will be keeping up with your homework for seven weeks. I will also keep up with your tests. I need to ask you and the person who helps you with your homework some questions.

You do not have to help me. You can stop helping me whenever you want to. Even if your parents said you could help me, you do not have to help me if you do not want to.

When I ask you questions about homework, no one will see your answers. I will tape your answers. Everything will be locked in a cabinet.

If you understand what I said and you want to help me, please print your name on the line below.

Yes, I want to help with the homework project: _____

Child's Name: _____

Investigator's Signature: _____

Date: _____

APPENDIX D
HOMEWORK SAMPLES

Name: _____

Same

Directions: Draw a set that has the same number as the first set.



Homework Sample

Name: _____

Directions: Circle the capital "E" or small "e."

1. e f l e

2. e u e p

3. E F L E

4. E E I Z

5. e m e n

6. E Y E P

7. E U H E

8. e v s e

9. E Y E B

10. e x e z

APPENDIX E
PARENT INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

How do the students' personal processes and the parents' home and teacher's classroom environments interact to influence the homework experiences of students?

1. How do you think your child feels about homework? (attitudes/ home/ school)
2. Do you think your child likes to do homework? (attitudes/ home/ school)
3. Do you think your child believes that homework helps him/her understand his/her school work? (beliefs/ school)
4. How do you believe that your child is motivated or not motivated by you to complete his/her homework? (motivation/ home)
5. How do you think your child views his/her ability to complete his/her homework? (self-efficacy/ home)
6. Describe the value your child places on homework? (value/ home/ school)
7. How independent is your child about completing his/her homework? Does he/she have to be supervised? Does he/she finish it? (self-regulation/ home)
8. Do you believe your child expects to be able to complete his/her homework accurately? (expectations, home)
9. When does your child complete his/her homework? Is it before or after TV or play? (self-regulation/home)
10. What support or resources would assist you in helping your child with homework? (home)

How do the student's personal processes and the students' school academic behaviors interact to influence the homework experiences of students?

1. Do you think your child believes that homework helps him/her make better grades in school? (beliefs/performance)
2. How would you describe your child's feelings about the value of homework in helping him/her to make better grades? (values/ behavior)
3. Do you think that your child thinks that homework improves his/her academic behavior? (self-efficacy/ behavior)
4. What do you think is the relationship between amount of initiative your child takes to complete his/her homework and his/her grades? (self-regulation/ behavior)
5. Does your child expect to make better grades when he/she completes his/her homework? (expectancy/ behavior)
6. What do you think is the relationship between your child's motivation to complete his/her homework and his/her academic behavior?
(motivation/ behavior)
7. How is your child's attitude related to his/her grades?
(attitude/ behavior)

How do the parents' home and teacher's school environments and the students' school behaviors interact to influence the homework experiences of students?

1. How much homework does your child complete each day? (home/ behavior)

2. Describe the place your child completes his/her homework. (home/ behavior)
3. How long does it take your child to complete his/her homework? (home/ behavior)
4. What do you think are some of the benefits of helping your child with his/her homework? (home/ behavior)
5. How useful is homework for helping your child improve what he/she learns in school? (home/ behavior)
6. How does homework completion affect your child's academic behavior? (home/ academic behavior)
7. What are your feelings about the amount of homework assigned to your child and his/her grades? (school/ academic behavior)
8. Does your child's homework interfere with other family activities? (home, school)
9. What time of the evening or night does your child complete his/her homework? (home/ academic behavior)
10. What is going on while your child is completing his/her homework? (home/ academic behavior)
11. Describe any interferences your child experiences while completing his/her homework? (home/ academic behavior)
12. How do you think your child's teacher feels about homework? (school/ home)

13. To your knowledge, does the teacher support homework completion by the students? (school/home)
14. Describe the appropriateness of the homework assigned to your child? (too difficult, too easy, just right, etc.) (home/school)
15. How much time do you spend each day helping your child with his/her homework? (home/ academic behavior)
16. How much time do you think your child should spend on homework each day? (home/ academic behavior)
17. Describe how you help your child with homework? (academic behavior/ home)
18. How much help do you think parents should give their children with their homework? (home/ school/ academic behavior)
19. What are some problems you have in assisting your child with his/her homework? (home/ academic behavior)
20. How do you encourage your child to complete his/her homework? (home/ academic behavior)
21. What do you say or do when your child completes his/her homework? (home/ academic behavior)

APPENDIX F
STUDENT INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

How do the students' personal processes and the parents' home and teacher's classroom environments interact to influence the homework experiences of students?

1. How do you feel about the homework assigned by the teacher?
(attitude/ school)
2. How has the teacher helped you with your homework?
(belief/ school)
3. How has your parent(s) helped you with your homework?
(belief/ home)
4. How important do you think homework is for learning?
(value/ home/ school)
5. What are some ways that homework helps you learn?
(value/ home/ school)
6. How well do you think you've been doing on your homework?
(efficacy/ home/ school)
7. What would have helped you do better when doing your _____ assignment? (efficacy/ home/ school)
8. When you did your _____ assignments last week, do you think you improved? (efficacy/ home/ school)
9. How do you think you will do on your homework assignments next week?
(expectancy/ home/ school)
10. What did you learn from your homework last week?
(beliefs/ home/ school)
11. What is the easiest thing about homework?

(beliefs/ home/ school)

12. What is the hardest thing about homework?

(beliefs/ home/ school)

13. What things or people make it hard for you to do your homework?

(beliefs/ home/ school)

14. What things or people make it easy for you to do your homework?

(beliefs/ home/ school)

15. What do you do when something bothers you while you are doing your homework? (self-regulation/ home)

16. Why do you do your homework?

(motivation/ home/ school)

17. What would happen if you did not do your homework?

(motivation/ home/ school)

18. Let's play pretend. I'll be you and you be the person who helps you with your homework. Pretend you are helping me.

(beliefs/ home)

How do the student's personal processes and the students' school academic behaviors interact to influence the homework experiences of students?

1. How does homework help you?

(beliefs/academic behavior)

2. How did homework help you last week?

(beliefs/academic behavior)

3. How does homework help you with your quizzes?

(beliefs/academic behavior)

4. What kind of grades do you think you will earn if you complete all of your homework? (expectations/academic behavior)
5. What would you do or what have you done when you have made a bad grade on a test? (self-regulation/ academic behavior)
7. How important is it to you to make good grades? (values/academic behavior)
8. How do you feel about making good grades?
(attitudes/academic behavior)
9. Why do you do your homework?
(motivation)

How do the parents' homes and teacher's school environments and the students' school academic behaviors interact to influence the homework experiences of students?

1. Who helps you with your homework? (home)
2. Where do you do your homework at home? (home)
3. When do you do your homework at home? Is it before or after TV or play? (home)
4. If someone helps you with your homework, how does it help you on your quizzes? (home/ academic behavior)
5. How do your homework assignments help you on your quizzes?
(home/ academic behavior)
6. How does the teacher help you complete your homework assignments?
(school environment/ home environment)

APPENDIX G
TEACHER INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

How do the students' personal processes and the teacher's classroom environment interact to influence the homework experiences of students?

1. How do you think your students feel about your homework assignments?
(belief/assignment)
2. Do you think that your students believe that they can complete the homework assignments accurately? (self-efficacy/assignment)
3. How are your students motivated by you to complete their homework assignments? (motivation/assignment)
4. Do you think that your students expect to be able to complete their homework assignments? (expectation/assignment)
5. How independently do you believe your students can complete their homework assignments? (self-regulation/assignment)
6. Describe the value you believe your students place on their homework assignments? (value/assignment)
7. Discuss the attitudes you believe your students have toward the homework assignments? (attitudes/assignment)
8. Discuss what you tell your students about homework?
9. Do you give homework instructions? If so, how do you believe it affects or does not affect the students' motivation to complete their assignments? (motivation/instructions)
10. Describe the relationship between the homework instruction you give (if applicable) and the students' beliefs about their ability to complete it. (self efficacy/instructions)

11. Do you return homework? If so, how do you think this affects the students' motivation to complete their assignments? (motivation/feedback)
12. If you return homework assignments, how do you think this affects the students' attitudes toward homework? (attitudes/feedback)
13. If you return homework assignments, how do you think this affects the students' values toward homework? (value/feedback)
14. How does your learning environment affect the students' ability to independently complete their homework? (classroom condition/self-regulation)
15. How does your learning environment affect the students' beliefs about homework? (classroom condition/beliefs)

How do the teacher's school environment and the students' school academic behavior interact to influence the homework experiences of students?

1. How is your homework instruction related to the students' homework completion and accuracy? (instruction/homework completion and accuracy)
2. How is your homework instruction related to the students' quiz scores? (instruction and quiz scores)
3. How are your homework assignments related to the students' homework completion and accuracy? (assignments/homework completion and accuracy)
4. How are your homework assignments related to the students' quiz scores? (assignments/ quiz scores)
5. What is the relationship between your homework feedback and the students' homework completions and accuracy? (feedback/completion and accuracy)

6. What is the relationship between your homework feedback and the students' quiz scores? (feedback/quiz scores)
7. How are the lessons that you teach related to the students' homework completion and accuracy? (teaching/homework completion and accuracy)
8. How are the lessons you teach related to the students' quiz scores? (teaching/quiz scores)

APPENDIX H
PARAPROFESSIONAL INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

How do the students' personal processes and the teacher's classroom environment interact to influence the homework experiences of students?

1. How do you think the students feel about the homework assignments?
(belief/assignment)
2. Do you think that the students believe that they can complete the homework assignments accurately? (self-efficacy/assignment)
3. How are your students motivated by you to complete their homework assignments? (motivation/assignment)
4. Do you think that the students expect to be able to complete their homework assignments? (expectation/assignment)
5. How independently do you believe the students can complete their homework assignments? (self-regulation/assignment)
6. Describe the value you believe the students place on their homework assignments? (value/assignment)
7. Discuss the attitudes you believe the students have toward the homework assignments? (attitudes/assignment)
8. Discuss what you tell the students about homework?
9. How does your learning environment affect the students' ability to independently complete their homework? (classroom condition/self-regulation)
10. How does your learning environment affect the students' beliefs about homework? (classroom condition/beliefs)

How do the teacher's school environment and the students' school academic behavior interact to influence the homework experiences of students?

1. How is the homework instruction related to the students' homework completion and accuracy? (instruction/homework completion and accuracy)
2. How is the homework instruction related to the students' quiz scores? (instruction and quiz scores)
3. How are the homework assignments related to the students' homework completion and accuracy? (assignments/homework completion and accuracy)
4. How are the lessons that you help teach related to the students' homework completion and accuracy? (teaching/homework completion and accuracy)
5. How are the lessons you help teach related to the students' quiz scores?

APPENDIX I

TRIADIC RECIPROCALITY: HIGH-READINESS STUDENT

Triadic Reciprocity: Jeffrey

Personal Factors	School Performance	Environmental Influences																								
<p>Cognitive (Readiness) High Readiness per G-KAP</p> <p>Affective Beliefs: His teacher and his mom tell him what to do. Mom reads words. Homework is easy. They send the right homework. Homework helps me get good grades.</p> <p>Attitudes: He feels good about homework. He feels good about making good grades.</p> <p>Motivation: He does homework to get A's, B's, and G's. If he didn't do it, he would get an "F" and his mom would whip him. He is motivated to make A's and B's.</p> <p>Values: Homework is necessary for learning. It is important to him to make good grades because he loves them and doesn't want to get an "F".</p> <p>Self-regulation: Noise bothers him and keeps him from doing his homework. He does nothing about it. If he gets a bad grade, he puts his paper in his cubby and does his homework next time.</p> <p>Self-efficacy: He believes he's been doing well on his homework because he gets a happy face or a check. He feels that he has improved. He believes he can make good grades on his tests.</p> <p>Expectations –He expects to do well on his homework next week. If he does all his homework, he will get A's, B's, and G's.</p>	<p>Success (homework and quizzes)</p> <table border="1" data-bbox="865 457 1190 730"> <thead> <tr> <th>Wk</th> <th>HW</th> <th>Q</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>1</td> <td>100</td> <td>94</td> </tr> <tr> <td>2</td> <td>93</td> <td>100</td> </tr> <tr> <td>3</td> <td>98</td> <td>100</td> </tr> <tr> <td>4</td> <td>92</td> <td>100</td> </tr> <tr> <td>5</td> <td>100</td> <td>100</td> </tr> <tr> <td>6</td> <td>100</td> <td>100</td> </tr> <tr> <td>7</td> <td>78</td> <td>100</td> </tr> </tbody> </table> <p>Failure (Unsuccessful performance on homework and quizzes)</p> <p>None</p>	Wk	HW	Q	1	100	94	2	93	100	3	98	100	4	92	100	5	100	100	6	100	100	7	78	100	<p>Adequate Resources (Does the student have adequate resources at home to do homework?)</p> <p>N/A</p> <p>Barriers (What makes it difficult to do homework?)</p> <p>Noise</p>
Wk	HW	Q																								
1	100	94																								
2	93	100																								
3	98	100																								
4	92	100																								
5	100	100																								
6	100	100																								
7	78	100																								
<p>Biological Events (physical maturation, sleepy, hungry, rapid heart rate)</p> <p>5 years 11 months; calm and cooperative during the interview</p>	<p>Lessons Learned (What did the students learn from doing the homework?)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • writing t's • less • alphabets • numbers • reading • sentences • more • same • words 	<p>Facilitators (What helped the student do homework?)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mom's help – reading the instructions and telling him what to do. • Completing home work as soon as he gets home 																								

Triadic Reciprocity: High-Readiness Student's Parent

Triadic Reciprocity: Parent (Jeffrey)

Personal Factors	School Performance	Environmental Influences
<p>Cognitive (Readiness) (N/A)</p>	<p>Success (homework and quizzes)</p>	<p>Adequate Resources (Does the student have adequate resources at home to do homework?)</p>
<p>Affective Beliefs: Homework helps him better understand his School work. Homework helps him make better grades.</p> <p>Attitudes: He likes homework and enjoys it. He is excited, happy and ecstatic about grades.</p> <p>Motivation: Mom cheers him on and tells him he's doing a good job and keep up the good work. He wants his grade to be an "A" and believes homework will help him get it.</p> <p>Values: He values homework highly because he is ready to do it when he comes in. He likes and enjoys homework and knows it will help him make better grades.</p> <p>Self-regulation: He is very independent and doesn't need much supervision. He completes his homework as soon as he gets home. He wants to do homework to make good grades.</p> <p>Self-efficacy: He is confident and knows he can do the homework. He believes homework helps him get 100's on his quizzes.</p> <p>Expectations: He expects to be able to do his homework. He expects to make better grades when he completes his homework.</p>	<p>N/A</p> <p>Failure (Unsuccessful performance on homework and quizzes)</p> <p>N/A</p>	<p>Yes</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Books • Flashcards • Math and reading games • Alphabets • Numbers • Leap Frog <p>Barriers (What makes it difficult to do homework?)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sometimes the wording of the homework is confusing. • Some of the homework is too easy.

	<p>Lessons Learned (What did the students learn from doing the homework?)</p> <p>N/A</p>	<p>Facilitators (What helped the student do homework?)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lessons in class • A caring parent • Parental assistance • No distractions • Adequate amount of homework • Homework does not interfere with other activities
<p>Biological Events (physical maturation, sleepy, hungry, rapid heart rate)</p> <p>N/A</p>		

Triadic Reciprocity: Low-Readiness Student

Triadic Reciprocity: Eldridge

Personal Factors	School Performance	Environmental Influences
Cognitive (Readiness) Low Readiness per G-KAP	Success (homework and quizzes)	Adequate Resources
Affective	Wk HW Q	(Does the student have adequate resources at home to do homework?)
Beliefs: His teacher helps him by reading the instructions. He does homework to get an education. Homework helps him with his tests.	1 100 100	resources at
Attitudes: He feels great about the homework assigned. He feels good about making good grades.	2 99 100	home to do
	3 100 94	homework?)
Motivation: He does homework so he can write. He gets a whipping if he doesn't do his homework. He does homework to make 100 on his tests.	4 100 100	N/A
Values: Homework is necessary for learning. It is important to him to make good grades to get 100 on tests.	5 96 100	
Self-regulation: His dad talks to him while he's doing his homework and he tells him to stop. He believes that if you don't do your homework, your will get a zero and go to the office.	6 100 100	
Self-efficacy: He feels that he's doing fine on his homework and that he's improved.	7 100 100	
Expectations: He expects to do well on his homework next week. He expects to do very good on his tests and get 100's if he completes all of his homework.	Failure (Unsuccessful performance on homework and quizzes) None	Barriers (What makes it difficult to do homework?) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • student not paying attention • not having instructions read to him • dad talking to him while completing homework
	Lessons Learned (What did the students learn from doing the homework?)	Facilitators (What helped the student do homework?)
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • letters 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • having instructions

<p>Biological Events (physical maturation, sleepy, hungry, rapid heart rate)</p> <p>5 years 6 months; calm and cooperative during the interview</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • writing 	<p>read</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • parental support
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Triadic Reciprocity: Low-Readiness Student's Parent

Triadic Reciprocity: Parent (Eldridge)

Personal Factors	School Performance	Environmental Influences
<p>Cognitive (Readiness) N/A</p>	<p>Success (homework and quizzes)</p>	<p>Adequate Resources</p>
<p>Affective</p> <p>Beliefs: Homework helps him understand his schoolwork because Mom asks him “what did you learn in school today?” She works on those skills. Homework helps him make better grades.</p> <p>Attitudes: He likes homework. His grades are better than his attitude.</p> <p>Motivation: Mom puts homework first. He is motivated to get better grades but needs to slow down.</p>	<p>N/A</p>	<p>(Does the student have adequate resources at home to do homework?)</p> <p>Yes. Mom buys extra things like flash cards and Leap Frog.</p>
<p>Values: Homework is very important because Mom gets on him about it. He is beginning to see the value of homework in making better grades.</p> <p>Self-regulation: He is able to work independently. Supervision depends on the task.</p>	<p>Failure (Unsuccessful performance on homework and quizzes)</p> <p>N/A</p>	<p>Barriers (What makes it difficult to do homework?)</p> <p>Need a lot more homework.</p>
<p>Self-efficacy: He has the ability to do most of the homework. He has made 100 on every spelling test.</p> <p>Expectations: He expects to be able to do his homework correctly. He expects to make better grades when he does his homework.</p>	<p>Lessons Learned (What did the students learn from doing the homework?)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • sight words 	<p>Facilitators (What helped the student do homework?)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • parent acting as a

<p>Biological Events (physical maturation, sleepy, hungry, rapid heart rate)</p> <p>N/A</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• shapes• numbers• coloring• cutting	<p>motivator</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• parental assistance• homework is done right after school• homework assigned is appropriate
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Triadic Reciprocity: Teacher (Monaska)

Personal Factors	School Performance	Environmental Influences
<p>Cognitive (Readiness: Scale 1-4) 2</p>	<p>Success (homework and quizzes) (What caused the student to be successful?)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use of incentives • Repetition 	<p>Adequate Resources (Do you have what you need to teach the students?)</p> <p>The classroom is adequately equipped.</p>
<p>Affective</p> <p>Beliefs: She has no beliefs about homework.</p> <p>Attitudes: She has a nonchalant, don't care attitude about homework and grades.</p> <p>Motivation: She has no motivation. She does not care about homework or grades.</p> <p>Values: Her value of homework is low. She returns it half-done with food on it.</p> <p>Self-regulation: She cannot work independently and is easily distracted.</p> <p>Expectations: She does not expect to be able to do homework or make good grades.</p>		

<p>Biological Events (sleepy, hungry, rapid heart rate)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sleepy • Hungry • Tired 	<p>Lessons Learned (What did the students learn from doing the homework? Did they learn from their mistakes?)</p> <p>She does not learn from her mistakes and is not learning the skills very well.</p>	<p>Facilitators (What helped student do homework? How do you prepare a student for a lesson?)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • small groups • one-on-one instruction
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Triadic Reciprocally – Paraprofessional (Monaska)

Personal Factors	School Performance	Environmental Influences
<p>Cognitive (Readiness – Scale 1-4) 2</p>	<p>Success (homework and quizzes) (What caused the student to be successful?)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • teacher’s motivation • parental support 	<p>Adequate Resources (Does the teacher have what she needs to teach the students?)</p> <p>The classroom is adequately equipped.</p>
<p>Affective</p> <p>Beliefs: She does not have any.</p> <p>Attitudes: She does not have any type of attitude toward homework. She does not feel homework will improve her grades.</p> <p>Motivation: She has no motivation to complete her homework. She has no motivation to make good grades.</p> <p>Values: She has no value of homework and does not see its value in helping her make better grades.</p>	<p>Failure (Unsuccessful performance on homework and quizzes) (What caused the student to fail?)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • lack of motivation • does not pay attention 	<p>Barriers [Are there things that interfere with you teaching skills? (intercom, temperature in room, air conditioner noise, defiance, lecturing too long)]</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • air conditioner • intercom • conversations • teaching materials
<p>Self-regulation: She cannot work independently.</p> <p>Expectations: She</p>	<p>Lessons Learned (What did the students learn from doing the homework? Did they learn from their mistakes?)</p> <p>She does not learn from her</p>	<p>Facilitators (What helped student do homework? How did you assist the teacher in helping students learn their skills?)</p>

<p>expects to be able to do her homework. She feels that there is a relationship between homework and grades.</p>	<p>mistakes and is not learning the skills very well.</p>	<p>Use of resources identified by the teacher as being appropriate to the child's level.</p>
<p>Biological Events (sleepy, hungry, rapid heart rate)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Sleepy• Hungry		

APPENDIX J

WEEKLY HOMEWORK ACCURACY AVERAGES

Students	Week 1	Week 2	Week 3	Week 4	Week 5	Week 6	Week 7
Devantae	73	97	81	82	100	100	100
Tavarius	63	99	93	100	75	88	95
Shaneeka	75	67	98	96	100	100	100
Eldridge	100	97	89	100	100	100	100
Joseph	100	99	100	100	96	100	100
Monaska	73	84	95	97	100	50	100
Ellen	64	94	89	92	100	100	100
Jeffrey	100	93	98	95	100	100	78
Dayshawn	74	95	73	99	92	50	100
Lisa	98	93	100	99	100	100	100

APPENDIX K

HOMEWORK ACCURACY AVERAGES FOR THE SEVEN-WEEK PERIOD

Students	Homework Accuracy Scores for the Seven-Week Period
Devantae	90
Tavarius	88
Shaneeka	91
Eldridge	98
Joseph	99
Monaska	86
Ellen	91
Jeffrey	95
Dayshawn	83
Lisa	99

APPENDIX L

QUIZ GRADES FOR THE SEVEN-WEEK PERIOD

Students	Week 1	Week 2	Week 3	Week 4	Week 5	Week 6	Week 7
Devantae	100	93	88	100	100	100	100
Tavarius	59	21	65	64	100	100	80
Shaneeka	94	86	94	100	100	100	100
Eldridge	100	100	100	100	100	100	100
Joseph	100	100	94	100	100	100	100
Monaska	59	29	94	50	100	90	100
Ellen	88	79	94	100	100	100	100
Jeffrey	94	100	100	100	100	100	100
Dayshawn	100	86	100	100	100	100	100
Lisa	100	93	100	100	100	100	100

APPENDIX M

QUIZ AVERAGES FOR THE SEVEN-WEEK PERIOD

Student	Quiz Average
Devantae	97
Tavarius	70
Shaneeeka	96
Eldridge	100
Joseph	99
Monaska	75
Ellen	94
Jeffrey	99
Dayshawn	98
Lisa	99