DISSERTATION

EXPLORING THE EDUCATIONAL ASPIRATIONS OF RURAL YOUTH: AN IMAGE-BASED STUDY USING PARTICIPANT PRODUCED PHOTOGRAPHS

Submitted by

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WE HEREBY RECOMMEND THAT THE DISSERTATION PREPARED UNDER OUR SUPERVISION BY DANA ANN LAMBERT ENTITLED EXPLORING THE EDUCATIONAL ASPIRATIONS OF RURAL YOUTH: AN IMAGE-BASED STUDY USING PARTICIPANT PRODUCED PHOTOGRAPHS BE ACCEPTED AS FULFILLING IN PART REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE OF DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY.

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ABSTRACT OF DISSERTATION

EXPLORING THE EDUCATIONAL ASPIRATIONS OF RURAL YOUTH:

AN IMAGE-BASED STUDY USING PARTICIPANT PRODUCED PHOTOGRAPHS

Education is an important variable in forming student aspirations in that it serves to help students become more knowledgeable about the world, more sensitive and understanding of their relationship to it, and more eager to contribute to the community.

The purpose of this visual ethnography study was to explore how students in one rural ninth grade classroom perceive their home, school, and community environments as supporting and/or inhibiting their educational aspirations. The approach allowed students to describe their reality in a tangible visual manner by studying; what students do (behaviors), what they say (reporting on photographs), and what they make, (photographs). Cultural themes emerged from the three environments; school, community and home in which rural ninth grade students spend a majority of their time.

This study was conducted in a rural area in the county of Colorado referred to as Steel County, located approximately ten miles east of the city. The community surrounding Steel County consists of residential areas, produce farms, and small businesses. The rural high school student body is comprised from sub-cities and transfer students from outside areas compiling a fifty mile parameter.

The use of photography provided a unique lens at capturing multi-level relationships that impact rural educational aspirations. Student photographs successfully captured social relationships within the cultural, political-economic, socio-political and spatial context of a rural community, captured within the home, school and community setting.

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Dedication:

Confucius said, “To put the world right in order, we must first put the nation in order; to put the nation in order, we must first put the family in order; to put the family in order, we must first cultivate our personal life; we must first set our hearts right.” I believe this dissertation reflects just that, the heart of the rural community. A community in which I was raised and continue to reflect upon and share my experiences and learning.

First and for most, this dissertation is dedicated to my family. My husband, David, my high school sweet-heart, best-friend and love of my life. Your encouraging words and support provided me the courage to embark on such a project. Our three amazing children; Morgan, Hope and Dawson. I have learned so much from their intuitive, creative, fun-filled personalities that make everyday life an adventure.

Secondly, I dedicate this dissertation to my parents, Dan and JoAnne and grandparents, Virgil and Laura, Bob and Sylvia. They provided myself, my two brothers, my aunts, uncles and cousins with an unidentifiable bound and closeness that will remain forever. These “county” memories and experiences are priceless.

Finally, this dissertation is dedicated to the study’s participants. All whom I encountered, I was met graciously and openly in sharing their educational aspirations. Steel County High School posses a place in which everyone is invited and welcomed.

Special Acknowledgments:

Many wonderful people have helped along my way of completing this project. I am grateful to all of my family and friends for their unwavering support and their interest in my progress.

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CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

Voice of the Land

Driving to the county, down Highway 50 east,
Pictures from the window portrays defeat

Equipment in the yards, homes disarrayed
Students cutting class to bail the hay

Freshness in the air, serenity and peace
A sense of security that things will always be

Youth immobile, what does their future hold
Self-fulfillment, satisfaction, challenge,
some will never know.

Dana Lambert

It is strange how life can travel in full circles. Standing in the entrance of the barn, I ease my way to the left, and crouch down to catch sight of the hairy body. It is hard to describe the profound satisfaction of walking into a pen and scratching a couple of pigs behind the ears while they eat. It sounds silly to say it, especially as I sit in my air conditioned office viewing a beautiful urban campus of higher education.

As a young child, I dreamt about having a farm of my very own. My family of five lived with my grandparents and their eleven children on the farm in between our moves. The magnitude of helpfulness, camaraderie, caring, peacefulness and commotion was perfectly described as home. Everyone lived, breathed, scheduled activities and ate army style meals around farming. A sense of peacefulness and belonging consumes me to date when I recall conversations we had on the farm.

Grandpa: “Hey.”

Friend: “Hey.”

Grandpa: “So, you still working over at____”

Friend: “Yup.”

Grandpa: “You get your___”

Friend: “Yeah, all fixed.”

Grandpa: “I bet it was ___”

Friend: “More than two grand…”

Grandpa: “Ouch, So you lost___”

Friend: “Bout a week. I’ll be done Friday.”

The language of farm life is where sentences go unfinished, assumptions are made, and key words are savored. Everyone understands everything everyone else is saying, or pretends to. Nothing is ever questioned or explained. It works best if you stand a certain way during these conversations. You fold your arms and take a wide stance, your legs two or three feet apart. This way guys battered by hard physical labor can ease the back pain and pressure on sore feet. Discussions usually takes 10-15 minutes until one guy looks at his watch and seems shocked, raises both hands to end the conversation and announces, “Oh jeez, that well ain’t gonna dig itself.”

Farm conversations are essential to rural life; part news, part education, part support group. Friendships are formed, deals struck, information gleaned. It is business. With the business come real fears. Fears like taxes, gas, the unpredictable market, family and employees.

Russell and Elder (1997) have found that farm families in the USA have suffered both financially and emotionally as the agricultural economy declines. We aspire to what we know or can imagine. We are told from childhood onward that many things we want to

accomplish is unattainable. We grow up with this idea, and as the years accumulate, feelings of self-doubt and fear begin to grow. I struggled internally when my dream began to change. I shared very little with my family about my new aspirations. As time progressed, my dream became so deeply buried, it was almost invisible, but I knew it was still there. I knew what I wanted, but was afraid of hurting those around me by abandoning tradition values to pursue my dream.

Coelho (1994, p. 174) once said that "following your dream is like learning a foreign language; you will make mistakes but you will get there in the end." The mere possibility of getting what I wanted consumed me with guilt. I looked all around at all those who have failed and felt that I did not deserve to get what I wanted either. I have known many people who made several mistakes when their dream was within reach. Once the mistake is made, the community will remind you of the obstacles that we have overcame, the suffering we endured, the things we had to give up, to get this far.

Nachtigal (1982) reports that it is the close-knit, personal nature of small rural communities in school and community operate as a single integrated social structure. Although outside ideas and resources may contribute greatly to successful plans, a high level of local involvement is essential to making those plans a success. Extra curricular activities become an important part of the instructional frame of the rural community. These characteristics generated from the community develop feelings of self-worth, achievement, importance and relevance.

Involvement in extra curricular activities forms the leadership and become an important part of the instructional frame of the rural community. These characteristics generated from the community develop feelings of self-worth, achievement, importance and relevance. The farm heritage impacts academic performance through the family processes within the household and outside in the community.

Quaglia and Perry (1995, p.233) separate student aspirations into two categories: ambitions and inspiration. "Ambitions represent an individual's ability to look ahead and invest in the future. Inspiration can be described as the individual's ability to invest time, energy, and effort presently to reach their ambitions." A student's aspiration is derived from a combination of personal and familial educational goals, elements to success in their choice of lifestyle. Aspirations require the investment of time, energy, and resources, (Quaglia and Perry, 1995). That being said, the environment has strong long lasting amplifications on ones present decisions and future destination.

A qualitative study on rural youth conducted by Chenoweth and Galliher (2004), found the reasons for going to college comprised three factors: self-improvement, money/status, and external/escape. Problems encountered in the college decision process resulted from direct and indirect environments; some were associated with the student's parents, some were individual characteristics, and some were associated with regional barriers, (e.g., lack of information and limited access to resources). Meehan's (2001) study emphasizes the importance of parental influence. His research concluded that nearly all of the students surveyed reported parents as being the most important source of educational information. Unfortunately, fewer than one third of the parents reported being familiar with the entrance requirements for two-four year institutions.

Walberg and Greenberg (1996) note that rural youth face economic decline, limited work opportunities, and increased isolation. Yet youth are a rural community's greatest asset. When youth migrate from their hometowns, rural communities suffer a loss of talent and vitality crucial to the development or maintenance of a desirable future for these communities. Factors affecting out-migration include limited economic opportunities, lack of faith in a community to sustain favorable economic conditions, and a willingness of rural youth to look elsewhere. All of these, combined with overall lower aspirations for

postsecondary education, make it more difficult for rural youth to achieve career and economic success.

Breen and Quaglia (1991, p. 223) report that rural students "…aspire to lower levels of higher education, express lower levels of self-confidence in completing the degree requirements, and expect to pursue higher education for a shorter time than urban students". Kampits' (1996) supports this finding by concluding that rural youth have significantly higher graduation rates from high school than urban youth, yet are less likely to pursue college degrees and are less likely to graduate from high school with firm plans for the future. A greater understanding can be gained on the lives of our rural youth by examining the influence of their school system, community and home structure.

Statement of Purpose

The purpose of this visual ethnography study is to explore how students in one rural ninth grade classroom perceive their home, school, and community environments as supporting and/or inhibiting their educational aspirations. The approach allows students to describe their reality in a tangible/visual manner by studying; what students do (behaviors), what they say (reporting on photographs), and what they make, (photographs). Creswell, (1998, p. 59) states that "Culture is an amorphous term." Cultural themes will emerge from three environments, (school, community and home) that rural ninth grade students in which they spend a majority of their time.

Research Questions

Stemming from the above purpose, the following research questions will guide the visual portrayal of their home, school, and community environments.

- For ninth grade students, what are the visual messages associated with educational aspirations in their home, school and community environments?

- What visual messages are identified as supporting and/or inhibiting to their educational aspirations?

Researcher Perspective

For the purpose of this study, I understand that I must rely on the lens of a naturalistic-ecological approach. Utilization of this approach will bring an awareness of biases I bring to the study as a rural K-12 graduate, parent, community member and former rural educator. The time that I spend in this study is also going to be a time of personal change for me, change that places me in the role of an outsider after living in the same community for over 37 years.

I have concerns that the rural community is in trouble because of; persistent poverty, low wages and lack of job opportunities, declining family farms and low agricultural profitability, government regulations, fewer educational choices than in nonrural areas, inadequate access to health care, cultural resources and professional advancement.

I pride myself in believing that the rural community is a repository for traditional values, close-knit communities and hard work; (self-reliance and self-sufficient). The community is unique given its serene and beautiful environment, surrounded by animals, trees and family farms. I see it as friendly, relaxed and a safe place to raise children.

I currently am employed at South Central Board of Cooperative Educational Services, (SCBOCES). SCBOCES' works directly with the Colorado Department of Education and oversees 16 School Districts within the south east region. My duties include (but are not limited to) supervision of the Alternative Teaching License Program, Response to Intervention Program (RtI), Gifted and Talented Program, Professional Development, data analysis of student's Northwest Evaluation Association, (NWEA) assessment scores,

plus coordinate two federal grants, (History and At-Risk).

My rural community experiences have created a strong drive for me to be an avid supporter of services geared toward assisting students. I feel that with the proper specialized services and support of staff, faculty, and upper administration, students can be equipped with the skills needed to achieve academic excellence and pursue their dream to better themselves and the lives and those around them.

Significance of the Study

According to Howley (1997), nearly half of the schools in the United States are located in rural areas and small towns. However, when change initiatives are reviewed, the focus more often then not is geared toward urban school settings. Perhaps the plights of urban schools are more visible to the public eye media and print, than are the conditions in rural schools. Rural places in the contemporary world often suffer more than others from the lack of research and from misguided effort to build up widely applicable and reliable procedures for school improvement, (Howley, 1997). Through the exploration of possible connections among rural environment and educational aspirations, I hope to present a descriptive picture of the community surrounding rural education.

CHAPTER TWO: REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

Chapter two is a review of the pertinent literature to this study. The first section examines the Geographic, Physical Structure and Economic Environment. The second section consists of exploring the Family, School and Peer Environment. Finally, the third section reviews the Community, Social Environment and Conclusion.

Influences on student's aspirations are linked to the student's surroundings, such as the home, school, and community environment. Phenomenon within these environments is difficult to determine whether or not they are truly rural. Khattri, Riley, and Kane (1997) have found little comprehensive research currently exists examining why students in rural schools are not performing as well as their suburban counterparts, and what solutions may prove most beneficial. Studies often incorporate incomplete models that do not take into account confounding variables, such as; family socio-economic status, student background, gender, academic self-concept, levels of education, etc. It is uncertain what degree these factors influence an individuals decision to pursue higher education and develop career goals.

Geographic Environment

According to Bajema (2002), aspiration level of youth in rural communities are more vulnerable to the social influences of a rural community due to factors of isolation, population size, and community culture, impacted by, teachers, peers, parents and other people. Geographic isolation sometimes prevents accessibility of information and assistance, which can impact students through their school personnel by lack of information available to high school counselors, and as a result, lack of college information available to students. High school personnel in these settings report finding it difficult to obtain and maintain access to admission requirements and financial aid information for various colleges.

Physical School Environment

Deal and Peterson's (1999) research have demonstrated that the culture of an organization is a key element that influences success. According to Deal and Peterson (1999, p. 63) the physical plant and the architecture "reflect important beliefs as to what schools represent and the meaning it holds for students and the community," Not only does a school's architecture signal what is important it also motivates employees, provides a message of deeper purposes and values, and can tie a community together.

Earthman and Lemaster (1996) conducted a study that discovered a positive relationship between building condition and student achievement. Student achievement was determined by performance on the Test of Academic Proficiency (TAP) and the condition of the school building. The difference between academic achievement and schools rated low and high was 7 percentile ranks. In addition, Earthman and Lemaster investigated the scores of 11th graders on the Comprehensive Test of Basic Skills (CTBS). In all but two subtests of the CTBS, the students in above-standard buildings outscored students in substandard buildings. The difference in scores between the two building conditions ranged from 1 to 9 percentile ranks.

O'Neil and Oates (2000) conducted a similar study researching the impact of school facilities on student achievement and behavior. Conducted in December 1999 through January 2000, the design of the study permitted a comparison of student achievement with facility condition ratings. A 0.05 level of significance was selected for this study. The results of the Pearson product-moment correlations and t-test for dependent variable showed that several of the independent building variables were significantly related to student achievement. Student achievement was higher in new buildings, as well as in those with higher quality ratings.

Studies conducted by O'Neill and Oates (2000) support the theory that building design, appearance, and maintainability impact the climate and consequently, student performance. The physical structure and condition of a school has the potential to inspire the nature, quality, and direction of what goes on inside. When school facilities are well designed and maintained, they enhance the learning environment of student, teachers and the community, (O'Neill & Oates, 2000). The overall façade or appearance of the facility should reinforce the school's function as a safe haven for young people, symbolizing the community's heritage and aspirations for the future, (O'Neill & Oates, 2000).

Economic Environment

According to Tompkins (2003) rural America is far poorer than the country's metropolitan areas as a whole, and nearly as poor as the inner cities. As "Save the Children" concluded in its 2002 report, America's Forgotten Children: Child Poverty in Rural America, Tompkins (2003, p.6) reported that "while tragedy of urban poverty is well known, we rarely hear about poor rural children on the news or in the myriad reports published each year concerning child poverty."

Poverty, or being economically disadvantage, is most often defined in terms of family income. Chenoweth and Galliher (2004) report that home and classroom environments impact adolescent development through provision of opportunities for communication and decision making. According to Chenoweth and Galliher (2004) report that the family environment economic status has often been identified as an influence in the decision of youth to enroll in higher education. Finances often dictate educational choices, determine the availability of certain peers, limit or permit access to health services, and host other social contexts (e.g. church, daycare, recreational activities, etc.) On a broader level family income also impacts the choice of parent's friends, neighbors, coworkers, and availability of media, legal services, and social services. Entire cultures or subcultures are influenced by

economics in the expectations and accepted standards of living that are made available to family members.

Crosnoe (2002) conducted research on the economic disadvantage, family dynamics and adolescent enrollment in higher education. The research results demonstrated that the linkage between early disadvantage and later educational attainment is partially explained by the attitudes and behaviors of parents. Economically disadvantaged parents are more pessimistic about the chances that their adolescents will be able to attend college in the future, and such pessimism reduces their motivation for actively managing their adolescent's environments. Because education is a primary means to adult success, the problems that these youth have entering higher education represents a clear obstacle to social mobility. This lack of mobility constrains the life trajectories of disadvantaged youth. Past studies have approached this linkage between early disadvantage and later educational attainment in multiple ways. According to Duncan and Brooks (1998), a common approach is to focus on the tangible advantages that money and social status brings families: safe neighborhoods, effective schools, educational resources and better nutrition and emotional factors.

Within the rural community, there are two sets of disadvantaged parents, the low-incoming minimum wage working parents, and the low-income farm-working parents. The minimum wage rural economically disadvantaged parents are generally less optimistic about their adolescents' educational chances and, in turn, engage less in the proactive parenting that promotes academic achievement. These parents perceived efficacy buffers against the more negative consequences of disadvantage that can influence their adolescents' educational trajectories.

Farming parents report their adolescents as having higher levels of extracurricular participation, leadership roles, and parental attachment, (Bajema, 2002). Parental

encouragement is an internal strategy used by parents to promote ties to external events, goals and social groups, (Russell & Elder, 1997). Bajema (2002) reports that rural youth from farm families had more academic success than rural youth from non-farm families because of their access to social ties and experiences from growing up in a farm family.

Family Environment

To promote children's success, parents make use of internal as well as external family strategies, (Russell & Elder, 1997). Internal strategies include warm, supportive relationships between parents and their children, as well as encouragement and joint activities. External strategies outside the household enhance children's social ties with local communities. Internal and external strategies mirror Coleman's (1988) description of social capital of parents, both inside and outside the home. While family socioeconomic markers and stressors are believed to have a direct influence on the academic success of young people, these effects may be moderated by strategies both internal and external to the family, such as parenting and community integration.

Meehan (2001) conducted a quantitative study was conducted with students and their parents from 29 middle and junior high schools (2,620) in nine rural areas in West Virginia in 2000, (Meehan, 2001). A number of conclusions were drawn about families: (a) parent/teacher meetings seem to be viewed as minimally important and (b) nearly half of the fathers never meet with their child's teacher, and (c) overall, parents seem content with the status quo of their child's education. Likewise a number of conclusions were noted regarding academics: (a) overall, students seem fairly confident of their academic ability and believe that they are good students. Nearly three fourths believe that they have good study skills and that they are doing well in specific subjects, (b) three fourths of the students plan to take algebra, foreign language, and chemistry in the future; two thirds plan to take physics; and only about half plan to take calculus and trigonometry, and (c) students have

limited awareness of postsecondary institutions. More than three fourths of the students are familiar with four-year institutions, but only about two thirds are familiar with either two-year colleges or vocational schools. The study concluded by highlighting the conclusions regarding student aspirations: (a) nearly three fourths of the students believe that further education is needed after high school to get a satisfying job and believe that they will continue their education. However, students seem to be unsure of their own aspirations, since more than two thirds do not know exactly what educational level they will achieve, and (b) they view poor grades and limited finances as the biggest obstacles to continuing their education.

Overwhelmingly, students view parents as the most important source of educational information. Insight can be gained when examining the impact of the interactions between and among the student's family, self-determination, school and community environment. Cowley (2003) conducted a study on academic aspirations and expectations with rural seventh grader students. The research identifies a disconnect among what students think their parents believe about them, what students believe about themselves, and parents actually believe. The results indicate that rural middle school students expect their parents to play a large role in providing information about continued education. Unfortunately, the low socio-economic families are often unable to meet these expectations.

Bajema (2002) conducted a qualitative study of 17 rural high schools, (1,051 students) and identified that ninety-six percent of the students indicated that they planned to pursue some type of post-secondary education. Students perceived that the environment provided by their schools was supportive of their educational and occupational aspirations. Unfortunately, in a survey conducted by Meehan (2001), reported that rural youth believe that their parents are more supportive of them taking full-time jobs, attending vocational schools, or joining the service rather than going to college.

School Environments

Students seem to understand well and early how the school system is designed to move them from grade level to grade level. One stressor within school life for students relates to their hopes for graduating out of the system. Building on prior research of Atkinson, (as cited in Meece, Glienke, & Burg, 2006), a social cognitive model was formed building on academic choices made as a result of the role of; culture, parents, and teachers in shaping achievement-related beliefs. Studies have shown that both children and adolescents separate what activities they are good at and what activities they value. According to Eccles et al, (1998) by fifth grade, children are also able to differentiate what activities may not hold much interest for them but are necessary to achieve a short-or long-term goal.

Hu (2003) studied critical transition points in student pathways to postsecondary education. Differences in educational aspirations by students in urban, suburban, and rural schools were evident. Lower percentages of rural students had aspirations for four year college education (28.2% for rural in contrast to 30.8% for urban and 32.9% for suburban schools) and graduate education (22.0% for rural in contrast to 31.1% for urban and 27.3% for suburban schools). Higher percentages of students in rural schools had aspirations for high school or below (16.6% for rural in contrast to 11.0% for urban and 10.6% for suburban schools) and two year college education (33.1% for rural in contrast to 27.1% for urban and 29.3% for suburban schools).

Epstein (1983) examined the impacts of the family and school environments on academic achievement. Students make decisions based more so on family influences than the school influences. However, school influences were more important to children who were not permitted decision making and communication opportunities at home. Goodnow and

Grandy (1993) study confirms Epstein's research by stating that "school belonging" (decision making, communication) contributes largely to academic motivation.

School belonging, or the sense that a student feels "personally accepted, respected, included, and supported by others – especially teachers and other adults in the school social environment" contributes largely to academic motivation, (Goodenow & Grady, 1993). In a study conducted with urban youth, Goodnow and Grady (1993, p.60) found that "school belonging was significantly associated with several motivation-related measures, expectancy of success, valuing schoolwork, general school motivation and self-reported effort."

Young (2000) conducted a longitudinal study to identify characteristics of effective high schools in Western Australia. Student outcomes in science and mathematics were adjusted for student background, gender, academic self-concept, socioeconomic status, science and math achievement, classroom learning environment, grade and prior attainment. Taking all variables into account, this study concluded that schools were not disadvantaged by their location. Rather, rural students were disadvantaged by their self-concept. Students in rural schools did tend to have a weaker belief in their own academic ability to perform, irrespective of their actual ability (Young, 2000, p. 221). This study suggests that it is the classroom composite of peers, which influence individual achievement, rather than the particular teacher effects.

Haller and Virkler (1993) found that the economic context between rural and non-rural youth existed because of the lower socioeconomic status of many rural families. It is evident that socioeconomic status directly and indirectly impact rural youth. Many rural communities face tough challenges. The banks are gone, the grange hall is closed, and commercial services are nominal. The last remaining public institution in many rural communities is the school. Rural schools have an essential community development function. They are often the central meeting place for community members, the location for

most recreation and cultural events, and the repository of articulate leaders for community organizations. They are frequently the rural town's museum, symphony hall, sports arena, fitness center, polling place, and the venue for public meetings on policy issues. There immediate environment and resources, (family, teachers, peers) are often the community's supporters/leaders.

The influence of peers in the school setting has been documented widely (e.g., Brown, as cited in Chenoweth & Galliher, 2004) particularly with adolescence in which individuals are most influenced by their peers. Peers influence academic achievement in positive and negative ways. The arenas of children, analyzed as parts of their life course, are socially and culturally situated in time and place and heavily structured by adults, e.g. teachers, parents and peers. However, the form and content of child activities with their particular cognitive, emotional, social and cultural dimensions are certainly created by the children themselves individually and through peer groups.

Collier's study (as cited in Bajama, 2002, p.62) explains that people tend to compare themselves to groups with similar beliefs and abilities. "The group serves as a powerful anchor that limits the level of aspiration, particularly when the group is cut off from other groups…people tend to use others who are similar or have similar levels of ability as a source of social comparison." Kvusland (2004, p.367) supports this theory stating that "children and young adults become socialized through activities constructed by the children themselves."

Community Environment

The word "community" is applied in broad and inconsistent ways in the growing body of literature. According to Peshkin (1978) there is a recurrence of many of the same themes: a sense of oneness among community members, though often to the point of control and community "connectedness" that is tight, but uses fear of status anxiety to dissuade students from leaving town. In other community studies, there is a cultural message that is

conveyed, one that asks community members to properly socialize its members into a way of a shared belief system, norms, and values, (Coleman & Hoffer, as cited in Smithmier, 1994).

Russell and Elder's (2002) study concludes that youth integrated in the community have more academic success than those youth not integrated in the community. Community integration proves to be an important factor in determining the degree to which rural children in this study were successful in school, (Russell and Elder, 2002). Farm families have been found to be at an advantage in terms of the social capital that they provide their children outside the family due to the ties their parents maintain to local schools, churches and civic clubs and organizations. In the rural setting, religious, civic and social groups rely on the participation of as many families as possible: farm families often represent the backbone of these community activities and organizations.

Fabiansson's (2006) conducted a study in a rural area similar to the community in this study; male-dominated industry, steel work and farming environment, where physical strength is valued. The diversity and number of sports and leisure activities focusing on physical sports were indicative of the community culture. This research shows that rural youth relate to the community in the following ways; 41.5% find the community to be helpful, 75.0% stated they can get help from a friend, 58.5% attend community events and 47.7% stated that the best things about living in the community because of the safe, caring, friendly people are helpful and 32.2% stated that the worst thing about living in the community is that there is nothing to do–boring.

Social Environment

Ley, Nelson, and Beltyukova, (1996) conducted a study identifying rural youth experiences in making plans to leave the community to pursue their educational and/or career goals. He found that rural youth are more likely to have conflicting aspirations than nonrural youth. Their feelings about the importance of living close to family come into conflict with

their feelings about the importance of leaving for educational and career opportunities. However "boring" the environment may be, rural adolescents are more likely to experience the dilemma of believing that both living close to family and getting away from their area are going to be important in their lives. Kirkpatrick (2005) study found that social ties and identification with parents was positively related to residential attachment. Young people who respected their parents and wanted to be like them placed a greater importance on living near family and the community. Those with less respect for their parents and less desire to be like them were more likely to want to leave the area

Using self-determination theory, Hardre (2003) tested a motivational model to explain the conditions under which rural students formulate their intentions to persist in, versus drop out of, high school. According to Deci and Vallerand (1991) the self-determination theory, when applied to education, is about fostering in students an interest in learning, a valuing of education, and a confidence in personal capabilities, Deci & Vallerand (1991). According to this theory, students become actively engaged in educational activities to the extent that classroom endeavors affirm their competencies. Self-determination represents the need to experience choice, and regulate one's behavior so that the student's choices determine his or her actions (Deci & Vallerand, 1991).

Environment that supports students' needs for competence and self-determination constituted autonomy-supportive environments, whereas those that neglect and frustrate these needs constitute controlling environments (Deci & Vallerand, 1991). Half of all students in Horatio's survey reported that their personal experiences serve as their guide when plotting their futures, (Horatio, 2003). Almost unanimously, students believe that personal satisfaction and personal relationships define success and nearly nine in ten students report that attending college is either critical or very important to being successful in life.

Conclusion

In spite of this unfavorable portrayal of rural schools, there exist favorable conditions that make for a pleasant and constructive schooling experience. The "family-like atmosphere" of a small school is consistently reflected in the literature (Carlson 1990, as cited in Smithmier, 1994), and the close personal and social relationships among students, teachers, and parents have been noted as well by Monk and Haller (1993). Finally, DeYoung (1987) stated that social life and pride in a small town often revolves around the school and its accomplishments. Students aspire to what they know or can imagine. This research will generate themes from the supporters and barriers within the environment that rural youth utilize to motivate themselves in the present and inspire themselves in establishing future goals.

The summary of this section is captured in the following quote from Bajema (2002, p.61) "Education is an important variable in forming student aspirations in that it serves to help students become more knowledgeable about the world, more sensitive and understanding of their relationship to it, and more eager to contribute to the community,"

CHAPTER THREE: RESEARCH DESIGN

Chapter three is a discussion of the research methodology including the design, setting, procedures, data collection, data analysis, trustworthiness, and ethical considerations. Each of these sections include definitions and/or descriptions of the processes associated with image-based research.

The Visual Ethnographic Research Design

The research design for the study is visual ethnography. According to Seymore-Smith (1986), visual ethnography is an anthropological specialization that studies culture through photographic methods including the use of the still camera. Collier (1967) describes the camera within the research design as an inductive technique to capture a cultural slice of reality. In this study, students in a rural ninth grade class will be given cameras to photograph those aspects of their home, school and community environment that support of inhibit their educational aspirations.

Prior to this research project I conducted a pilot study with three students in the; fourth, seventh and tenth grade. The intent of involving students from the different schools, (elementary, middle and high) was to compare and analyze perspectives of educational aspiration among the different grade levels. All three students took pictures of the home, school and community environment. Once the photographs were developed, I meet individually with each student and discussed their photographs. The meetings were tape recorded and transcribed.

The process was not productive in producing photographs. Independently, the students appeared to lack an interest in taking many pictures. Generally the pictures entailed; phone, desk, parent, and church. Students reported that they “did not have time to take very many pictures,” even when the allotted time frame was expanded. One of the students “lost”

the disposable camera on two occasions. As a result of these challenges, the research design/process was restructured. The dissertation chair and I agreed to implement the following processes; focus on one classroom, group the students for discussion and presentation purposes and conduct classroom activities that will provide direction and motivate the students to complete the project.

Research Setting

Steel County High School, (SCHS) is located approximately ten miles east of the city, in the rural portion of the county in Colorado. The community surrounding the SCHS consists of residential areas, produce farms, and small businesses. The student body is comprised of students from sub-cities and transfer students from outside areas compiling a 50 mile parameter.

The Educational Consortium (2003) reports that SCHS is among the poorer counties in the State of Colorado with an alarmingly high percentage of young people living below the poverty level. There have been a growing number of single parent families, grandparents who serve as primary caregivers, students who live with foster parents, dysfunctional families, and mobile students, (Education Consortium, 2003). Demographic characteristics of these students include persons who are: racial and ethnic minorities, economically disadvantaged, persons with disabilities, migrant families, and first generation to attend college, etc.

The statistics at SCHS among post secondary enrollment and advanced vocational educational partnerships are astonishingly unequal. According to the school district's post secondary and advanced vocational educational partnership enrollment for Fiscal Year 2003-2004, 49% were female students and 51% male. However, examining different ethnicity groups reflects that 11% were Hispanic females and 13% were Hispanic males, compared to 39% Caucasian female and 36% Caucasian male, (2% other). The statistics

reflects a great disparity. The situation is even more disconcerting when one examines the educational attainment level of young people just entering the workforce. Nearly one-third of the district's residents between the ages of 18-24 have not obtained a high school diploma, (Education Consortium, 2003).

Broughton and Fairbanks (2003) specifically focus on the determining factors that equip early adolescents in developing their identities within school contexts. Lamb, Puskar, Tusaie-Mumford (2001) article examines the relationship between high school academic curriculum and students' persistence path through college. Both of the articles report on the data that measures high school college preparatory enrollment and the likelihood of attending selective colleges or universities, (as reported by students on their college entrance exam applications). Relationships between student's school identity and academic encouragement appear to encourage or stifle student's motivation among different gender, ethnicity groups to pursue post-secondary education.

Specifically noted is the difference between levels of academic curricula with respect to staying on track to a bachelor's degree. As the level of academic curricula increases, so does the portion of undergraduates who stay on track. An astonishingly 87% of students who has participated in rigorous high school academic curricula remained on track to a bachelor's degree three years later, (www.cns.ed.gov/pubs2002/quarterly/fall/q4-1.asp). Sadly, 20% of SCHS's total residents have not graduated from high school, (Education Consortium, 2003).

Definitions

To present a clear understanding of the student's photographs, three categories were utilized to classify their academic aspirations. The terms hinder and support were adapted form Gibson's (1986) work on ecological perceptions of the environment.

Support: activities carried out primarily to provide support services that foster skills to excel one's academic aspirations

Hinder: barriers/inhibitors that impact one's capability to meet and/or excel one's academic aspirations

Other: activity, project has no impact on academic aspirations

Procedures

This study was conducted with 17 ninth graders participating in the school's health class. The students were asked to take photographs of the school's campus, rural community, home and other avenues that the participant interprets as supporting or inhibiting to his/her academic success, "other" elements in the environment that have no impact on their educational aspirations.

The focus of this study explores the everyday experiences and events of the high school and the perceptions and meaning attached to those experiences as expressed by the participants. I met with the students and implemented the following research procedure:

Meeting 1. (10-20 minutes): I met with the students in the classroom, describe the expectations of the project and passed out the consent and assent forms to be signed by the student and his/her parent/guardian, (see Appendix A for assent and consent forms). I provided participants with a time-line to keep students focused and fully aware of the expectations. Please refer to the time-line template below.

Rural Educational Aspirations Research

Time-Line

January 13: Pass out assent and consent forms, explain the project

January 16: *Due* ~ Signed Parental Consent forms

January 20: Pass out cameras. Divide students into groups

January 20- 28: *Take Pictures*: Take a minimum of 15 pictures of the school, community and home (5 pictures of each environment). No pictures can be taken of anyone's face.

January 23: Check on student progress

January 29: *Due* ~ Collect Cameras

February 11: Return pictures and CD's. Discuss power point presentation expectation

February 10-17: *Power Point Presentation*: Work on power point presentation within your group.

February 13: Check on progress

February 19: *Due* ~ Student Power Point Presentation

Meeting 2. (20-40 minutes): I collected the consent and assent forms. I assigned the class into five different groups, (3-4 students per group), and explained that the students and his/her assigned group are expected to spend approximately one hour taking pictures of the home, school and community over a time frame of one week. I provided every student a disposable camera. Students were instructed to take pictures of artifacts (not faces of people) in the home, school or community in which they identify as being a support or barriers with regards to their educational aspirations. If the student identifies a person as a supporter, barrier or other, the student will be instructed to take a picture of an item, an artifact,

or the backside to represent that individual. Students were encouraged to form study groups to complete the week-long project.

I set up two activities to ensure the students understood the expectations, plus engage the students in active learning. Students participated in a "Linking Language" activity to help them understand the photography process. I printed several pictures of a home, the school and community. The pictures were placed on a sheet of butcher paper and placed onto the students desks. The students walked around and labeled the photographs based upon their experiences. Students then broke into groups and discussed the different labels, derived themes, and then shared/discussed their findings with the class.

The two pictures below reflect: a classroom at the high school (Figure 3.1), and a church within the community (Figure 3.2). Other photographs used for this activity, but are not depicted below were of the front office, students studying, the field, and the desk.

Figure 3.1

Figure 3.2

To increase the probability that the pictures taken were well-thought out photographs of the home, school and community, I provided an outline for the participants to make a list of those places they wanted to capture prior to taking their photographs. Unfortunately, I did not know the extent to which these instructions were followed as participants were not required to submit their list.

Photo Elicitation Group Activity
(list items that you want to take pictures of that support/hinder your educational aspirations)

SCHOOL

HOME

COMMUNITY

Meeting 3. (5-10 minutes): I collected the student's disposable camera and explained to the students that I was taking the cameras to have their pictures developed. I reminded the students of the next meeting date and time.

Meeting 4. (20-40 minutes): I passed out the students photographs (on photography paper and on a CD). Through the collection of the photograph process, the student groups (3-4 students per group) were instructed to group their pictures together and derive themes from the groups' photographs. I requested for the student groups to put together a power point displaying the themes of the photographs. I provided all of the students with a template to keep the students focused. Please refer to the template below:

Photo Elicitation Power Point

3 Categories: School – Home – Community
Title: Word that describes the picture

# of students in your group who believe that the picture **supports** education
# of students in your group who believe that the picture **hinders** education
# of students in your group who believe that the picture has is in an **"other"** category, no impact on education

- -

Power Point Example:

Category: Home
Title: Student Desk

Support: 2
Hinder: 0
Other: 1

Meeting 5. (60-90 minutes): The student groups presented their power point presentation to the class regarding their photographs and topics. The presentation was videotaped.

Data Collection

The data collection strategies are threefold: collection of photographs, the photo power points, and the photo presentations. The following three data collection strategies will be utilized:

Collection of photographs. The collection of photographs depict people (known or unknown), scenes, (staged or natural), or symbols (implicit or explicit). According to Harper (2002, p.13), "Photographs evoke information, feelings and memory that are due to the photograph's particular form of representation." Photographs trigger recall and focus the interviewing process, enabling an in-depth look at the unintended aspects of a program. Emmison and Smith (2000) state that photographs are able to manifest themes and also explore social and special correlations of their display. The collection of photographs for this study entails the students taking pictures of the specified areas, (school, community, and home). The focuses of the student's pictures are to identify their support system and barriers within these settings, or "other" areas that do not fit in a category of support or barrier.

Photo Essays. Photographic essays invoke the response that solely "written words can express that photographs cannot, and vise versa," (Pink, 2001, p.134). The students will group their photographs together and create themes. The students will identify the themes with their own words (text) associated with each picture (or groups of pictures) in their power point presentation.

Photo Presentations. Photographs are made meaningful through the subjective gaze of each student. Each student produces photographic meaning by relating the photograph to his or her personal experience, throughout the school, home and community setting. The

process is unique in that the process allows students to "use the content of the images as vessels in which to invest meanings and through which to produce and represent their knowledge, self-identities, experiences and emotions," (Pink, 2001, p.68). The researcher video taped the student's presentations to record the participant's verbal statements made when giving their power point presentation, (see Appendix B for example student power point).

Data Analysis

The students' photographs and power point presentations yielded important data for analysis. The data was subjected to the following analysis procedures: First the data was subjected to the process of topical coding by using the critical elements of the research questions as deductive codes: support, barriers and other to educational aspirations. Within these topics an inductive coding process was used to illicit the student's contextual meaning of these three concepts. Finally, the data was viewed from a more open inductive frame to see if thematic structures exist outside of the focus proceeded by the research questions. Strauss and Corbin (1998) state that the inductive coding process guides the general framework of constant comparative analysis.

Trustworthiness

The following trustworthiness strategies developed by Creswell (1998) was utilized: (a) the data for this study will be collected through multiple resources, (photo elicitation and photo presentation), (b) an ongoing dialogue served as a check throughout the analysis process. Repeated observations occurred at the research site through the use of photo elicitation and photo presentation, (c) the participant will be involved in all phases of this study, (d) Two members of my graduate committee will serve as peer examiners and (e) research biases will be articulated in the writing of the dissertation proposal under the heading "The Researcher's Role."

Ethical Considerations

Pink (2001, p. 39) stated that "It is not solely ethnographers and participants who are implicated in the ethical issues researchers confront during fieldwork. There may be a whole range of other interested parties and agendas that shape the ethical conduct of ethnographers and their informants by enforcing their own guidelines or by posing a threat to the safety of those represented in ethnographic work …" Ultimately ethical decision making is based on the interpretations of the mortalities and internationalities of other people and the institution that they may represent.

Many issues may arise within the data collections procedure that needs to be addressed with the participant's parents to clarify how particular circumstances will be handled. The American Mental Health Counseling Association (2000) "Counselors Code of Ethics" Principle 1: Welfare of the Consumer point one and three state that "The primary responsibility of the mental health counselor is to respect the dignity and integrity of the client. Client growth and development are encouraged in ways that foster the client's interest and promote welfare. Mental health counselors fully inform consumers as to the purpose and nature of any evaluation, treatment, education or training procedure and they fully acknowledge that the consumer has the freedom of choice with regard to participation." While pursuing these endeavors, I made every reasonable effort to protect the welfare of the students. I made every effort to ensure that the research project served in the best interest of the students and community. The "Counselor's Code of Ethics" served as a guiding tool in this study.

CHAPTER FOUR: DATA ANALYSIS

Chapter four is a presentation of findings from the five student groups. This chapter is sectioned into three sections. The first section reviews the procedures utilized for collecting data, the second section presents a compilation of the group's photographs, and the third section represents a compilation of the entire participant produced photographs.

Section One: Data Management

The participant produced photographs, power points, and recorded presentations were printed out and/or burned to a disk for the participants and researcher. The photographs and disk were placed in a safety deposit box. The data was also stored on my home computer and backed up onto a jump drive.

The participant's presented their photographs to the classroom through power points in Microsoft. Their presentations were video-tapped to ensure the accuracy. A couple groups mis-checked the power point categories and corrected themselves during the presentation. Once the photographs were stored on the computer, data management was not difficult.

Data Analysis

The within and cross group analysis was used for data analysis. I used a topical coding method with the critical elements of the research questions to assist the search for themes. The organization and presentation of data themes was the result of compiling all of the groups tally scores. During analysis, I struggled with some responses as I considered where the photograph would fit in a particular theme. At times, I had to assign some of the participant's photographs to one category. For example, some participants' responses dealt with "Mom" and/or "Dad" and I assigned the photographs to one category, "Parent". To avoid redundancy, I choose to present data once within the category that the photograph best fit.

Data Representation

Photographs take up a considerable amount of memory. The within and cross group analysis took up a large amount of memory space on the computer. As it was, editing the Word document was challenging when a photograph was moved, all of the other photographs would shift, resulting in photographs overlaying text or reappearing in other pages. Saving cut and paste, copying took longer to process due to the large size of the document. Embedding the photographs along with other data, word text, graphs also posed a problem of continuity and flow from page to page. If there was not enough room at the bottom of one page, the photograph would move the top of another page leaving a considerable amount of empty space. Whenever this occurred, I attempted to adjust the size of the photograph or wrap the text accordingly.

Regardless of the difficulties of embedding photographs throughout the text, I am convinced that the photographs present a more intimate story to the reader. An environment in which the reader can visualize, connect, sense what the day to day activities of a typical rural teenage student. The participants produced a snap shot of their own experiences and beliefs about their home, school and community. The resulting within and cross group themes were arranged by me, but were initially created by the participants.

Section Two: Within Group Analysis

The second section of this chapter presents the findings of five student groups, ranging in group size of three to four students. The students utilized three categories to organize their selection of photographs; their home, school and community. Data from the participant's photographs were used to create group themes in which I attempted to answer the following two questions:

1. For ninth grade students, what are the visual messages associated with educational aspirations in their home, school and community environments?

2. What visual messages are identified as supporting and/or inhibiting to their educational aspirations?

Pages 35 to 49 capture the themes from the five student groups. I have outlined the group photographs according to the following three categories:

- Category 1: group size and gender
- Category 2: two photographs the group identified as: Support, Hinder, Other
- Category 3: group tally per picture
    - For example; Home: Support: (3) Mother
        - The information above represents: Under the category of Home Support, 3 students in the group agree that the picture of "mother" supports their academic aspirations at home.

Each group has three pages of photographs. The groups are identified as: Group One, Group Two, Group Three, etc. at the top left hand corner of each page.

Group One: Three female students

<u>Home</u>:

- **Support:** Tally = all 3's: Home desk, Mom, Brother, Bed

- **Hinder:** Tally = all 1's: Desk, Dresser, Bedroom, Journal

- **Other** Tally = 2: Posters

Group One: Three female students

School:

- **Support:** Tally = all 3's: Library, Scholarship Office, American Flag, Trophy Case, Lockers, Desk, Pencils, Paper/Binders, Computer, Hornet, County Pride Poser, Globe

- **Hinder:** Tally = all 2's: Knick Knacks (on desk in library)

- **Other:** Tally = all 1's: Classroom, Gym

Group One: Three female students

<u>Community</u>:

- **Supporter**: Tally = all 3's: Church, Park, Community Center, School

- **Hinder**: Tally = all 1's: Wal-Mart, Baseball Field, Dance, Car

- **Other**: Tally = 1: Pueblo Mall

Group Two: Three male students

<u>Home</u>:

- **Supporter**: Tally = (3) Home and (2) Vehicle

- **Hinder**: Tally = all 3's: Video Games and Television

- **Other**: Tally = all 3's: Backyard and Frontroom

Group Two: Three male students

School:

- **Support**: Tally = all 3's: Teacher Desk, Student Desk, School Bus

- **Hinder**: Tally = 3: Girls, 2: Laptop computers, 2: Wall of Champions, 2: Stadium

- **Other**: Tally = all 3's: Former Principals, "guys we don't know," Fighting Hornet, Hornet Logo, Trophies

Group Two: Three male students

<u>Community</u>:

- **Support**: Tally = all 2's: Flag Pole and Pueblo Chieftain Newspaper

The Pueblo Chieftain

- **Hinder**: Tally = 1: Stadium

- **Other**: Tally = all 3's: Musso's Produce, Vineland Gas Service, Musso's Resturant, Local Main Road, Demolition Derby, Motor Company

Group 3: Four male students

<u>Home</u>:

- **Supporter**: Tally = all 4's: Father, Alarm Clock, Homework

- **Hinder**: Tally = all 4's: Playstation, Television, Cell Phone

- **Other**: Tally = 0: No photographs identified an "other" category

Group 3: Four male students

<u>School</u>:

- **Support**: Tally = all 4's: Student Desks, Lockers, Internet Connection, Computer ER, School Bell

- **Hinder**: Tally = 0: No photographs identified an "hinder" category

- **Other**: Tally = 0: No photographs identified an "other" category

Group 3: Four Male Students

<u>Community</u>:

- **Support**: Tally = all 4's: Public Library, Administration Building, Local Bank

- **Hinder**: Tally = 1: Art Center

- **Other**: Tally = 0: No photographs identified an "other" category

Group 4: Three Students, (Two Female/One Male Student)

<u>Home</u>:

- **Support**: Tally = all 1's: Father's Desk, Family Pet, Student Medals

- **Hinder**: Tally = 1: Student Medals

- **Other**: Tally = 3: Barn Animals, 2: Family Pets

Group 4: Three Students, (Two Female/One Male Student)

<u>School</u>:

- **Support**: Tally = 3: Library, all 2's: Hallway, Awards, Mascot

- **Hinder**: Tally = 0: No photographs identified an "hinder" category

- **Other**: Tally = all 1's: Awards, Hornet Mascot, Hallway

Group 4: Three Students, (Two Female/One Male Student)

<u>Community</u>:

- **Support**: Tally = 3: American Flag

- **Hinder**: Tally = 0: No photographs identified an "hinder" category 0
- **Other**: Tally = all 3's: Fields, Outside School Premises, (All 2s) Parking lot, Road

Group 5: Three female students

<u>Home</u>:

- **Support**: Tally = all 3's: Home, Horses, Stove

- **Hinder**: Tally = 1: Computer Room

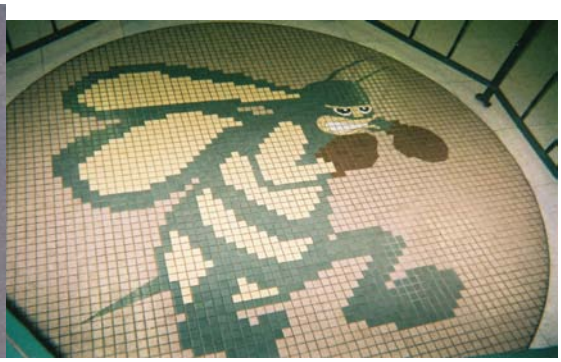
- **Other**: Tally = 3: Family Pet, all 1's: Mailbox, Computer Room

Group 5: Three female students

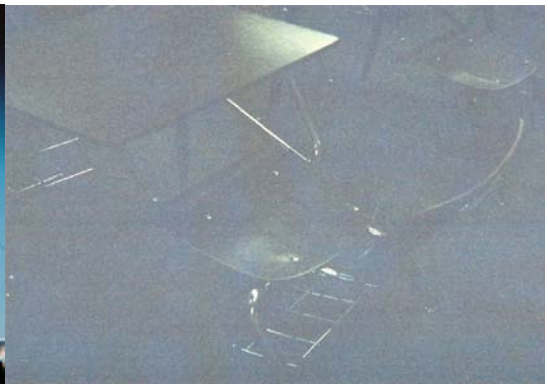
School:

- **Support**: Tally = all 3's: School Entrance, White Board, Book Shelf, Notebook, Writing Utensils

- **Hinder**: Tally = 3: Laptop Computers, 1: Hornet Mascot



- **Other**: Tally = all 3's: American Flag, Student Desk, Library, Cafeteria



Group 5: Three female students

Community: Three Female Students

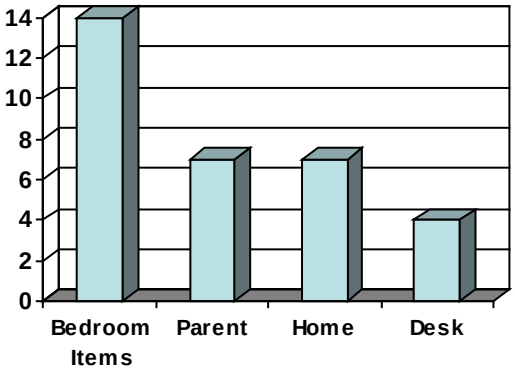
- **Support**: Tally = 3: Road

- **Hinder**: Tally = 0: No photographs identified an "hinder" category
- **Other**: Tally = all 3s: Vegetable Field, Farm Land, Tumble Weeds

Section Three

To assemble the cross group themes, I compiled photographs that were repetitive among the five different groups. Below you will see graphs and photographs that represent the commonalities of the student's data.

Home: Support



Group 1

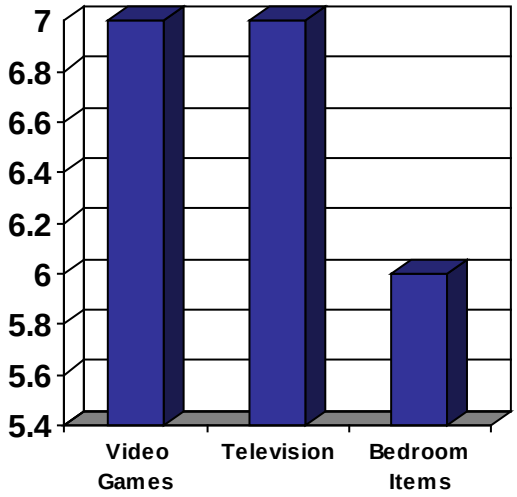
Group 2

Group 3

Group 5

Group 4

Home: Hinder (Group 4 did not identify any items in this category)



Group 3

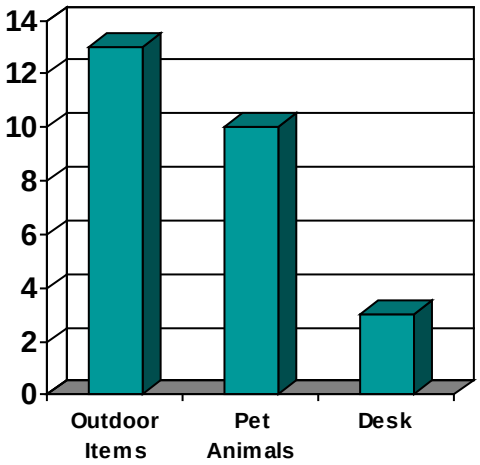
Group 2

Group 2

Group 1

Group 5

Home: Other (Group 3 did not identify any items in this category)



Group 2

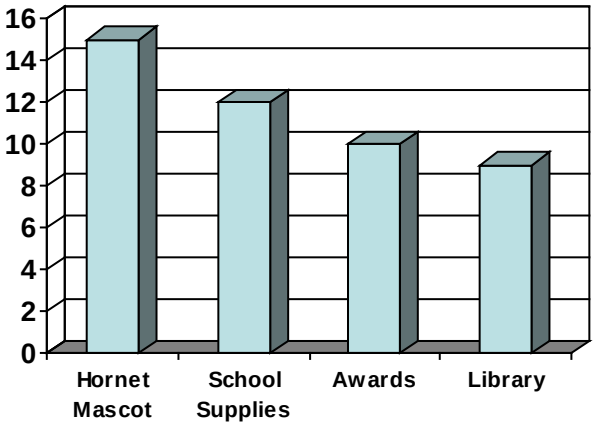
Group 2

Group 4

Group 5

Group 1

School: Support (Group 3 did not identify any items in this category)



Group 1

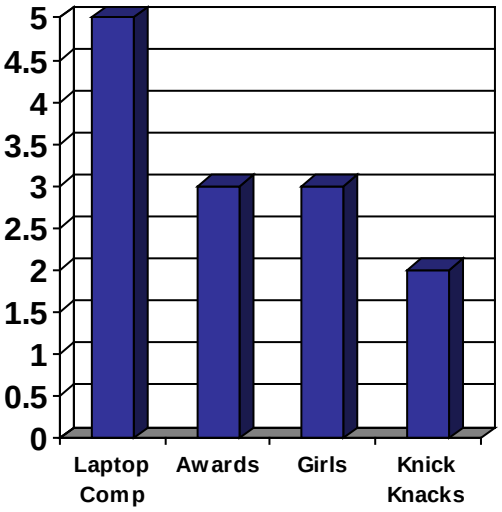
Group 2

Group 5

Group 2

Group 4

School: Hinder (Group 4 & 5 did not identify any items in this category)



Group 2

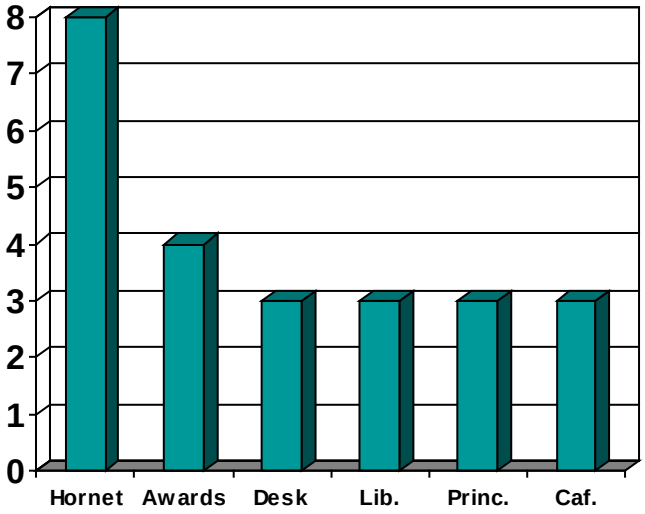
Group 5

Group 1

Group 2

Group 1

School: Other



Group 2

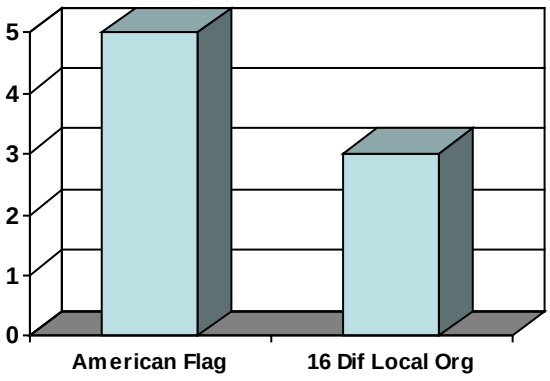
Group 4

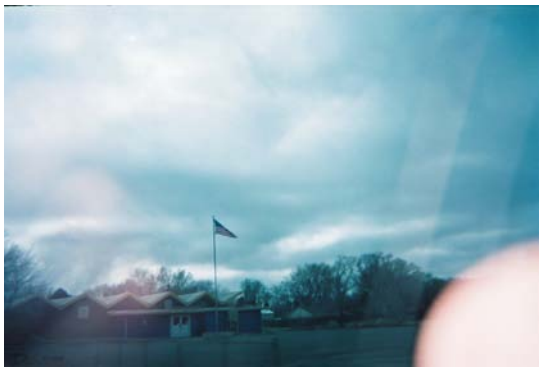
Group 1

Group 5

Group 2

Community: Support





Group 2

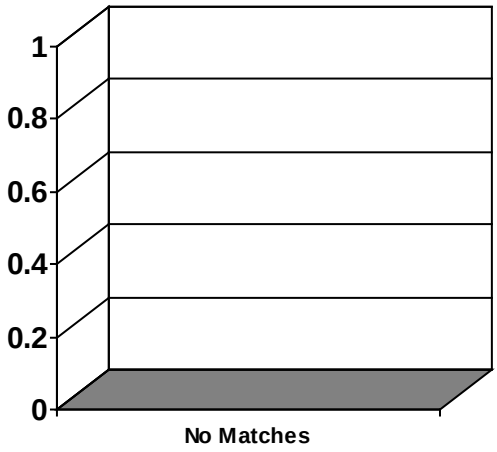
Group 4

Group 3

Group 5

Group 1

Community: Hinder (Group 4 & 5 did not identify any items for this category)
There were no matches among the groups – All photographs depicted below received a vote of only 1 within this category.

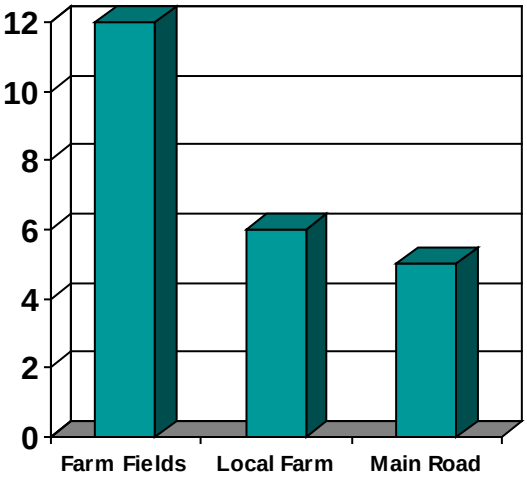


Group 2

Group 3

Group 1

Community: Other (Group 3 did not identify any items in this category)



Group 4

Group 5

Group 2

Group 2

Group 4

Summary:

I observed the rural student photographs to be very thoughtful and conscientious in the pictures they produced. It was evident that the students share similar experiences among the home, school and community settings. The home category of support produced photographs of parents, home and bedroom items. The school category of support produced photographs of school supplies, awards and the hornet mascot. The community category produced broad and diversified photographs of 16 different community organizations, yet yielded a common theme of pictures of the American flag, (5 pictures). Although a majority of the photographs were of physical objects, a positive theme of cultural context relationships occurred.

Hindrances within the home category were photographs of video games and the television. Hindrances within the school category were mostly identified as; lap-top computers, cell phone, "girls" and the school hallway. Home and school hindrances could primarily be identified as distractions. Hindrances within the category of the community consisted of sporadic organizations such as; Wal-Mart, baseball field, and the local art center. Without individual interviews, it is difficult to interpret why these organizations were identified as hindrances. Although one could hypothesize that the category was broadly assigned because of the student's relationship within the cultural, political-economic, socio-political and spatial context.

The category of "other" identified items that the students labeled as having no impact on academic aspirations. The home category included photographs of barn animals and family pets. The school category included photographs of former principals and the cafeteria. The community category included photographs of rural roads, farm fields, and cars. Some of these categories overlapped with one another. Interestingly, one may hypothesize that the use of a car, roads, barnyard animals, etc. could be identified as

relationships within the socio-political or spatial context as supporting or hindering academic aspirations.

According to Panelli (2002), many social relationship contexts must be taken into consideration when studying rural youth. First, "cultural contexts shape the practices and values in a young person's immediate rural experiences through family and community," (Panelli, pg 117). Cultural contexts affect how young people are positioned vis-à-vis wider cultural notions such as rural childhood and work. Second, political economic contexts affect both the explicit material conditions and work requirements of young people; i.e. food, shelter, income, etc. Third, socio-political context in which people live include those structures and social/power relations that influence young peoples identities, differences, and access (or not) to participation and representation. Fourth, spatial contexts are of vital interest in young people's geographies, affecting young people's movement and experiences profoundly.

The use of photography provided a unique lens at capturing multi-level relationship that impact rural educational aspirations. Student photographs successfully captured social relationships within the cultural, political-economic, socio-political and spatial context of a rural community.

CHAPTER FIVE: DISCUSSION

This visual ethnology study was conducted with 17 ninth graders participating in a rural school's health class. As stated in Chapter 3, a visual ethnography is an anthropological specialization that studies culture through photographic methods including the use of the still camera. The students were given disposable cameras to photograph aspects of their home, school and community environment that support or inhibit their educational aspirations.

The students' photographs and power point presentations yielded important data for analysis representing a snap shot of their everyday high school experiences and the perceptions and meaning attached to those experiences. The data was subjected to the following analysis procedures: First, the process of topical coding was utilized by using the critical elements of the research questions as deductive codes, (support and barriers to educational aspirations). Within these topics an inductive coding process was used to illicit the student's contextual meaning of these two concepts.

Data from participant photographs were used to create the themes in which I attempted to answer the following two questions:

1. For ninth grade students, what are the visual messages associated with educational aspirations in their home, school and community environments?
2. What visual messages are identified as supporting and/or inhibiting to their educational aspirations?

Data analysis consisted of two phases. The initial phase analyzed data within the groups, and the second phase analyzed data across the five groups. For the within-group analysis, I compiled student derived themes from the participant photographs. Themes were formed based upon participant-produced photographs and the headings of the participant-produced power points in the areas of home, school, community; and whether the photographs were

identified as support, hinder or other (no impact) in regards to the students' academic aspirations.

To assemble the cross group themes, I compiled photographs that were repetitive among the five different groups. I compiled graphs and photographs that represented the commonalities of the student's data within the three categories; home, school and community; divided into the categories of support, hinder and other.

Home Support: Personal Items, Parent, Home, Desk

Personal Items:

Overwhelmingly, 60% (14 out of 23) of the photographed items were within their personal space, (i.e.; items within their bedroom) serving as supporting factors for their academic aspirations. As presented in Chapter 2, Deci & Vallerand (1991) identified the environment as a support for student competence and self-determination. Independence is susceptible and important transition from adolescence into adulthood, posing unique situations as it is a developmental period characterized by increasing autonomy and self-regulations. This category captures the students desire to form their own self-identity by creating an environment filled with possessions that reflect who they are, who they want to become.

Parents:

All of the photographs of parents, (7 out of 7) identified their parents as the most important source of educational information. Xitao (2001, p. 30) describes the time from 8th to 12th grade as an important transitional period for adolescents because of their "desire for autonomy and independence and their gradual detachment from their families." As stated in Chapter 2, insight can be gained when examining the impact of the interactions between and among the student's family. Bulanda's (2009, p. 204) research concluded that "measures of parental involvement are positively linked to several child outcomes, including better

academic achievement, fewer behavioral problems and less depression and anxiety." Cowley's (2003) research on academic aspirations indicated that rural students expect their parents to play a large role in providing information about continued education.

Home Hinder: Video Games, Television, Bedroom Items

Video Games

Although a television set is a fixture in many households, controversy over television influence continues to rage. All of the photographs, (7 out of 7) of television and video games were identified as a hindrance of their academic aspirations. "Researchers have yet to understand fully the issue of transfer of learning from electronic media," (Schmidt 2008, p. 63). According to Serls (1985, p. 160) "younger students reading performance improves as amount of television watched increased. However, by age 17, television bears the popular expected negative association with academic achievement, that is, as time spent watching TV increases, reading achievement level go down." Shelley, a reading specialist (1998, p. 568) reports that her primary responsibility is to "encourage students to read and this task has become more difficult because today's students are often much more enamored with television than they are with books."

Home Other: Home Environment, Pets, Desk

Home Environment:

We often assume that how children spend their time affects their cognitive and social development. Approximately 72% (13 out of 18) of the photographed items were within their home environment serving as "other" factors that have no influence on their academic aspirations. Although we know the demographic and economic characteristics of children's families and the communities where they live and attend school, we rarely know how individual children spend their time at home. Students categorized these pictures as "having no impact upon their academic aspirations." However, based upon the students'

photographs, they have chosen to partake in appropriate activities to fill in the free time void within a given day. Hofferth research provides a good indication of how the student's daily activities are broken down.

Hofferth (2001, p. 306) reported that in 1997, "55% of an average child's week was spent eating, sleeping or in personal care", with an additional 15% spent in school. This leaves only 30% of children's time as discretionary. Of this, 51 hours, comprises free play 15 hours per week (29%) and television viewing about 12 hours per week (24%). In contrast, structured activities comprised 9 hours (18% of free time). Children spent the smallest amount of time in educational activities: 1 hour reading and 1 hour and 48 minutes studying." Out of home sport participation and visiting represent important aspects of children's lives both in the amount of time spent and in their relationship to cognitive and socio-emotional well being. Evidently, a balance of the two activities may be desirable.

School Support: Mascot, School Supplies, Awards, Library

School Mascot:

"Hoyas"… "Hoosiers"… "Dons"… the colorful and sometimes peculiar mascots of teams have long been a source of identity and affection for students, staff, faculty and alumni. Approximately 60% (15 out of 25) of the photographs identified the school mascot as a supporter of academic aspirations. The school mascot serves as a "powerful cultural symbol because they not only evoke allegiance to an institution's athletic teams but also may be instrumental in shaping the image of the entire college or university," (Connolly, 2000, p. 515). Logos and mascots are important vehicles of group identity, and their names, insofar as they have meaning, "may be said to reflect a community's linguistic standards, its sense of social decorum, and some of the basic values," (Smith 1997, p. 172).

Not surprisingly, family's who have lived within the rural area for generations, feel attached and have developed a strong sense of community. Collier's study (as cited in

Bajama, 2002, p.62) explains that people tend to compare themselves to groups with similar beliefs and abilities, “the group serves as a powerful anchor that limits the level of aspiration, particularly when the group is cut off from other groups…people tend to use others who are similar or have similar levels of ability as a source of social comparison."

School Supplies:

All of the photographs of school supplies, (12 out of 12) were identified as supporters for their academic aspirations. As stated in Chapter 2, Haller and Virkler (1993) found that the economic context between rural and non-rural youth existed because of the lower socioeconomic status of many rural families. This is interesting in that the average amount of money spent on instructional supplies expenditures during the 1996 school year was “$44.93 per student, with a low of $40.96 and high of $63.49,” (Okpala 2001, p.114). However as stated above, the rural community has a strong commitment to the school. Haller and Virkler (1993) found that the rural schools are often the central meeting place for community members, the location for most recreation and cultural events, and the repository of articulate leaders for community organizations. School supplies or school preparation serves as a strong supporter of academic achievement within the findings of this research project.

School Hinder: Laptop, Awards, Peer Relationships, Knick Knacks

Laptop Computer:

“Adolescents have widely adopted the use of digital media for daily activities,” (Schmidt 2008, p. 54). Approximately 83% (5 out of 6) of the participants identified the school’s lap-top computer as a hindrance of their academic aspirations. A typical adolescent scenario is to be working on their homework on the computer with word processing program open for text, surfing the Internet, simultaneously instant messaging with friends about “who likes who,” and meanwhile, the television is on in the background while they are listening to

music on their iPods. This situation may reflect the multi-tasking that could occur at home; however, many of those conditions are often controlled at school.

More than a "thousand schools nationwide have committed themselves to some form of laptop computer initiative, and the number is increasing rapidly," (Windschitl 2002, p. 165). Laptop computers introduce a host of complex issues into a school community, most importantly is "how teachers will adapt to classroom settings in which every student owns a mobile suite of powerful technological tools and telecommunications access to a global repository of information and ideas," (Windschitl 2002, p. 166). Much of the literature and needed research identifies how teachers come to use technology in these new technology environments. According to Lowther (2003, p. 24) "Despite increased access to computers by today's K-12 students, the challenges of designing effective instruction in general, let alone computer-based lessons that address state-mandated content and standards of technology practices remain as demanding on teachers as ever." Such schools are creating new practices and policies to adopt a new technology culture, infused with the notions of ideal 21st Century future for our media driven students.

Peer Relationships:

"By emerging adulthood, at least 85% of young people have had a romantic relationship of some kind," All of the photographs of peers, (3 out of 3) identified members of their peers, "girls" as a hindrance of their academic aspirations. (Dhariwal 2009). The influence of peers in the school setting has been documented widely (e.g., Brown, as cited in Chenoweth & Galliher, 2004) particularly with adolescence in which individuals are most influenced by their peers. Peers influence academic achievement in positive and negative ways. However, the form and content of activities with their particular cognitive, emotional, social and cultural dimensions are certainly created by the adolescents themselves individually and through peer groups.

Interestingly, the three participants who identified "girls" as a hindrance to their academic aspirations were all male students. According to Dhariwal (2009, p. 585) "Within the peer group, boys play in emotionally restricted large groups, while girls rely on dyadic intimate friendships, at times for discussions of romance." In the transition from peer to romantic partners, adolescent boys' lack of intimate relationship experience. As such, I speculate that this finding is merely a difference in successful interpersonal functioning within this adolescence age group.

School Other: Mascot, Awards, Desk, Library, Principal Pictures, Cafeteria

Approximately 47% (8 out of 17) of the photographs identified the school's mascot as "other" indicating the items in the "support" and "hinder" category have no impact on their academic aspirations. Seventeen to twenty-three percent of the remaining photographs reflect items/areas around the school, i.e; awards, desks, library, pictures of prior principals, cafeteria, etc. As mentioned in the "School Support" section above these items relate to the school's culture and identity.

Community Support: American Flag, Business/Organizations

American Flag:

The American flag is a collective sign, a symbol of a society that is elevated to be visible to every member. All of the photographs, (5 out of 5) identified the American Flag as a supporter for their academic aspirations. Boime (2009, p. 4) reports that the American flag, "is the emblem of a coherent group identity that in principle expresses the shared values of that group and distinguishes it from all others." Theoretically, photographs of the American flag have similar meaning of the photographs taken of the school's mascot. The American flag and the school mascot both project a symbol of unity, a common denominator for all.

Businesses and Organizations:

Not all places mean the same to everybody, evident in the 16 different business/organizations identified as supporters. As mentioned above, in adolescence, children become increasingly independent and autonomous. According to Gustafson (2001, p.6)… "places are depicted as having single, essential identities, based upon history and tradition, and the definition of a place all too often means drawing a boundary around it, separating the inside from the outside." The wide range of identified community supporters reflects the wide range of student experiences within and outside of the community.

Community Hinder:

There were no matched photographs that demonstrated factors within the community that hinder academic aspirations. As stated above, students are becoming autonomous and explore their outside environment.

Community Other: Farmland, Local Farms, Main Road

Farmland:

Collier's study (as cited in Bajama, 2002, p.62) explains that people tend to compare themselves to groups with similar beliefs and abilities. All of the photographs, (12 out of 12) identified the local farm fields as an "other" as having no impact on their academic aspirations. People tend to use others who are similar or have similar levels of ability as a source of social comparison. As mentioned in Chapter 2, Peshkin (1978) reports there exists a sense of oneness among rural community members. Evidently, 71% of the participants believe that the farm land serves as that point of connectedness. That shared belief system, norms, and values, (Coleman & Hoffer, as cited in Smithmier, 1994).

Discussion of Findings and Implications

This dissertation has demonstrated the power of placing cameras in the hands of local community students and asking them to photograph items that represent academic supporters

and inhibitors within their environment. The analysis of the home, school and community produced broad themes. A theme of "parent and home" was frequently identified as support of the student's academic success.

Epstein (1997, p. 119) reports that "parent involvement and school and family cooperation has been specified as one of the key ingredients for excellence and improved education." Schools that are well connected with their families tend to have an understanding of the families' "background, cultures, concerns, goals, needs and views of their children." Families tend to separate themselves from a school if the climate and atmosphere is one that does not make them feel welcomed.

To create a welcoming environment, Epstein (2002, p.13) recommends six types of involvement to promote a positive school climate; "parenting, communicating, volunteering, learning at home, decision making and collaborating with the community." Implementing all six types of involvement, schools can help parents become active at school and at home in various ways that meet student needs and family schedules. Input from participants help schools address challenges and improve plans to outreach so that all families can be productive partners in their children's success.

Most parents cannot frequently come to the school building to see what their children are learning. Epstein recommends "learning at home" to engage all parents in weekly discussions with their children about schoolwork. For example, an interactive homework process called "Teachers Involve Parents in Schoolwork" (TIPS) helps school teachers design and assign homework that enable all students to share what they are learning with a family member, (Epstein, p.15). Homework is part of a full program of the school, family and community partnership.

Community partnerships can be formed in many ways to increase students' learning opportunities and experiences. Activities may be conducted during lunch, after school and

other times by school, family, and community partners. For example; community instructors can come to the school during lunch or after school to teach tai chi, tae kwon do, hip-hop dance, conduct fitness classes. Business partners can provide part of the cost of buses and entrance fees for students and families to visit museums and attend cultural programs. Parents, the school and business partners can develop a "Hall of Graduates" recognizing alumni with inspiring talents/accomplishments. Many community partners are more willing to help if they know that their investments contributed to student learning and success in school.

Most schools conduct only a few activities to involve families in their children's education, but most do not have well-organized, goal-linked partnership programs. Epstein (2002) recommends a "school learning community" to involve the families, school and community. Research and fieldwork show that such programs improve schools, strengthen families, invigorate community support and increase student achievement and success. A well-organized partnership program starts with an Action Team for Partnerships, made up of teachers, administrators, parents and community partners (Epstein 2002). The Action Team is linked to the school council or school improvement team, with a clear focus on promoting student success. The team writes annual plans for family and community involvement and implements and evaluates those activities.

A positive school climate welcomes and encourages family environment. Family involvement brings about improved teaching by generating a positive attitude among teachers and raising teacher self-esteem. Teachers feel respected by families who are involved. Improved teaching leads to greater academic achievement by students. Academic achievement and student success lead to a positive school climate. This circular reciprocal relationship creates a continuous positive loop.

Bowen, (1998, p. 47) supports Epstein by reporting "that when parents promote continuity between home and school values and experiences, students are more likely to develop a strong sense of educational meaningfulness, which in turn affects academic achievement." School practitioners must strategically create programs of family and community involvement to strengthen the home, school and community relationship and improve student academic performance.

Suggestions for Improvement

Steadman, (2004, p. 585) stated that "experience in the setting drives evaluations such as attachments and descriptive meanings. All setting are imbued, to varying degrees, with multiple meanings, based upon the mode of the encounter." For example, farmers as a group will share certain meanings for a plot of land that are distinct from those of real estate developers or hunters.

Participant photographs should be paired with interviews and/or electronic discussions boards as to not leave way for misinterpretation. Many school sites utilize on-line teacher/student communication education services, i.e.; Noodle. This system would make an excellent resource to post and comment on photographs. Participant produced photographs would originally be posted by the student to me, who could save the photograph, record individual text, then post for the rest of the class to reflect upon and make comments.

A photograph of the participant's setting is intimate; other participants who are familiar with the setting may comprehend the meaning of the photograph. This application would engage discussion of participant's photographs, initially individually (prior to posting) and cross-group (after posting). In retrospect, I would not change the approach of this study to engage participants in the production of photographs. What I would have included is more dialog pertaining to what the participant had to say was important about each photograph. While I do consider the photographs to serve as a powerful data collection tool, I now also

believe that interviews would have increased the depth of the participant's thoughts and feelings per photograph.

In addition to the photographs and discussion, I would recommend adopting a system in which to categorize the level of participant responses. Gustafson (2001, p.11) has identified a "Meaning of Place" template to capture participants thoughts related to the meanings of place. Gustafson's model entails three poles of "experiential modes" with important similarities, i.e.; self, other, environment. The "self" theme correlates to the "personal" meanings of place, i.e.; self-identification, emotion. The "others" theme resembles the "social" category, i.e.; perceived characteristics, traits, behavior. The environment" theme is broader than simply a "physical' category. It includes not only the place as a physical environment, but also symbolic, historical, institutional and geographic environment.

In addition, Gustafson's (2001) model's does not force the photographs into discrete categories, but are rather mapped around and between the three poles of self, others and environment. This interplay of continuity clearly shows that meanings and place are given multiple times. A meaningful place appears as a process, where various individual (and collective) projects converge and/or compete with other projects, and with external events.

It might also be useful to investigate what ways rural isolation and academic aspirations influence what places mean to people and how the attribution occurs. Gustafson's model would provide the necessary tools to gather a richer, more in-depth framework for capturing the student's academic aspiration and manifold the meaning of place (the environment).

Conclusion

Steel County High School is located approximately ten miles east of the city, in the rural county in Colorado. As a center in the community, Steel County High School a stage for the intergenerational community to congregate, transmit mutual understandings of the community values and keep vigilant of the community's rules for conduct and relationships. It takes many small farmers, and many small ranchers for the land to be taken care of properly. Being good at an activity and valuing its worth is created by an eclectic range of influences…

The rural community relies on one another in a way that I can't really explain. For me, the centralness of rural living is a kind of balance point to the way I think about what's occurring in the world today. Although it is very hard for me to articulate how that centralness works, I believe that all meaningful experiences are created by the value of hard work. Rural residents are good at working against unpredictable weather, the tangle of economic variables to earn a living, plus raise animals in the country side. They are good at working hard, and value members of the community who work hard.

Panelli (2002) reports that researchers must take into account many variables when examining the social relationships of rural youth. Adolescent lives are not only influenced by adults but also are varied by overlapping social, cultural, economic, political and environmental settings and systems that structure their lives. The table below integrates Panelli's framework entailing the terms, definition and the student photographs within each context.

Panelli's Relationship Contet

Term	*Definition*	*Photographs*
Cultural Context	Shapes students values through family and the community.	Parents, School Mascot, Farm Fields and Roads, American Flag.
Political Economic Context	Material conditions such as food, shelter and income.	Parents, Home, School Supplies, Various Local Agencies.
Socio-Political Context	Where students live and impact their identities, differences and access to participate in activities.	Lap-top Computers, Peers, Farm Fields and Roads, Different Businesses and Organizations.
Spatial Context	Geographies affecting the students movement and experiences.	Farm Fields and Roads, Different Businesses and Organizations.

An interwoven system of expectations regarding work and spatial mobility influences young people's negotiation of work and play First, "cultural contexts shape the practices and values in a young person's immediate rural experiences through family and community," (Panelli, pg 117). Cultural contexts affect how young people are positioned vis-à-vis wider cultural notions such as rural childhood and work. Second, political economic contexts affect both the explicit material conditions and work requirements of young people; i.e. food, shelter, income, etc. Third, socio-political context in which people live include those structures and social/power relations that influence young peoples identities, differences,

and access (or not) to participation and representation. Fourth, spatial contexts are of vital interest in young people's geographies, affecting young people's movement and experiences profoundly.

Families, schools and the community are constantly engage in a large variety of social relations that can provide connections, challenges and even conflict between individuals and groups. Family and kinship relations are shown to shape young peoples experience of schooling, work and future lifestyles in or beyond rural settings. Analyzing the interrelationships between young people's experiences produce a context in which they operate. These relationships were evident in the participant photographs, thus overlapping in many arenas surrounding rural student's lives. Relationships captured in student photographs produced varying experiences within the home, school and community setting.

Figure 5.1

Vital photographs explored in this paper reflect meanings attributed environmental impacts of high school students' academic aspirations. The photograph above (Figure 5.1) represents Steel County's football stadium, taken from the elementary school. It is difficult to separate the community from school because of the close knit relationship of the

environment and community members. Generations of families have attended this high school. There exists a special kinship amongst the students, parents and community members that will forever exist throughout their lives.

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Appendix A

Assent and Consent Forms

Assent to Participate in a Research Study
Colorado State University

My name is Dana Lambert and I am a doctorate student at Colorado State University – Fort Collins. My dissertation research project focuses on gaining a student perspective about aspects of the rural environment that strengthens and/or make it difficult for rural students to excel in education. I am asking you if you would like to help me study your community.

If you agree, I will ask you to take pictures of your school, community and home. There is not a right or wrong picture to take – it is just about what you like or don't like about the environment. After you turn in your camera, I will develop the pictures and you and your group will tell me what you think about each picture that you have taken. Neither your name nor any comments will be connected to your photographs within my research report, so no one other than you, your classmates and I will know what has been collected. Unless you report to me that you are being harmed. Then, by law I have to report this.

Agreeing to be in this project can not hurt you. It won't help you, either. You will not receive any gift for completing this project. You do not have to participate. If you say "yes" now but change your mind, you can stop being in the research any time by just telling me.

Another permission form titled the Consent Form will be sent to your parents to ask if it is OK for you to participate. If you want to be in this research, sign your name and write today's date on the line below.

_____ _____
Student's Name Date

_____ _____
Researcher Date

Consent to Participate in a Research Study
Colorado State University

TITLE OF STUDY: Visual Ethnographic Multiple Case Study

PRINCIPAL INVESTIGATOR: *Dr. JIM BANNING*
Colorado State University School of Education Program,# 970-491-7135

CO-PRINCIPAL INVESTIGATOR: *MRS. DANA LAMBERT*
Pueblo School District No.70, 719-547-4093

WHY AM I BEING INVITED TO TAKE PART IN THIS RESEARCH? *Your participation in this study will provide information concerning the community and culture that strengthen and/or make it difficult for you to excel in your education.*

WHO IS DOING THE STUDY? *By volunteering to take part in this research your child is being invited to provide information through photographs taken by your child that is geared toward examining the community.*

WHAT IS THE PURPOSE OF THIS STUDY? *The overall intent of this visual ethnographic multiple case pilot study is to explore connections between and among the educational-environment, culture and aspirations. Through this exploration, Mrs. Lambert hopes to present a descriptive picture of the community surrounding the educational setting of a rural school district.*

WHERE IS THE STUDY GOING TO TAKE PLACE AND HOW LONG WILL IT LAST? *Your child will be the photographer. Therefore your child will be the decider on where and when the photographs are taken. You are NOT expected to do and/or go anywhere outside of your normal day schedule. The research will take approximately one week. The student will volunteer approximately 1 hour participating in the study.*

WHAT WILL I BE ASKED TO DO? *A disposable camera will be provided to you by Mrs. Lambert to create photographs of places, things, events and activities that you believe represents how your environment supports your academic aspirations.*

- ***Meeting 1****, (10-20 minutes): The researcher will meet with the classroom, describe the expectations of the project and pass out the consent and assent forms to be signed by the student and his/her parent/guardian.*
- ***Meeting 2****, (20-40 minutes): The researcher will collect the consent and assent forms. The researcher will assign the class into three different groups, (5-8 students per group). The researcher will explain that the student and his/her assigned group are expected to spend approximately one hour taking pictures of one of the assigned areas; the school, community or home over a time frame of one week. The researcher will give every student a disposable camera.*
- ***Meeting 3****, (5-10 minutes): The researcher will meet the classroom and collect the student's disposable camera. The researcher will explain that she is taking the camera to have the pictures developed and will remind the student of the next meeting date and time.*

- ***Meeting 4***, *(20-40 minutes): The researcher will pass out the students photographs (on photography paper and on a CD). The student groups will be instructed to group their pictures together and derive themes from the groupings. The researcher will ask the student groups to put together a power point displaying the groups photographs and type in their statements about the photograph groupings and themes.*
- ***Meeting 5***, *(60-90 minutes): The students will give a power point presentation to the class regarding their photographs. The presentation will be videotaped.*

ARE THERE REASONS WHY I SHOULD NOT TAKE PART IN THIS STUDY? *Your participation in this study is completely voluntary and you can choose to withdraw at any time, without giving Mrs. Lambert any reason and without penalty.*

WHAT ARE THE POSSIBLE RISKS AND DISCOMFORTS? *It is not possible to identify all potential risks in research procedures, but the researcher(s) have taken reasonable safeguards to minimize any known and potential, but unknown, risks. If the participant discloses that she/he is in danger and/or having thoughts of causing harm to others, the researcher is held liable by law to report such incidents.*

WILL I BENEFIT FROM TAKING PART IN THIS STUDY? *There are no direct benefits to the participant by taking part in this pilot study.*

DO I HAVE TO TAKE PART IN THE STUDY? *Your participation in this research is voluntary. If you decide not to participate in the study, you may withdraw your consent and stop participating at any time without penalty or loss of benefits to which you are otherwise entitled.*

WHAT WILL IT COST ME TO PARTICIPATE? *There are no costs associated with this research project.*

WHO WILL SEE THE INFORMATION THAT I GIVE?
The data in this study will be kept confidential. A pseudonym will be utilized to replace the participant's names in order to protect their identity.

CAN MY TAKING PART IN THE STUDY END EARLY? *Your participation in this research is voluntary. If you decide not to participate in this study, you may then be removed. Otherwise the length of this study will last approximately three to four weeks.*

WILL I RECEIVE ANY COMPENSATION FOR TAKING PART IN THIS STUDY? *You will not be compensated for your time invested in the completion of this study.*

WHAT HAPPENS IF I AM INJURED BECAUSE OF THE RESEARCH? *The Colorado Governmental Immunity Act determines and may limit Colorado State University's legal responsibility if an injury happens because of this study. Claims against the University must be filed within 180 days of the injury.*

WHAT IF I HAVE QUESTIONS?
Before you decide whether to accept this invitation to take part in the study, please ask any questions that might come to mind now. Later, if you have questions about the study, you can contact the investigator, Dana Lambert at (719) 547-4093. If you have any questions about your rights as a volunteer in this research, contact Janell Barker, Human Research Administrator, at 970-491-1655. We will give you a copy of this consent form to take with you.

WHAT ELSE DO I NEED TO KNOW?
Your signature acknowledges that you have read the information stated and willingly sign this consent form. Your signature also acknowledges that you have received, on the date signed, a copy of this document containing 3 pages.

_____ _____
Signature of person agreeing to take part in the study Date

_____
Printed name of person agreeing to take part in the study

_____ _____
Name of person providing information to participant Date

_____
Signature of Research Staff

PARENTAL SIGNATURE FOR MINOR

As parent or guardian I authorize _____ (print name) to become a participant for the described pilot study. The nature and general purpose of the project have been satisfactorily explained to me by Mrs. Dana Lambert and I am satisfied that proper precautions will be observed.

_____
Minor's date of birth

_____
Parent/Guardian name (printed)

_____ _____
Parent/Guardian signature Date

Appendix B

Student Power Point Presentation Example

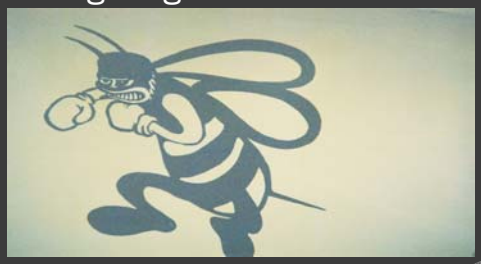
By…… 3 male students

PHOTO POWER POINT

School
Title: Chalkboard

Support: 2
Hinder: 0
Other: 1

School
Title: Fighting Hornet



Support: 0
Hinder: 0
Other: 3

School
Title: Trophy case

Support:2
Hinder:1
Other:0

School
Title: Stadium

Support:1
Hinder:2
Other:0

School
Title: Wall of Champions

Support: 1
Hinder: 2
Other: 0

School
Title: desks

Support: 3
Hinder:0
Other:0

School
Title: Bronze Hornet

Support: 2
Hinder:1
Other: 0

School
Title: Bus

Support: 3
Hinder:0
Other:0

School
Title: Plaques and Trophies

Support: 0
Hinder : 0
Other : 3

School
Title: Guys We Don't Know

Support: 0
Hinder: 0
Other : 3

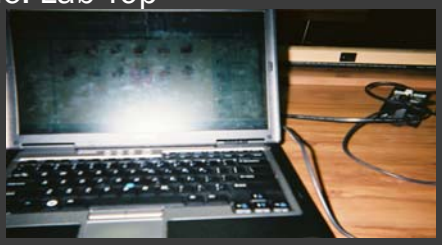
School
Title: Hornet Logo

Support: 0
Hinder: 0
Other: 3

School
Title: teacher desk

Support: 3
Hinder:0
Other0

School
Title: Lab Top



Support: 1
Hinder: 2
Other: 0

School
Title: Girl(s)

Support: 0
Hinder: 3
Other: 0

Community
Title: Motor Companies

Support: 0
Hinder: 0
Other: 3

Community
Title: Stadium

Support: 1
Hinder: 1
Other: 1

Community
Title: Musso's

Support: 0
Hinder: 0
Other: 3

Community
Title: Vineland Service

Support: 0
Hinder: 0
Other: 3

Community
Title: The Chieftain

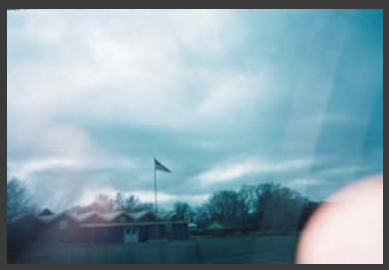
The Pueblo Chieftain

Support: 2
Hinder:1
Other: 0

Community
Title: Road

Support: 0
Hinder:0
Other:3

Community
Title: American flag



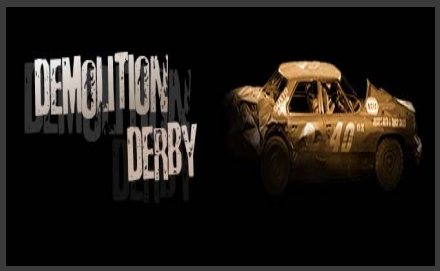
Support:2
Hinder:0
Other:1

Community
Title: Local Real Estate

United Country

Support:1
Hinder:0
Other:2

Community
Title: Demolition Derby



Support: 0
Hinder:0
Other:3

Home
Title: Hoop

Support:0
Hinder:1
Other:2

Home
Title: Video Games

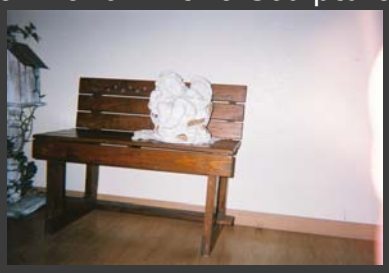
Support:0
Hinder:3
Other:0

Home
Title: T.V.

Toes

Support: 0
Hinder: 3
Other: 0

Home
Title: Bench with a Sculpture



Support:0
Hinder:0
Other:3

Home
Title: Vehicles

Support: 2
Hinder: 0
Other: 1

Home
Title: Birdies

Support: 0
Hinder:1
Other:2

Home:
Title: Front room

Support: 0
Hinder: 0
Other: 3

Home
Title: Back yard

Support: 0
Hinder: 0
Other:3

Home
Title: house

Support: 3
Hinder: 0
Other: 0

Home:
Title room

Support: 1
Hinder:1
Other:1