Beyond Dissolution and Dispersion: A Phenomenological Analysis of Student Perception as Related to Resiliency

Franny Jo Serenka

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BEYOND DISSOLUTION AND DISPERSION: A PHENOMENOLOGICAL ANALYSIS OF STUDENT PERCEPTION AS RELATED TO RESILIENCY

A Dissertation
Submitted to the School of Education
Interdisciplinary Doctoral Program for Educational Leaders

Duquesne University

In partial fulfillment of the requirements for
the degree of Doctor of Education

By
Fran Serenka

May 2010
DUQUESNE UNIVERSITY

SCHOOL OF EDUCATION
INTERDISCIPLINARY DOCTORAL PROGRAM FOR EDUCATIONAL LEADERS

Dissertation

Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements
For the Degree of Doctor of Education (Ed.D.)

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August 29, 2010

BEYOND DISSOLUTION AND DISPERSION: A PHENOMENOLOGICAL ANALYSIS OF STUDENT PERCEPTION AS RELATED TO RESILIENCY

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ABSTRACT

BEYOND DISSOLUTION AND DISPERSION: A PHENOMENOLOGICAL ANALYSIS OF STUDENT PERCEPTION AS RELATED TO RESILIENCY

By
Fran Serenka
May 2010

Dissertation supervised by Dr. James Henderson

The research study is entitled, Beyond Dissolution and Dispersion: A Phenomenological Analysis of Student Perceptions as related to Resiliency. Resiliency as a concept has been studied in various disciplines for the past thirty years. The information in the literature review bears out that building resiliency in students and in school communities has been a very important topic in education for about the last ten years. Resilience as defined is “the ability to recover from or adjust easily to misfortune or change (Henderson, 2004, p. 7). Students from the former Duquesne City High School endured a difficult event in their school closure. Other various events and aspects of social and academic development were interacting simultaneously. Social and political unrest, transitioning during the period of adolescence, belonging to a new social group, self image and group dynamics, and academic achievement were issues and interactions
for these students. This study will seek to define the perceptions of the affected students of the former high school regarding the events of their school closure and the various other events that marked over a two year time period in their lives.
DEDICATION

This research is dedicated to the students of the former Duquesne City High School and the School Districts of Duquesne City, East Allegheny, and West Mifflin. It is also dedicated to my children, Kate, Tia, Abby, Duncan, MacKenzie, and Alex, to my parents, Joseph and Anna Mae, to Norm, Bett, Sara, Bill, Steven, and Mark, to my granddaughter Gabi, to Father Dennis Colamariono, the Diocese of Pittsburgh, CJL, Aud, Doc, Herb, Billy, and Theresa, to my New Jersey family, my students over the past 30 years from every neighborhood and city, my colleagues, mentors, and especially to James Henderson, all for whom, in their various experiences, resiliency has an individual, enlightening, strengthening and beautiful meaning.
I’d like to acknowledge my personal and professional mentors over the past years. Each person from whom I have learned has become part of my frame of reference and worldview. My heart is filled by those who have taken the time to enrich my existence.

“No one can make you feel inferior without your consent.”

Eleanor Roosevelt, *This Is My Story,* 1937

*US diplomat & reformer (1884 - 1962)*
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Chapter 1

Introduction

In Western Pennsylvania, a group of high school students lost their high school by legislative and gubernatorial action in July of 2007. House Bill 842, The Omnibus School Code Legislation, created Act 45 of 2007 and was signed into law on July 20, 2007 by Governor Edward G. Rendell. This legislation made it possible to dissolve the Duquesne City High School and mandate the students scheduled to attend that high school to enroll in either of two other neighboring school districts. Citing from the Education Policy and Leadership Center Notebook from Wednesday, July 25, 2007:

Act 45 grants the Secretary of Education the power to designate two or more school districts, each within a three mile radius of Duquesne, to educate Duquesne high school students on a tuition basis. No district may be assigned more than 165 Duquesne students.

Act 45 also requires the Secretary to establish a process for reassigning students and to establish a tuition rate for a reassigned student in a regular or special education program (for FY 2007-08 the rate will be the 2006-07 high school tuition charge of each designated district; in subsequent years, the rate may not exceed the 2007-08 tuition multiplied by the greater of either 2% or the percentage increase in total budgeted revenues available to the Duquesne School District). For the 2007-08 and 2008-09 school years, districts designated to accept Duquesne students will receive an additional $500 per re-assigned student to be used for transition services for students, including, but not limited to, mentoring,
tutoring, employee in-service programs designed to assist transitioning students, and security expenditures.

Districts designated to accept Duquesne students must provide transportation to the students and are eligible for state transportation reimbursement for these students. Notice of designated school districts, the reassignment process and tuition rates must be published on PDE’s web site by August 1 annually and in the Pennsylvania Bulletin by September 30 annually. Designated school districts are not required to include Duquesne students in their public school enrollment reports for purposes of determining an interscholastic sports classification. Reassigned students will continue to be counted in the Duquesne School District’s average daily membership for purposes of distributing basic and special education funding. Additionally, the Legislative Budget and Finance Committee must annually report (by February 1) on Duquesne’s financial and academic status, as well as an audit of the district’s accounts for the previous school year.

Act 45 also requires the Secretary of Education to establish an education advisory committee by October 1, 2007 to make semi-annual reports evaluating the transition of students, recommending changes to the reassignment process, and recommending ways to improve educational opportunities for Duquesne students; the Secretary must respond in writing to the committee’s reports. The advisory committee will consist of representatives of the governing boards of each designated school district and the Duquesne School District, an administrator and teacher from each designated district and the Duquesne district, an elected official representing each district, three residents of each school district involved, a PDE
employee (who is not a member of the Duquesne Board of Control), and a representative of the local intermediate unit.

The Pennsylvania Department of Education and the Secretary for Education decided to close a high school. The Duquesne City High School students were about to have their scholastic existence and frame of reference change. The information regarding what to do with the students was published. The Pennsylvania Department of Education website contains the following specific information regarding receiving school districts.

Pursuant to section 1607.1(a)(1) of the School Code (added by Section 14 of Act 45 of 2007), Secretary Zahorchak has designated two school districts to accept high school students from the Duquesne City School District on a tuition basis. The two designated school districts are the East Allegheny School District and the West Mifflin School District. In accordance with section 1607.1(a)(3), each designated district will receive tuition in the amount of its 2006-2007 high school tuition charge for each student that it receives pursuant to section 1607.1(a)(1).

Thus, the per pupil tuition rates that the designated districts shall receive are $8,811.22 for East Allegheny and $9060.25 for West Mifflin. The selection process established pursuant to section 1607.1(a) (2) is set forth in the document entitled [Data file.]Our Kids: New Choice, New School, New Future. This data file is available from the Pennsylvania Department of Education Website, at www.pde.state.pa.us.

The previously mentioned publication delineated the process with dates for students to choose either district. It also proposed a process for a lottery in case all
students chose to attend one receiving district. The data file for this proposed process is available from the Pennsylvania Department of Education Website, www.pde.state.pa.us.

Duquesne High School was closed, the students were to choose a new school, and it all happened in a rush of social and political turmoil no student should have to endure. The process was legal, signed, sealed and then debated openly, so all the students could feel the effects of the chaos that surrounded moving them from one established community school into other communities where there were few previous ties and many social and athletic rivalries.

The unfortunate event of this high school closure was preceded by numerous attempts to correct a dilapidated school system. State money, educational support, and inserted best practice could not correct the problem of continued financial distress, low academic performance, and in general, shallow educational experiences for the high school students. The effect the events surrounding this closure had on the Duquesne City High School students is worthy of investigation. An analysis of student perceptions about the school closure, transitioning to new high schools, belonging to new school communities, and of their ideas about success and resiliency may yield interesting evidence for these students and for the future of education in Pennsylvania and across the nation. This research is also excellent information for Pennsylvania in light of the fact that a Penn Link internet message from the Pennsylvania Department of Education was issued to all school Districts on December 22, 2008 encouraging districts to seek new voluntary mergers in the near future. Many more students will require higher levels of resilience to cope with an uncertain future. (PA Dept. of Ed. Penn Link, December 23, 2008)
We strongly encourage you and your colleagues to explore and consider the opportunities and benefits that a voluntary merger may provide your district. The current economic climate requires that districts consider whether a voluntary merger would be in the best interest of the students, families and taxpayers of your school district (PA Dept. of Ed. *Penn Link*, December 23, 2008).

**Statement of the Problem**

Beginnings with the *No Child Left Behind* legislation in 2001, changes in education policy have had state education systems in turmoil, and individual educators scrambling for the past several years. Questions surrounding methodology for attaining the requirements of the mandate, and implications for inevitable outcomes, have been debated and challenged at the national, state, and local levels. Sustained, high academic achievement for every individual student is the driving force behind the legislation. Grappling with how to deliver a comprehensive system of social and academic supports resulting in high academic achievement for all students is the quandary. A steadfast belief in the field of education is that all children are unique individuals who will progress along an academic continuum at a personal and specific pace (Shelor & Hohmann, 1995). There is also support from education practitioners for the notion that all children will achieve intellectual benchmarks at various times needing various supports and instructional methodologies (Cawelti, 1999). *No Child Left Behind* expects that some uniformity is applied to those variables with potentially devastating, high stakes accountability, calling the foundation of education into question, and in the case of Duquesne High School, laying the foundation for its dissolution.
For the Pennsylvania Department of Education, it appeared that the Duquesne City School District and, in particular, the high school, was failing to support its students in striving for high academic achievement. The PSSA, Pennsylvania System of State Assessments, scores for the past several years indicated that benchmarks were not being made at Duquesne City High School for grade 11 students. From 2004 through 2007, proficiency rates in math were to be forty-five percent, and in reading, fifty-four percent. Table 1.1 reveals the Proficient and Advanced score totals for Duquesne High School Grade eleven PSSA Reading and Math score from 2004 until its dissolution in 2007. Furthermore the high school was deemed to be substandard because it was only able to financially sustain a minimum high school education.

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<tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>PSSA Reading Grade 11</td>
<td>41.9%</td>
<td>47.6%</td>
<td>27.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PSSA Math Grade 11</td>
<td>16.7%</td>
<td>48.8%</td>
<td>4.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PSSA Writing</td>
<td>64.9%</td>
<td>89.7%</td>
<td>78.3%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 1.1: Duquesne High School PSSA Scores 2004-2007

The situation in recent years was not always the case for the Duquesne City School District. Forty years ago, it was inconceivable that Duquesne City High School would cease to exist. At that time, Pennsylvania had just finished a first wave of Allegheny County school district mergers, and the Duquesne City School District had escaped that movement. Mr. Joseph E. Serenka, Jr. (interview, October 28, 2008), former West Homestead and subsequently Steel Valley School Board member, stated that all the integral, local municipalities that wanted to merge did so through simple Board motion. He stated that many districts were formed out of “good common sense.” After
those mergers occurred, there was a Board formed to study the next set of mergers to occur in Allegheny County. Dr. Nick Staresinick, (Interview, October 28, 2008) long time educator and consultant stated that this Allegheny County Board was made up of district board members who were asked to serve and study the issue of further Allegheny County mergers. Local districts like Homestead, West Homestead and Munhall merged to become Steel Valley in 1972. McKeesport Areas School District was created in 1971 out of the municipalities of McKeesport, East McKeesport and Glassport. Table A.1 in Appendix A shows the movement of the entire group of districts in Allegheny County from one hundred twenty-seven districts to forty-two. The last one was the Woodland Hills School District which was actually the only court ordered district in Pennsylvania. Communities including the towns of Edgewood, Swissvale, Forrest Hills, Rankin, Churchill, Braddock, North Braddock, East Pittsburgh, Wilkins, and Turtle Creek, joined to become Woodland Hills in the final wave of mergers a little less than 30 years ago.

Dr. Staresinic (interview, October 28, 2008) noted that a board member from Duquesne was on the County Board. It was never a thought that Duquesne City School District should merge in the days when mergers were occurring all over the county and state. Viable enough to remain alone when numerous other districts in the surrounding area would be consolidated, Duquesne Public School District was serving far more students in their Kindergarten through grade 12 at that time. The population of Duquesne City in 1970 was 10,678 residents. Today, merely 7332 citizens are paying the second highest real estate tax effort (Census, 2000). By the 2010 Census, the population will be much lower as even more people leave the municipality of Duquesne. Table A.2 in Appendix A shows a listing of tax effort in equalized mills.
In the mid-1970s, the community of Duquesne, Pennsylvania flourished. Spiraling downward from a community with a good economic base, firm ethnic roots, viable tax base, mid-range real estate value, and ability to sustain a school district was an agonizing thirty-five to forty years. The telling tale of a community’s declining condition is the dissolution of its academic assets. After being sold to the school district for district expansion, the Carnegie Library of Duquesne was closed, and then in 1968 it was torn down and replaced by housing (Burns, 2005). In 2007, 39 years later, the community high school closed its doors leaving a K-8 program as the single academic asset.

In western Pennsylvania, a few communities supported a K-8 education system and sent their high school students to a neighboring high school as a matter of course. “Under state law, if a school district does not maintain a public high school, students may attend the "nearest or most conveniently located high school of such class as they may desire to attend, unless the board of school directors of the district of residence shall have assigned the pupils to a high school and adequate transportation is provided thereto” (Niederberger, May 31, 2007, citing the PA School Code).

Community arrangements like this existed in western Pennsylvania for many decades. An example was the West Homestead School District permitting its senior high students in grades 11 and 12 to choose to attend either Homestead High School or Munhall High School. The smaller West Homestead District had no proper instructional facilities to educate senior high students. For decades, a rite of passage was to choose one’s high school. Family and neighborhood indicators contributed to the choice for some students. Peaceful and positive rivalries thrived along with this process. Former
board member Joseph Serenka (Interview, October 28, 2008) also agreed that the process for the students in West Homestead was an historical process for the community. Serenka indicated, “The merger to make Steel Valley was simply making permanent an education collaborative that existed for years.”

More recently in Pennsylvania is the example of the Midland School District which pays tuition to other districts to educate its students. Decisions to close high schools in the Midland School District, Beaver County, and the Saint Clair Area School District in Schuylkill County were made at the local level, not by the state Secretary of Education (May 31, 2007 Niederberger). The Midland and St. Clair model is a result of too few students to fund a viable high school, and neighboring districts open to receiving the students. New discussions statewide for reorganizing a school district include the Morrisville School District in Bucks County. With 909 student grades Kindergarten through 12, and PSSA scores that reach at least proficiency, there is still concern about the cost of running a high school with too few students for expanded course offerings. Studies have been commissioned by the Pennsylvania State Legislature as part of the Costing Out Study, asking school districts where areas of pooling costs might be identified. Smaller districts routinely look for ways to maximize services and reduce costs. The full costing out study that can be found at

http://www.pde.state.pa.us/stateboard_ed/lib/stateboard_ed/

PA_Costing_Out_Study_rev_12-07.pdf - 1904.6KB sets ups guidelines for consolidated expense and expenditure for Pennsylvania’s schools districts.

Common Sense, a spending analysis offered by the State was utilized by Duquesne City School District after the dissolution of the High School program. Results
of that document can be found on line at
http://www.pdenewsroom.state.pa.us/newsroom/cwp/view.asp?a=256 &q=129720 -
27.1KB. For Duquesne, an analysis of spending showed that ‘tuitioning out’ the High
School students was a cost effective decision over supporting its own high school
program.

The story is similar in some way with each of the Pennsylvania’s smaller and
historically economically disadvantaged school districts over the years. Out of 501
school districts in Pennsylvania, of the school districts who pay the top tax effort, funding
issues like special education, cyber charter school tuition, and special education tuition to
charter schools in general, plague district budgets in all cases. Furthermore, in unsteady
economic times, the December 22, 2008 Penn Link communiqué from the Pennsylvania
Secretary for Education and from the President of the Pennsylvania State Board of
Education requested that districts consider yet another wave of voluntary mergers. This
request comes forty years after the onset of the first wave. Table A.1 in Appendix A
illustrates the first wave of Allegheny County mergers from over 100 schools to presently
42, not including the School District of Pittsburgh.

For Duquesne Public High School, the case of how it became dissolved had
nothing to do with an agreement for full scale district merger or an agreement for
students to attend other districts for high school. In all other cases, the Pennsylvania
Department of Education did not make the choice to have the community’s high school
students educated elsewhere. Other school communities arrived at the decision
independently, after looking at facts and options. The future implications for a
community whose high school was dissolved are worthy of investigation. Through a
phenomenological analysis of the perceptions of the students caught in the closure and moved to other schools, themes will be discovered that may result in an ability to predict the overall implications of this event in terms of student resiliency. The events surrounding and the information pertaining to all aspects of dissolution and related to political issues were widely covered and reported in the media. The pervasive nature of the media coverage reinforced the dissolution of Duquesne High School as a negative life event for well over a year. Students could readily see and feel the tension as their high school was dissolved right before their eyes.

The Pennsylvania Legislature gave the Secretary for Education the authority to close a high school (House Bill 842, The Omnibus School Code Legislation, Act 45 of 2007). This may have produced a negative effect on the students slated to attend that high school. This study highlights the history of the Duquesne City School District that moved into financially distressed and academically empowered status that eventually resulted in the closing of the high school. The problem addressed in this study is the impact the events of school closure had on students as analyzed through participant perceptions of the events. The study will address the problem as a phenomenological analysis of the perceptions of the students regarding school closing, transition to new schools, and the impacts these event had on the student’s ability to be resilient as defined by the Pennsylvania Resiliency Framework adopted in 2007. This framework is an outgrowth of over a decade of work by Nan Henderson and Michael Milstein published in 2003. The framework will be presented and discussed at length in Chapter Two. Student perceptions of resiliency will then be fitted into a three prong design by Cecily
Knight which holds resilience to be a condition, a state, and a practice for a successful life (Knight, 2007).

Experiencing significant loss at a young age can be very difficult. Studies in the field of psychology document loss in later adolescents and base their differing findings on various protective factors that exist for each adolescent. Depending upon the type of loss, the existential impact on the student and the degree of resiliency built into both the event and the student, the loss will produce differing results for each person. Specific studies relating to this phenomenon are presented in the literature review.

Often seen as a negative life event, the problem of transitioning students at the secondary level has both developmental and academic implications. Although older students are able to adapt much more easily to the situation with developed adaptive mechanisms, transitioning at the secondary level will nevertheless cause tension for the student. The literature review will address the issue of transitioning students at the secondary level.

Difficulty creating or joining new social groups is a result of transitioning to another school. Some student communities have ready-made social groups especially if a particular talent is realized in the transitioning student. For many though, moving from one social group to another, one school to another, with essentially no “belonging” may cause the student to realize an adverse social and self-image effect. All of these issues will be addressed in the literature review.

Nation-wide, the success rate for all students regarding NCLB legislation is of paramount importance. In 2001 NCLB was authorized as federal legislation for educational accountability in an attempt to propel academic achievement of America’s
children forward. In 2006 it was reauthorized and required all states to work toward one hundred percent proficiency for all students by the year 2014. As Pennsylvania continues through to its 2014 target year, when all the schools and students are to achieve total proficiency, assuring that all students have the opportunity to an excellent education is imperative. How to ensure that all children from various socio-economic groups have the tools to succeed is the concern of Pennsylvania educators. NCLB legislation as Pennsylvania enacted it was the driving force behind legislation for the Duquesne City High School students to have the opportunity to a fuller educational experience. In hoping to provide a fuller educational experience that may lend itself to greater academic achievement, the Pennsylvania State Legislature and the Pennsylvania State Department of Education officials may not have taken into account the obstacles the Duquesne High School students would have to endure from the student point of view. The question is whether these events have an impact, according to student perception, that has a negative effect on their existence and resilience. Table 1.2 depicts the academic accountability targets as required by NCLB percentages in terms of Math and Reading proficiency for Pennsylvania students throughout the years. By the year 2014 in Pennsylvania all students must be 100 percent proficient in Math and Language Arts, or must have shown at least one year of growth in the academic area. The students in Duquesne High School performed significantly below state averages in academic areas. It is important for this study to possibly identify exactly what students sacrificed in their own world for a fuller academic experience enabling them meet the targets delineated in Table 1.2.
### Table 1.2: Pre-determined Proficiency Rate for PA NCLB Accountability

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Reading Target</th>
<th>Math Target</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2002-2004</td>
<td>45%</td>
<td>35%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2005-2007</td>
<td>54%</td>
<td>45%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2008-2010</td>
<td>63%</td>
<td>56%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2011</td>
<td>72%</td>
<td>67%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2012</td>
<td>81%</td>
<td>78%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2013</td>
<td>91%</td>
<td>89%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2014</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

This study will utilize the Pennsylvania Department of Education Resiliency Framework (2007) delivered by Henderson as the participant instrument for perceptual analysis. The researcher will reformulate the instrument questions as the semi-structured interview questions for the perceptual analysis. The preliminary and guiding questions will be utilized to analyze the events of the Duquesne City High School closing, and the Resiliency Framework will specifically address student perceptions of resiliency factors as they apply to these events.

### Historical Background

The newspaper articles, spanning over one year prior to the closing of the school, chronicled the step by step movement of the socio-political forces that signaled the dissolve of the Duquesne City High School. Presently in excess of two years of articles about the Duquesne City School District have been published. Main author Mary Niederberger and a few other writers contributed at the Pittsburgh Post Gazette to this remarkable two year coverage. The article published by the Pittsburgh Post Gazette in May 24, 2006 spoke volumes about the future of the Duquesne City School District already marred after years of financial and academic instability. That article is an
excellent starting point for the print media coverage that chronicled the demise of the Duquesne City High School. Newspaper reporter Niederberger (May 24, 2006) stated, “The cuts proposed in the 2006-07 Duquesne City School District’s preliminary budget are so deep that, if enacted, the district will lose its librarian, guidance counselor, psychologist and seven teachers.” The article continued to inform the public about the final decision of the Pittsburgh Public School District to manage Duquesne City, but that the high school students would continue to be educated in their home building. Previous information held that students may attend one of Pittsburgh’s high schools. Issues surrounding where they would attend were heated both in the town of Duquesne and in the city of Pittsburgh. At the time of the article, Niederberger stated that people were getting used to the fact that the high school students may be educated off campus and Pittsburgh Public’s decision was met with mixed emotions. Nevertheless the 2006-2007 school year began with Duquesne City under the direction of Pittsburgh Public Schools. The high school students would not be moved. There would be no art or music classes, eventually no foreign language, and a dismal financial future. Board members wanted community members to focus on the positive aspects of education in Duquesne. For example the PSSA scores in the 2005-2006 school year were markedly higher than before, and football as well as boy’s and girl’s basketball programs were going to be maintained (Niederberger, May 24, 2006).

The Pennsylvania Secretary for Education, Dr. Gerald Zahorchak, applauded Pittsburgh Public School District for being the only District to stand up and make an offer on behalf of Duquesne City. In a June 28, 2006 article by Eleanor Chute and Mary Niederberger it was revealed that Propel School made a proposal to take over the
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Duquesne City School District, K-12. A team was sent in from the state to assess the proposal. Dr. Zahorchak continued that it would be a year before any movement was made for the future of Duquesne City and stayed with the Pittsburgh Public offer.

By the end of June, America’s Promise grant funding was in jeopardy, and Duquesne City School District did not have a budget for the 2006-2007 school year (Chute & Niederberger, June 6, 2006). Relying on the Pennsylvania legislature to pass its own budget, Duquesne was counting on additional funds, not only for their own budget shortfall, but as being appropriated for district administrative positions that were necessary under the direction of Pittsburgh. Early July brought the passing of the State’s budget and money being appropriated to Pittsburgh for the administration of Duquesne City Schools. Duquesne received 3.1 million dollars and Pittsburgh received an extra 2 million to administrate Duquesne (Niederberger, July 7, 2006). By the end of July, Pittsburgh Public School District was slated to administrate Duquesne City, and plans were made for the 2006-2007 school year to begin.

Just before classes began in August 2006, Pittsburgh Public Schools Superintendent Mark Roosevelt met with parents and community leaders to discuss the future of Duquesne City Schools. With an amazing 3.3 million dollar debt, in addition to the capital projects debt, the Duquesne City School District would have difficulty moving forward. Information in a Pittsburgh Post-Gazette article entitled, “New Era to Begin in Duquesne as Classes Resume Next Week,” (Grant, August 17, 2006) the writer recapped specific personnel that would no longer be there. Among the positions were Superintendent of Schools and High School Principal. The people who held those positions would be missed. “The new leadership of Duquesne’s school system will be a
team of administrators from Pittsburgh Public Schools who were asked by officials at the Pennsylvania Department of Education to help meet some of its financial and academic challenges” (Grant, August 17, 2006).

An interesting article appeared at the end of August, 2006. It spoke about the community members trying to ascertain, through all the turmoil, if there was going to be a football team. The Duquesne City School District, historically known as an athletic powerhouse, was uncertain about fielding a team. By the end of August the fears were put on hold at least temporarily.

But the past few months, everyone has been searching for deeper answers than who the starting quarterback will be, who will complement senior standout Fitzgerald Bobo, or what defensive schemes the Dukes will run – they have been wondering if there would be a team at all….Now, everyone can rest a little easier; there will be football in Duquesne this year. After all, can you imagine the town without it” (Niederberger, August 15, 2006).

As discussions continued in the next several months about the possibility of closing the Duquesne City High School, past issues began to resurface. “Long before financial problems at Duquesne became such a crucial issue, neighboring school districts, including West Mifflin School District, made it clear they did not wish to adopt students from Duquesne”(Grant, August 17, 2006). An entire first semester passed in the 2006-2007 school year before District issues started to move into the media again. By January 2007 financial strife resurfaced and plagued the District once again. Rumors of having to close their doors by March 2007 if state aide wasn’t offered circulated the region yet more.
In the spring of 2007, on April 19, Mary Niederberger wrote an article in the Post Gazette which quoted the Pennsylvania Secretary for Education as saying that continuing the status quo for Duquesne High School “is not morally acceptable nor is it financially acceptable “(Niederberger, April 19, 2007). Comparisons of various local high school curricular offerings were made by the Secretary and found Duquesne High School to be deficient. Figure 1.1 was featured in the newspaper article graphically showing the lack of offerings for the Duquesne students.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>High school programs: Duquesne and surrounding districts comparison</strong></th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Duquesne</strong></td>
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<td><strong>ACADEMICS</strong></td>
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<td>Languages</td>
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<td>Music classes</td>
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<td>Art classes</td>
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*Figure 1.1: Local High School Offerings as Published in the Post Gazette*

As the April 19, 2007 article continued, it stated that there was no real information released by the PA Department of Education about Duquesne from January
to April 2007. The City of Pittsburgh agreed to manage the District for one year and information regarding the future of the High School and the District in general was scarce. There were three plans that were submitted to the state by the School District of Pittsburgh for the future of Duquesne, but neither the School District of Pittsburgh nor the PA Department of Education (PDE) revealed the specifics of those plans (Niederberger, April 19, 2007).

By late April, residents were attempting to keep an open mind and were looking at options. The residents made it clear in a meeting held with Pennsylvania’s Secretary for Education that they would prefer their children going to the neighboring West Mifflin School District rather than Pittsburgh Schools. The community of West Mifflin noted that their schools are already too crowded, and did not want to accept the Duquesne students. As the Secretary for Education studied meeting notes and ‘viable options,’ surrounding communities braced for the news of the future. Arguments began because neighboring Districts did not want to receive the students. Steel Valley School District and the McKeesport School District both went on record stating that they were not interested in receiving tuition paid students, and that they were going to concentrate on the students they already had (Niederberger, April 29, 2007).

In a May 23, 2007 article, a reference was made to student movement. If students are not assigned to schools when a District does not support a high school, it is clear from a 1965 case, that they may go wherever they want to attend. The transportation is at the expense of the sending District. “Stuart Knade, chief counsel of the Pennsylvania School Boards Association, cited a 1965 case before the state Supreme Court involving two school districts that no longer exist, one for the township of Chester and the other for
the city of Chester” (Niederberger, May 23, 2007). He said, it can be concluded from the Chester case that if students do not have a high school assignment, the students do not need the consent of the receiving district they choose that is nearest or most conveniently located (Niederberger, May 23, 2007).

On May 29, 2007, Niederberger published and stated that the Secretary for Education would ask the…

“State board of control to vote at its June 5 meeting to end the district's high school program. If that action is taken, Dr. Zahorchak said he will then ask the state Legislature to grant him the power to assign Duquesne students to other high schools in the area. At that time, Dr. Zahorchak refused to identify which districts could expect to get Duquesne students other than to say there would be ‘multiple’ school districts. Dr. Zahorchak was specific that his plan was not a merger of school districts” (Niederberger, May 29, 2007).

The next day, community comments came on the issue of sending the high school students out to other schools. Duquesne High School basketball coach Montel Staples said, “I think it's a sad day in Duquesne when our kids have to be funneled out to different districts….Who is gonna be the voice for our kids in other districts? My heart is real, real sad “(Niederberger, May 30, 2007). Parents were concerned about the schools to be offered. Their hope was that the decisions for schools would only be two school and not many choices that would have students scattered everywhere. (Niederberger, May 30, 2007)

The beginning of June was filled with anger for the community members who felt That PDE had done them wrong (Niederberger, June 6, 2007). Secretary Zahorchack
held firm to his beliefs that Duquesne High School was failing its students due to lack of a proper curriculum. But what the community was talking about was not the bricks and mortar of the school. They were talking about the intangible feelings of loss and grief. They were feeling the loss of a community institution; the school-as-a-community and the school-in-the-community. The high school was a long standing cornerstone of the community, situated right in the middle of town. Built around an incredible field house in its recent renovation, Duquesne Education Center was about to lose its high school. The realization that the basketball and football powerhouse that existed for years will be gone was a cultural implication that opened deep wounds.

By mid June 2007 newspaper coverage was at an all time high. There was speculation and political discussions. Quoting from educator and writer Linda Croushore (2007),

But the heart of the matter -- for the region's communities and school districts and for the state legislators who hold the fate of Dr. Zahorchak's plan in their hands -- is first and foremost: **doing the right thing for Duquesne's high school students**. We need to recognize that the students of this community are not statistics to be shuffled here and there but real people, with dreams and aspirations…

We need to think about this proposed change from the point of view of Duquesne's young people and their families. How will we support them? How will we help them adjust to this new experience while they cope with the loss of their school identity, so important to every proud "Duquesne Duke?" How can we help them fit into a new school situation…
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Duquesne students know what is being said about them and their high school. They have heard the voices in neighboring districts wondering what their presence will mean, whether it will bring trouble, pull down test scores or upset existing balances” (Croushore, June 15, 2007).

Through the month of June, public meetings were held to prepare residents and students for the inevitable. The financial and academic issues alone were reasons for a major change. By mid-June State Senator Sean Logan working with Secretary Zahorchak made reference to the Legislature receiving “a written proposal from state Education Secretary Gerald Zahorchak that would give him [the Secretary] the authority to ‘tuition out’ Duquesne High School students” (Niederberger and Barnes, June 14, 2007). The legislature was to consider this proposal. State law permits students who do not have a high school in their community to attend the nearest one. To distribute the students to only two schools would require legislation.

Their faces tell the story of what they've lost, but their voices speak of hope, new opportunities and the chance to set higher goals. “I'm tired of being called dumb because I am from Duquesne," said Tamika Miracle, 16. "That's what they already know about Duquesne that we are dumb and we can't do anything but sports. I want them to know that I push myself as well as my friends." Despite the perceived obstacles, the students said they are ready to move forward and anxious to hear details about where they will go to school and what courses they will take. Tamika summed up the group's feelings this way: "In my mind, I want to go to another
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school. In my heart, I will always be in Duquesne” (Niederberger & Barnes, June 14, 2007).

Mid June of 2007 also revealed the anger from the West Mifflin Community toward the pending decision to close Duquesne High School. Secretary Zahorchak assured the West Mifflin citizens that the possible move would not overcrowd their building (Niederberger, June 21, 2007).

Based on the parameters of the proposal — high schools within 10 miles and districts or high schools that have met or are deemed to be making progress toward AYP — it appears the receiving districts could include East Allegheny, Steel Valley, West Jefferson Hills, West Mifflin Area, Wilkinsburg, and Norwin” (Niederberger June 27, 2007).

At the same time the Secretary was proposing a plan, the School District of West Mifflin proposed one to permit the Duquesne High School to remain open and allow the students to attend some of the needed classes at West Mifflin. Senators Jay Costa and Sean Logan proposed the plan to the Secretary for Education which called for “West Mifflin to manage Duquesne schools, much like the Pittsburgh Public Schools did this year, for the next three years, with a review of the efforts at the end of each academic year” (Niederberger June 27, 2007). Presented one day, the plan was rejected the very next day.

The evening of June 29, the Senate voted to allow the Secretary of Education “the power to reassign Duquesne High School's 200 students to two or more school districts but said the receiving districts must be within three miles of the Duquesne Education Center” (Barnes, June 30, 2007). By early July, the Secretary had made the decision to
send two thirds of the students to West Mifflin and one third to East Allegheny.

Representatives Bill Kortz and Marc Gergley similarly tried to introduce legislation into the House that would keep Duquesne High School open and allow the Duquesne students to take advanced courses and to participate in extracurricular activities at the West Mifflin High School. The plan they introduced was referred to as “Plan B.” Plan B also called for West Mifflin School District to Administrate Duquesne High School.

(Niederberger, July 3, 2007)

On July 5, 2007, another plan for Duquesne that had passed the Senate, failed completely in the House.

House Bill 842, also known as the omnibus school code bill, was a comprehensive education measure that included a funding package and the 2007-08 version of the state school code. It passed the Senate on Friday by a vote of 48-2, with Sens. Sean Logan and Jay Costa voting against it.

The school code in the bill included an amendment that would have allowed Education Secretary Gerald Zahorchak to reassign 200 Duquesne High School students to at least two school districts within three miles of Duquesne's borders.

Earlier this week, state Rep. Bill Kortz said those districts were West Mifflin Area and East Allegheny (Niederberger July, 6, 2007).

A conference committee had to be set for the issue to be ironed out. Kortz expected to use this forum to push his plan. By early July, charter schools offered to take the Duquesne students. By July 16, 2007 the Senate voted “41 to 7… to approve the state school code for 2007-08, which includes language giving state Education Secretary
Gerald Zahorchak authority to reassign 200 students from the now-closed Duquesne High School” (Barnes, July 16 2007).

Neither of the communities was ‘rolling out a welcome mat’ for the Duquesne students, even though the state would pay about $9,000 in tuition for each student who attended their district. West Mifflin Area residents are vehemently opposed to accepting the Duquesne High School students and threatened to sue if forced to accept them. East Allegheny had similar ideas.

“I have been directed to file a lawsuit if and when East Allegheny is named as a school district to accept Duquesne students,” said Daniel Beisler, solicitor for the East Allegheny School District. Last night's East Allegheny meeting drew a more boisterous crowd than one held in the West Mifflin Area district the night before, although both had about 300 in attendance (Grant, July 20, 2007).”

By July 21, 2007 it was official as to where the students would be sent, yet it would be until early August that the students really would know about their placement. The East Allegheny suit was still pending, yet by the end of July 2007, both Districts sent transition teams to Duquesne the evening of July 25. On July 26, students made their choice of schools (Chute, July 26, 2007). The resulting number of students were 134 students placed in West Mifflin and 64 placed in East Allegheny (Chute, August 1, 2007). Immediately, PDE and the Allegheny Intermediate Unit offered support for all 200 students who were to be transitioning. “While planning is in the early stages…services could include anti-bullying programs, tutoring…mentoring programs and teacher training” (Smydo, July 26, 2007). But by the last day in July 2007, the School
districts of West Mifflin and East Allegheny both filed suit in commonwealth Court against having to accept the Duquesne students (Chute, July 31, 2007).

“I don't think that any judge would issue an injunction to keep students at home without an education," said Jack Cambest, attorney for West Mifflin Area. Instead, the suit is aimed at challenging the constitutionality of the state legislation that was approved last month and that permitted the transfers."We want to stress that this lawsuit is not geared at the students or their ability to perform or their race or anything of that nature," said Mr. Cambest. "It's geared more toward what we believe is a piece of special legislation that was geared just to the Duquesne School District. We believe it's illegal and unconstitutional to do that” (Chute, August 1, 2007).”

Early August of 2007 there was evidence that students were getting a feel for the future as they visited the new schools and enrolled in courses. In late August, as the students began in their new schools, they experienced a positive beginning as reported by both school districts. (Niederberger, August 30, 2007) By mid-September the news was the same (Rex, September 13, 2007), and by the end of September, officials declared the project of transitioning students to the new high schools a successful project (Niederberger, September 27, 2007). It seems as though success in this instance simply meant no more conflict and students being safely educated. In October a positive article appeared that gave hope for the future of the project and a validation to what is widely known about children; they make any situation work.

There have been no fights, no cross words, no hostility, no scenes. A divide anticipated by so many never materialized. Funny how things shake down -- the
adults bicker and complain while the kids innately make it all work, meshing
toward a common goal, ignoring the distractions” (Dunlap, October 19, 2007).

The story of how Duquesne High School eventually disappeared was a hot item of
interest in the media, but the social and political uproar died down. From October of
2007 until June of 2008, there was one local article in the newspapers. It discussed what
happened to the students in terms of who graduated and what future plans may be for
those students.

At West Mifflin Area, 23 Duquesne students were in the senior class and 21 of
them graduated. One moved out of the district and one is in summer school
completing credits to graduate. Of the 21 graduates, five will attend four-year
colleges, 11 will attend Community College of Allegheny County and three will
attend technical or business schools. At East Allegheny, the school year started
with 11 seniors from Duquesne. Of that total, seven graduated. Three moved or
decided not to stay, and one was assigned to alternative placement and may return
next year to complete credits. Of the seven who graduated, two are going to
college, one is applying to schools and the others are entering the workforce
(Niederberger, June 6, 2008).

By August of 2008, a year after the initial action by the Pennsylvania Legislature
to dissolve Duquesne High School and disperse its students, there was little printed in the
local papers although the Consortium for Public Education continued to document the
events with video-recorded interviews from the students. These interviews will be
discussed in Chapter V. By August of 2008, there was no word about the turmoil
existing a year earlier. What impact will this event and its processes leave on the
students who were affected by the dissolution and dispersion? What implications for the future can this event hold?

**Purpose of the Study**

The objectives of the study are to define, by perception, student feelings and opinions about the circumstances that plunged Duquesne City High School into dissolution, and to collect and analyze data on the events surrounding dispersion into other schools. The key findings will be the resultant data of how the students perceive the resiliency components as imbedded into the events, and how they also feel about their overall success. Determining how and to what extent political decisions, official action, and the lived experiences of the dissolution of their school and their dispersion into other schools affected the research participants is a most important piece of information for education practitioners. In the literature review are studies that show high degrees of resiliency for high school age students. In light if that fact, gaining specific information from student perceptions will help educators in Pennsylvania to make better decisions about consolidating schools in the future or supporting various learning opportunities for high school students. If providing a strong, engaging and enriching high school education for all students in Pennsylvania is the goal, then governing bodies in Pennsylvania must be able assist school districts in that function in a cost effective manner. High school closures or consolidations may become more frequent as the high school reform movement turns away from the single school model.

As stated previously, a Penn Link in December 2008 from the Secretary for Education asked districts to consider voluntary mergers and consolidations once again 40 years after the first wave.
The purpose of this study is to gather information regarding student perception of events that transpired surrounding Duquesne City High School in western Pennsylvania. An analysis of those perceptions will take place using the components of the PA State Resiliency Framework based on the work of Henderson & Milstein (2003) and delivered in the Keynote address at a state education conference in 2007. The degree to which the data finds evidence that resiliency was evident in the process, the extent to which resiliency was manifested as a state of being, a condition of existence, and a practice for life (Knight, 2007), and how the student participants view their own success will be considered in the research findings. Implication for how the process of dissolution and dispersion affected the high schools students in the Duquesne City School District, and what the future may look like for these students will be part of the discussion section.

Research Questions

Phenomenological analysis offers a solution as a method tailored to defining the experiences of each individual student. Examining student perceptions and the meaning attached to those perceptions may be a key to fully understanding the impact of the event on the participant. Looking at the protective factors associated with resiliency may reinforce a positive outlook for students who must endure negative life events. Educators addressing aspects of resiliency in Kindergarten through grade 12 may have important implications for all students as we move through the No Child Left Behind Legislation. Fostering and addressing the protective factors associated with resiliency may be the prescription of hope for the future and meeting the No Child Left Behind mandates for every child. Through the use of semi-structured interview questions derived from the
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Resiliency Framework presented to PDE in 2007 by Henderson, this study seeks to find answers to the following research questions:

1. What are the perceptions of the former Duquesne City High School students regarding the events of school closure, transition to new schools and belonging to a new social grouping?

2. Did the students perceive the six components (protective factors) of Nan Henderson’s PA Resiliency Framework (High Expectations, Meaningful Student Engagement, Connectiveness and Bonding, Skills for Life, Clear and Consistent Boundaries, Unconditional Support) in the events of school closure and transition?

3. How does each of the participants view their own success in the past, present and in the future?

4. Do the themes and correlations address and confirm the Knight (2007) proposal that resilience is a state, a condition and a practice?

**Definition of Terms**

1. Resiliency – the ability to recover from or adjust easily to misfortune or change (http://www.merriam-webster.com).

2. Phenomenological Analysis- A qualitative research method consisting of data being analyzed through specific steps to gain insight as to how the experiences of the participants are related to phenomenon being studied.

3. Transition / Transitioning- the act of passing from one state, stage, subject, or place to another; a movement, development, or evolution from one form, stage, or style to another (http://www.merriam-webster.com).

5. Success- favorable or desired outcome: the attainment of wealth, favor, or eminence (http://www.merriam-webster.com).

6. Sending School – The school or entity sending and paying for students to attend another school (Definition in context)

7. Receiving Schools – The school or entity receiving students from a sending school or entity and receiving compensation. (Definition in context)

8. High Expectations- [Set and communicate high expectations from the original] Expectations must be both high and realistic and is held consistent for both resiliency building and academic success (Henderson, 2004, p. 13).

9. Meaningful Student Engagement- [Provide opportunities for meaningful participation from the original] Give students, their families, and staff a lot of responsibility for what goes on in school, providing opportunities for problem solving, decision making, planning, goal setting, and helping others (Henderson, 2004, p. 14).

10. Connectiveness and Bonding- [Increase bonding from the original] Increasing the connection between individuals and any pro-social person or activity. (Henderson, 2004, p. 11).

11. Skills for Life- [Teach life skills from the original] These skills should include cooperation, conflict resolution, resistance and assertiveness skills,
communication skills, problem-solving and decision-making skills, and health stress management (Henderson, 2004, p.13).

12. Clear and Consistent Boundaries- The development and consistent implementation of school policies and procedures including clarifying expectations of behavior (Henderson, 2004, p.12).


14. Noema – is defined as the experience itself (Moustakas, 1994)

15. Noematic - refers to the correlated response in lived experience to that noetic insight. (Moustakas, 1994)

16. Noetic- refers to "inner knowing," a kind of intuitive consciousness, direct and immediate access to knowledge beyond what is available to our normal senses and the power of reason. (Moustakas, 1994)

17. Epoche’ – The “bracketing” of the object of study to observe it as it stands alone. (Moustakas, 1994)

18. Horizontalize – To realize all the items to be studied on equal terms.

(Moustakas, 1994)
Chapter II

Review of the Literature

What does it mean to be resilient? The information in the literature review bears out that building resiliency in students and in school communities has recently been a very important topic in education. As a matter of fact, the topic of resiliency has been discussed in various venues for the past thirty years. Studies of resiliency are reviewed in this chapter and their importance for education will be discussed. The field of psychology addressed the topic with increased concentration in the 1980’s and 1990’s. Those studies are well documented in the literature. Resilience as defined is “the ability to recover from or adjust easily to misfortune or change” (Henderson & Milstein, 2003, p. 7).

Students from the former Duquesne City High School endured a difficult event in their school closure. Other various events and aspects of social and academic development were interacting simultaneously. Social and political unrest, transitioning during the period of adolescence, belonging to a new social group, self image and group dynamics, and academic achievement were issues and interactions for these students. A literature review of these topics will give information to ground the analysis of student perceptions of the events and the implication for resiliency and overall success. This study will seek to define the perceptions of the affected students of the former high school. A central question is what are the themes that arise out of the perceptions of these various events? In these themes, are there implications for manifesting resiliency according to the framework delivered by Henderson to the Pennsylvania Department of Education in 2007? Do the students perceive themselves as resilient? Do the students
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perceive themselves as successful? These are good questions that deserve answers. This research will address these questions as well as others and will contribute to the body of knowledge on resiliency.

Educational accountability in the twenty-first century poses the issue of education adequacy and posits a fundamental question. Before the research areas are explored, it is important to ask, what does it mean to be well-educated? The reason the Duquesne City High School was dissolved in the first place was because it could not afford to offer what is considered to be a good high school education to its students due to funding limitations. Its dissolution was caused by that school not being able to prove it was educating students for the 21st century and beyond to academic proficiency (Niederberger, April 19, 2007). What did the PDE mean when it stated that Duquesne City High School could not offer students what was required to meet the minimum high school education? Was that only pertaining to academic offerings? Today, a ‘good education’ in Pennsylvania is measured as a level of proficiency in a particular academic area. After all, proficiency is the goal of educational accountability in Pennsylvania during the past nine years since the advent of the No Child Left Behind Legislation of 2001. Proficiency as defined is “advancement in knowledge or skill” (http://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/proficiency). The annual administrative training for the Pennsylvania System of State Assessments (PSSA) provided by the PDE states that proficiency is an assessment goal and status reached when a student can demonstrate through taking the PSSA’s that the cut score was reached. The cut score will show the student has attained a certain number correct on the assessment and therefore, proficiency. The formula for the cut score is a mathematical calculation, and
the percentage of students required to reach proficiency is set PDE as mentioned and charted for Duquesne City in Chapter One. The required percentage of proficient students goes up as the years continue. By 2014, one hundred percent of all students are to be proficient or be able to show at least one year of growth according to the PVAAS (Pennsylvania Value Added Assessment System) model accepted as a proficiency calculation in the summer of 2009.

What it means to be truly educated is a philosophical questions posed by Alfie Kohn in an article entitled the same in Principal Leadership, March, 2003. Although not a research article, the author through example illustrates very successful people who cannot multiply or spell. These same very successful people can do higher order thinking and reasoning, or are experts in their field, but cannot accomplish some of the tasks that are mandated benchmarks of educational reform like simple calculation and punctuation. He posed a question about the standardization of education. Kohn (2003) contends that it is very dangerous to equate being well educated with those aspects of schools that are likely to offer a good education. Being well educated, after all, is a state of being which cannot be diminished by any specific mandate. How can a state of being be defined in terms of what someone else feels is success or proficiency? In the end, will students be successful even if the state assessments say otherwise? Do they perceive that they are being successful and that they will succeed in education even if the data shows an overall lack of proficiency?

Knowledge is acquired, but in “context and purpose” (Kohn, 2003, p. 5). The question should really be what are the qualities of a school that are likely to offer a good education? Do those qualities transfer to the students, and can the students define what
those qualities are? In the era where all children are supposed to be proficiently
functioning at a particular level at or before the end of any benchmark year, is the
question of being well educated diminished to a far too simplistic answer? Is being well
educated a matter of knowledge? Is the decline or increase in achievement as seen in
tests scores a reflection of what the school community holds to be the benchmarks of a
good education?

Kohn (2003) points to the research completed and modeled by educators such as
Ted Sizer, Deborah Meir, and others associated with the Coalition of Essential Schools
(http://www.essentialschools.org/). In these models, students function to perform what
they know and how they can demonstrate mastery. It is the coupling of the content
standards with performance standards that is essential. After an understanding of the
application of the information, education then becomes an experience that students can
grasp. Is there a battle between what states are able to assess as proficient and what it
actually is to be well educated? Proficiency tests are heavy in basic knowledge and
basic skills. When the performance aspects of higher order thinking and creativity
become a requirement, it appears that the students are not achieving when they really
may be. It is possible that all this is due to a ‘disconnect’ in the students’ experiences?
Education for all students is a lived experience and not a single avenue of comprehended
knowledge.

To overcome ‘the disconnect’ and other negative experiences a student may
encounter, resiliency must be developed in students. What occurs during their school
years has far reaching implications for students beyond simply the academic knowledge.
The wellness of the whole child must be addressed from the early years on. In this
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chapter, the review of the literature is organized first by discussing the theoretical framework underlying the research purpose and method. It is then organized according to topics addressed in the research questions. The research purpose is intended toward a deeper and student specific interpretation of resiliency. Resiliency is reviewed in the areas of health, psychology, and education. The method used for this study is phenomenological analysis. More in depth information about the method will also be found in Chapter Three. The research question topics reviewed in the literature are (1) student perceptions, (2) negative life events as in transitioning to a new school and belonging to a new social group, and (3) academic achievement and success as both real and perceived.

Theoretical Framework Underlying the Research Purpose: Resiliency in Health, Psychology, and Education

Resiliency can be compared to the research completed for Safe and Caring schools where Jeary (2001) suggests that the components of school and community are making connections, emotional wellness, student involvement, leadership, relationships, and physical security. The characteristics of resiliency as seen in educational practice herald the success of schools. Schools who promote resilient practices for both students and staff reinforce successful outcomes for students. In a Principal Leadership article in 2007, Virginia Smith Harvey supports the notion that there is a list of attributes for resiliency in students. “Considerable research has revealed that resilience results from positive social relationships, positive attitudes and emotions, the ability to control one's own behavior, and feelings of competence (Droll, Zucker, & Brehm, 2004, p.46).” Along
with those, Harvey believes that total wellness including physical wellness is important for student resiliency.

Catterall (1998) believed that resilience is tied to individual student performance and is not a group associated attribute. Catterall believes there are “advantages in considering a definition of risk grounded in actual school performance and behavior, as opposed to common conceptions of risk tied to various group-level probabilities of failure” (Catterall, 1998, p. 86) His research studies the transition of grade 8 students who were at risk for failure, and the way in which focusing on school performance and behavior helped failing students turn that trend around.

In the early 1990’s resiliency theory was new to the fields of prevention and education. Due to the work of a few pivotal professionals, resiliency has become the heart of several strength-based theories and programs in psychology, health related fields, and education. Early resiliency work in education in the United States included the work of Bonnie Benard. She devoted her life’s work to finding positive ways to support students in their development. Resiliency rises as one aspect of development that helps students prevail even in the most extreme situations. In 1991, she introduced resiliency and its application to education in the book, *Fostering Resiliency in Kids: Protective Factors in the Family School and Community*. In this book, Benard reviews the research and concludes that people are hard-wired to be positive and survive negative life experiences. (Benard, 1991)

In a more recent WestEd publication, *Resiliency: What We Have Learned* (2004), author Bonnie Benard mentions the last ten years as being a pivotal decade in education for the study in resiliency. This text outlines and reviews resiliency research and its
application for use in schools and communities. Primarily she considers resilience to be a universal capacity. In citing studies over the past 25 years in various fields, she concludes that over seventy percent of most youth and even fifty percent of those with multiple risk factors overcame the adversity and arrived at a good developmental conclusion (Benard, 2004). Resiliency as a practice for students is the hallmark of research by Brown, Benard and D’Emidio-Caston. "Being emotionally connected with adults and people in communities is a significant part of what allows nearly 70 percent of young people in even the worst conditions to thrive despite adversity," (Brown, Benard, & D'Emidio-Caston, 2001, 287). Most young people will not grow up struggling if taught to work with their problems and personal assets. Concluding, Benard considers resiliency to be a universal capacity and that all people have the ability to be resilient.

Benard also concludes that the personal strengths in resiliency are social competence, problem solving, autonomy, and sense of purpose. (Benard, 1991) These strengths are important across genders and across other demographic characteristics. Listed under each personal strength heading, are four to six descriptors of the personal strength. After a full discussion of the personal strengths and each of the descriptors, Benard reaches the conclusion that practitioners must incorporate resiliency education at all levels. The future challenges to resiliency would be first, that more time and funding be spent on the study of resiliency. Another challenge would be to ensure that educators believe in their own resiliency. A third challenge would be to ensure that once established, the thoughts and practices that support resiliency are maintained. Educational leaders have the ability to sustain the programs and support policy and practice that sustains resiliency. In the Appendix of her book, *Resiliency: What We Have*
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*Learned,* (Benard, 2004) Benard creates a Matrix of Personal Strength and lists the theories and research that support the “personal strength as resiliency” idea. The reproduced table can be found in Appendix B of this study.

Mike Milstien and Nan Henderson in both the early and later editions of the book, *Resiliency in Schools: Making it Happen for Students and Educators* (1996, 2003) espoused a Resiliency Wheel that included six steps to fostering resiliency through two processes. Process one, called mitigating risk, includes steps one through three on the resiliency wheel. These steps are increasing bonding, setting clear and consistent boundaries, and teaching life skills. Through these three steps in the first process, students are supported for success in managing their environment and circumstances.

The second process in resiliency building includes steps four through six. These steps, of providing care and support, setting and communicating high expectations, and providing for meaningful participation, together work to build and support resiliency in students. The entire text poses ways for individual schools and their personnel to create and manage schools cultures that foster resiliency. From vision to verbiage, schools can be reformed to include resiliency building attributes. In a drastic move away from the negativity of the “Damage Model” (Wolin & Wolin, 1993, P. 20), schools can create a mindset that fosters hope for the future. The Resiliency Wheel can be viewed in Figure 2.1.
Building resilient school communities stems from a schoolwide approach to developing the structures and characteristics of a resilient school community. Consistent leadership is imperative that supports the reform and changes in policy, practice, and school structure for resiliency to be maintained. In 2000 editors Henderson, Benard, and Sharp-Light collaborated on a book discussing this schoolwide approach. In chapter two, Henderson talks about the four basic steps to resiliency in youth that all caring adults can utilize. They first called this the “results attitude” and it must be communicated at all times. This attitude includes recognizing what is right with all situations and in all persons, and dwelling in the positive. Focusing on strength and cataloguing strengths rather than weaknesses for each person is vastly important. It is also important to build a resiliency wheel around each child. This wheel, described
earlier, is the wheel from which Pennsylvania adopted its Resiliency Framework. PDE called on Henderson in the summer of 2007 to be the keynote speaker at a conference to outline for Pennsylvania the framework that would later be informally adopted using 6 components of resiliency. Pennsylvania began to utilize the themes and components of resiliency to address school improvement and student academic success. Incorporating all six steps or components into the two processes discussed earlier, students will realize success in the areas of both behavior and academics. The final area in fostering the schoolwide approach to resiliency building is to “never give up” (Henderson, Benard & Sharp-Light, 2000, p. 14).

Mentoring for Resiliency (2000), another collaborative text between editors Bonnie Benard, Nan Henderson and Nancy Sharp-Light, focuses on mentoring which addresses the resiliency wheel (Henderson & Milstein, 1996, 2003) in the area of providing care and support, thus lending to resiliency in young people. Developing relationships that are caring and supportive is important, but sustaining those relationships with pivotal people is what really makes a difference. Relationship building is a cornerstone of socialization for high school age students. Finding and connecting with people who care not only serves the student, but the needs of the mentor to connect. Building “mentor-rich environments” ((Henderson, Benard & Sharp-Light, 2000,p. 17) helps generations connect and for a larger, richer school community, that promotes more involved community stakeholders.

In 2007, Cecily Knight presented a three dimensional framework for resilience as a perspective for teachers to help promote resiliency and total wellness in students. The purpose of the paper was to suggest the framework be used by teachers in schools
outlining the important role of the school in enhancing resilience. It presents an overview of the topic of resilience and attempts to identify a common language for resiliency research. The paper also presents an overview of resiliency education in Australian schools and the current Australian programs that promote resiliency. After an extensive examination of the literature, “the paper suggested that resiliency is discussed in the literature as a state, a condition and a practice. Consequently, a three-dimensional framework has been developed from this to help teachers understand resiliency and to provide practical ways in which they can promote the resiliency of their learners, (Knight, 2007, p.138). Concluding that an important role regarding resiliency is played by educators in schools, fostering resiliency education programs as professional development for practicing teachers is important. It is also critical as university preparation for pre-service teachers, would be of paramount importance, and would result in positive practical implications for the future of education.

In 2004, Waxman, Padron` and Gary reported on educational resiliency from the perspectives of the students, teachers and school. Beginning with the notion that educators who attempt to reform schools into resilient settings must be well themselves, the authors conclude that wellness in providers of support leads to wellness in the students they support. The authors traced the history of the cardiac medical model to view research that proved differences in illness patterns were achieved by persons who had differing outlooks on negative life events. Moving to the psychological sciences in the late 1980’s, psychologists were becoming increasingly aware of elements of strength in individual personalities. In the early chapters of the book, the authors look at resiliency research as proposing two separate camps of thought on the issue. The
constructivist perspective of resiliency holds that various attributes lend to a resilient personality. The generalist perspective holds that resiliency is a result of the various interactions of a lifetime.

Finally in 2007, Henderson, Benard, and Sharp-Light serving as editors, collaborated on a book called *Resiliency in Action: Practical Ideas for Overcoming Risks and Building Strength in Youth, Families and the Community*. Arranged like a handbook and as easy to read and utilize, this book takes the topic of resiliency, adds a practitioner’s perspective, and sets up seven sections in which to promote both research and practical ideas for building resilient school communities. The book includes checklists and inventories aimed at fostering resiliency. It is a culmination of decades of research and years of collaboration. The handbook is one that each education professional should have in their personal library.

For Pennsylvania, interest in a resiliency model has been recent. The Pennsylvania Department of Education Chapter 12 Student Services Plan and Student Services Guidance and Toolkit which was revised in 2007, outlines what Pennsylvania expect districts to use as they craft their student services plan for the strategic plan. The Resiliency Framework contained within that document is represented in Figure 2.2.
The Pennsylvania Department of Education sets student achievement, student self management, and resiliency into a framework for educators to be able to grasp the interaction between all facets of student experience in schools. For Pennsylvania, the Chapter 12 Regulations for Students and Student Services, and the Guidance for Chapter 12 as amended in May of 2007 (pp. 6-9), shows how the Pennsylvania Department of Education views the interaction. Resiliency indicators are interspersed with academic achievement and student self management aspects. The framework is intended for use by educators in the Pennsylvania, yet the impact, practice, mindset and effort exists with students as well. Education is an interactive experience, but the aspects of Chapter 12 for

*Figure 2.2: State of Pennsylvania Resiliency Framework 2007*
the most part have not been introduced or manifesting in student learning. This information has only been held as support for teachers and professional knowledge. The guiding questions that enhance that framework are listed in totality in this study and are included in the Participant Packet in Appendix C. The semi-structured interview questions were derived from the list of questions as published in the PowerPoint presentation called *Promoting Student Success Through a Resiliency Approach: Implementing Chapter 12 Student Services*. The presentation was created by the Pennsylvania Department of Education for professional development purposes.

Pennsylvania also utilizes a response to intervention (RTI) model which fosters resiliency in the areas of unconditional support and high expectations. The model as shown in Figure 2.3 addresses behavioral and academic challenges with a three tiered response. In the fall of 2009 Response to Intervention and Instruction (RTII) was introduced adding the aspect of differentiated instruction to the initial supports of RTI. Professionally developing educators in Pennsylvania with information about these two models and affording students and parents the same knowledge would be an excellent tool for establishing resiliency and support practices across the state.
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Theoretical Framework Underlying the Research Method: Phenomenological Analysis as a Method

Phenomenological analysis for systems research reveals a relationship between the phenomenon and the lived experience. The events of school closing, transitioning to a new school, and belonging in that new community, are keys issues for the participants. To begin the literature review of the method, it is important to first understand the logical flow of phenomenological analysis regarding student perceptions. In looking at the issue of resilience and its academic implications, it is imperative to try to understand the perceptions of the students individually. To understand the perceptions of a student, a researcher must construct meaning out of the experiences of that student. In

Figure 2.3: Schoolwide Response to Intervention
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constructing meaning, a reflective analysis must be completed arriving at implications for the process and discussion topics in general.

Phenomenology dates back to the German phenomenological philosophers of the mid-1800’s. With Franz Brentano and Edmund Husserl, phenomenology became the study of conscious phenomena. It is an analysis of things or experiences, and how those things and experiences relate to one another. “Phenomenology seeks to make explicit the implicit structure and meaning of human experiences. It is the search for “essences” that cannot be revealed by ordinary observation” (Saunders 1982, p. 354). For this research, students will be able to give witness through their perceptions about dissolution and dispersion. The human experiences will have different meanings to various people, yet the meaning ascribed to the experiences may have a direct impact on resiliency and success.

Phenomenological research is the descriptive investigation of the contents of consciousness itself, both the subjective and the objective realities. To understand the cultural and symbolic aspects of a system or organization, and the experiences of individuals within that organization, a framework must be constructed that resembles a research methodology in which patterns and implications may arise. Sanders (1982) discussed three specific difficulties with phenomenological analysis. The first is that normal analytic methods work from assumption or hypothesis, towards the results. Phenomenology on the other hand works from intuition and insight toward meaning. The second difficulty is the vocabulary of phenomenological research. The difficulty rests the terms frequently being Latin or Greek. For phenomenological research to take place, the terms and ideas must be well understood. A list of terms and definitions is
found in Chapter One. The third difficulty of phenomenological analysis is the methodological issues that plague phenomenological research. Quantitative research has well formulated methodology that can result in a comfort that the norms and rules of the method, if followed, will give a reliable result. For phenomenological analysis, a precise methodology does not yet exist. “There is no orthodox procedure which can be held up as the authoritative phenomenological method” (Chamberlain 1974, p. 126). The common framework constructed out of an examination of an individual’s experiences becomes the method. Layering other quantitative and qualitative methodologies on top of the phenomenological framework is possible as well. In this particular study, after a framework of experiences is constructed, coding of responses and then analysis of themes and experiential implications will take place.

There are several features of phenomenology, and therefore the analysis, that take place within the philosophical realm. The first feature is intentionality. The essences of human experiences as they are uncovered are a result of intentionality. The definition of intentionality is the total meaning of the object. In understanding the total meaning of the object, essences appear. For example, the intention given by a student to the experience of transitioning, results in arriving at being able to explain the essence of the experience by the researcher. Edmund Husserl used the terms noema and noesis to describe intentionality as total meaning between what is expected, being the noema, and the experience taken by itself, or the noesis.

To get to the root of the analysis, and for the process to be pure and true for each student, it is important for the researcher to engage in epoche’, the second feature of phenomenology. The term was first used by Husserl, and refers to the researcher
suspending any preconceived notions about the subject or the object being investigated. Suspending the opinions or attitudes is imperative. “The essential phenomenological attitude is the temporary suspension of all existing personal biases, beliefs, preconceptions, or assumptions, in order to get straight to the pure and unencumbered vision of what a thing ‘essentially’ is” (Sanders, 1982, p. 335). Husserl called the suspending process “bracketing” as the term is used in mathematics. The bracketing, or suspending of attitudes is epoche’.

The third feature of phenomenological research is the ability to engage in eidetic reduction. This term refers to the process of breaking down the experiences into the most basic and most concrete form, beyond what is obvious or apparent, to the essences of the conscious experience. “(Eidetic reduction) is the process of going beyond, behind, or underneath the conventional patterns or structures of thought and action in order to locate their common ground” (Saunders, 1982, p. 335). Intuition and reflection are the processes by which eidetic reductions occurs. It is clear that the bracketing must take place in order for the researcher, while using these forms of introspection, to maintain an objective analysis.

Martin Heidegger in his book *Being and Time* (1968) made several distinctions about the state of being and the experiences a being could have. Being-in-the-world is a state of being whereby external experiences act on the individual. It is a state that combines the individual with social life experiences. For this research, it is the state of being that a student encounters when the experiences of schooling impact upon immediate existence. Perceptions are the reality of Being-in-the-world. Taking an intensive look at participant perceptions of the experience of dissolution and dispersion
is worthy of in depth, phenomenological analysis. Participants describing perceptions is “Being-in-the-World” for the participant. Student perceptions of experiences, events, and their own achievement and success exist for each student. These perceptions help to form the student’s self concept regarding their place in the world. A positive view of “being in the world” must be created for the student to feel comfortable with any life change process. When surrounded by societal pressures and political issues, ‘being’ becomes difficult and resiliency comes into question. Resiliency may be the ability to maintain a positive being- in-the-world. In light of the mandates that hold education to high expectations, getting to the essence of the events though a closer look at perceptions and experiences of the students themselves, may hold the answer. Attempting to define the essences of resilience by examining perception of the experiences is the research goal.

**Student Perceptions**

As the academic mandates set a high bar of expectations for all students, it is clear that all students will develop at their own rate. Each student accesses their education in a different manner and the experiences of each are unique to that individual. Each student perceives various experiences differently as well. It is the themes and essences derived from students’ perceptions of the events surrounding the dissolution of their school that this research hopes to be able to define according to its implications for resiliency and success.

Research leading to the development of an inventory to measure student perceptions was conducted in 2004 by Rayneri and Gerber. The research involved students learning most effectively when the classroom environment addressed their
preferred learning style. Together with a Learning Styles Inventory developed in earlier research, the Student Perception Inventory (SPI) measures how students perceive the environment of a classroom. Both were used together in the 2004 study to show a relationship existed between student perception of the environment and learning styles. If both instruments were associated with positive responses, it would suggest a positive relationship resulted in increased academic achievement (Rayneri & Gerber, 2004).

Aspects of participant thoughts and feelings about experiences have been proven to be important to academic achievement. A good perception of an experience usually leads to confidence in self and surroundings. Norman and Hyland (2003) found confidence played a major role in learning at all levels. When a student feels comfortable with all aspects of the learning system, achievement will to occur. A learner’s confidence is either an inhibitor or a facilitator in the learning process. Feeling confident and perceiving one’s self to be successful also has implications for building resiliency (Henderson, 2003).

A school attitude assessment survey was used as an instrument to measure the attitudes of academically capable students who routinely underachieve (McCoach & Siegle, 2003). It may be the case that student attitudes toward school issues, self, and others impact even gifted children to the point of underachievement. Attitudes are measured in the reported study. The McCoach and Siegle (2003) study was referenced several times in the resiliency literature. Even though its implications are regarding attitudes, attitudes toward experiences have an impact on perceptual representation. The McCoach and Siegle study as sited in another text on resiliency was important in documenting that a positive attitude will foster resiliency (Henderson, ed., 2007).
In another study by McCoach and Siegle (2003) in the *Roeper Review*, the researchers did find, after studying both gifted and regular education students and their self-concept, that student who had a higher self-concept seemed to perform better academically. The gifted students seemed to have a higher self-concept in general, but self-concept and academic performance were positively related. In the study conclusions, the authors believed that further research in the area of enhancing student self-concept to arrive at higher academic achievement was required. Further research should explore the idea as to “whether programs that seek to increase academic self-perception in underachieving students can effectively increase their academic achievement” (McCoach & Siegle 2003, p.65).

Another study focused on perceptions as predictors of academic achievement in sixth and ninth grade students. Measuring autonomy, support, parent attachment, competence, and self worth, the researchers found a significant relationship existed that clearly demonstrated a link between interpersonal and intrapersonal variables and the outcomes related to academic endeavors. Students who demonstrated strong interpersonal skills as well as intrapersonal skills were able to achieve academically. Maintaining these strong skills is directly related to resiliency in students (Wong, Weist, & Cusick, 2002).

In addressing the information that will be collected when the same research participants matriculate to the next grade, a study was conducted on the future orientation, academic engagement, and academic achievement of black high school students. The results of the study proved that it may be important to develop a future orientation for students as a protective factor in their future successes (Brown & Jones,
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2004). A futures orientation is part of the Resiliency Wheel developed by Henderson in the area of meaningful participation and student engagement (Henderson & Milstein, 2004).

**Life Experience of Transitioning as an Adolescent: Moving to a new School**

Transitioning in education occurs several times, and must be defined in a number of ways. Each year a child transitions to the next grade in school, there is a great jump in academic as well as social expectation. Yearly transitioning may also be the time when a student leaves the highest grade in one building to go to another school building. It may also mean leaving one school district to go to another. Maintaining academic achievement and not experiencing a decline in academic achievement in the transition year is an issue for students in transition. Through a combination of academic supports, supports for other life experiences, and a well defined, well constructed, student centered, and well supported curriculum, academic loss in the transition year can be decreased. In fact, utilizing the aspects of the Resiliency Wheel (Henderson and Milstein, 2003) as applied to curriculum expectations can stem the tide of transition loss. At the present time, the ideas of transitioning and curriculum are usually treated separately but their interaction is undeniable. Transitioning, especially if it occurs from one school district to another can have devastating effects on a student if curricular expectations are not the same. Pennsylvania has tried through standardizing its academic expectations to create more consistency especially in the core curricular areas.

Transitions impact a student early on in educational experience and will be discussed first. The question that requires an answer is whether it is more difficult to support academic achievement in transition years. A transition year may be one where
the student moves from one building to another in the same school district. It may also be defined as a year where the student first accesses education or a particular component of education for the first time. Transition years can be years where profound stress is exerted on a student. Beginning with transition into school at the earliest stages, it is clear that “transition activities are the exception rather than the rule in our public schools” (Bohan-Baker & Little, 2002, p.96). Bohan-Baker and Little (2002) conclude that family and community involvement are the keys to successfully transitioning our earliest learners into the education system. They also support the notion that strong leadership in establishing good transition practices is important to the success of school communities. Teacher preparation should include family involvement components and transition teams should be established for school systems at every level. Establishing a consistent set of rules and expectations for each community by each community will support successful transitions as well.

Akos (2002) in his research asked students their opinion on various themes surrounding transitioning to middle school. He found that a vast number of their concerns dealt with rules and regulations in the middle school and the processes of the middle school. It is important to note that given a good orientation on the two issues of regulations and processes, students should begin to transition with positive experiences. Clear and high expectations are important for both social and academic situations (Henderson & Milstein, 2003). When students know what is expected, they know how to respond to various situations. With increased knowledge of expectations and process, transitioning should be easier (Akos, 2002). With positive transitions, resiliency will be supported.
Research by Rice (1998) examined peer characteristics in students that students believed to be important during the middle to high school transition year. Further, the researcher queried how these peer characteristics related to possible differences in classroom management. He found that as students get older, they are more likely to place an emphasis on academic issues over social issues. Girls are more likely to maintain importance of the social characteristics in peer interactions, but in all cases, peer characteristics impacting on classroom management points to the importance of academics over the social and clearly needs more research. What the research does bear out is that as students progress in age, they are less tolerant of foolish behavior and believe that a good academic preparation is more important than fooling around. The research may point in the direction of heterogeneous groupings and aggregating the groups using personality characteristics data (Rice, 1998).

Zettergen (2003) looked at school adjustment based on peer status of rejected, average or popular children. In this longitudinal study, the popular children seemed to have a higher academic achievement than the rejected ones. The notion that belonging has an impact on achievement and resiliency is substantiated by the Henderson and Millstein (2003) research as well. An interesting notion by Zettergen was that the popularity students enjoy may be directly related to their ability to achieve or the fact that they are academically successful. Making children successful is most important in light of positive self image being the payoff. If academic achievement is closely related to popularity in most cases, and popularity is closely related to successful transitioning, then the focus of efforts should be increasing each child’s academic achievement. Alarmingly, there are groups of students and sections within society whereby it is not
‘cool’ to succeed. Those children are at a deficit in that they are setting themselves up for failure if the major concentration is not on academic achievement and therefore a positive self-image.

Alspaugh (1998) researched achievement loss or academic gain during the transition process and found that achievement loss was directly related to the number of times a student transitions. The higher number of transitions a student endures yields a higher achievement loss. He found that there is an absolute achievement loss in most cases associated with transitioning yet the degree differs from student to student. He also found that year to year transitioning in the same building resulted in less of an academic achievement loss over building to building transitions.

For maintaining academic achievement in the high school, students must be interested and engaged in their courses of study. The question of whether students get tracked into lower or higher-level courses as a result of what is offered to them in earlier years of school is affirmed in research by Dauber, Alexander & Entwisle in 1996. Students whose academic record places them in lower level groups have a hard time breaking out of those groups. The contributing factors beyond academic record were researched as well. There is no evidence that parent education impacts student placement, but it is worth further research to see if parent involvement and parent knowledge of education and its systems has a positive impact on student placement. The issue of lower achieving students accessing creative and enriching classes if they are tracked into classes for lower achievers become important. Academic achievement is going to decrease if interest in the material is low. Resiliency research shows that if
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student engagement is high, academic achievement and resiliency will increase (Benard, 1993).

For special education students there is great concern as to how the transitioning process affects them. Forgan and Vaughn (2000) found evidence that neither their academic self-concept nor their global self-concept suffered in the transitioning process. The achievement by LD students didn’t seem to suffer either. Consequently, self-concept did suffer in the regular education students. Forgan and Vaughn propose that this may be due to the fact that the LD students have intensive academic support in school. These findings were interesting in that many articles have been written and research completed in the area of inclusive education being used as a model for all students to find success. Providing caring and support is mentioned in the Resiliency Wheel (Henderson & Millstein, 2003) as one of six important aspects in building resiliency. An excellent way to transition and possibly teach all students is with a special education model- individual learning plans for all students.

Supporting the Forgan and Vaughn (2000) research is the study done by Salisbury and McGregor (2002) who researched the climate and context of inclusive elementary schools that were successful in raising and maintaining student achievement. When a school is organized to serve all students, it fares better in supporting student achievement than a school allowing it to happen by chance. Recognizing that children present varied risk factors, supporting all students within their needs was an important factor in the successful schools.
Life Experiences of Transitioning to a New Social Group: Importance of Self Esteem and “Belonging”

Positive experiences and perceptions are of paramount importance to the healthy functioning of children, and for all children, a healthy self-esteem is important. Human development plays a large role in the ability to perceive and experience at a particular level. Perceiving and experiencing a positive transition process is clearly related to sustained academic achievement. Some evidence shows that if supports can help to maintain a healthy self-esteem, the transition process is a more positive experience (Zimmerman, Copeland, Shope & Dielman, 1997). This study supported the notion that the degree of self-efficacy a student enjoys definitely has an impact on successful transitioning. No other protective factors like parent involvement or teacher support seemed to have as significant an effect as positive self-image.

Berger (2007) suggests a focus should be placed on students who are overstressed, having a difficult time reconciling future goals with everyday life. She says there is a disconnected process between what students must do and what is really required in life. Berger suggests students are required to function independently at adolescence and adopt a mature outlook functioning in the world of rapidly changing demands. Presently, families are not readily available to support young people, and processes and practices should be in place to support students.

Major events in the life of a student and present at the same time as the transitioning make the process harder with a more negative outcome (Koening & Gladstone, 1998). In terms of human development, there are several processes going on simultaneously. In terms of Piaget’s theory of cognition (Piaget, 1937,1954) a 17 or 18
year old is in the stage of formal operation. In this stage, individuals move beyond simply concrete experiences, and begin to think abstractly. Logical reason appears, and an individual is able to draw conclusions from available information. These processes can then be applied to hypothetical situations. The evidence of logical reasoning is when individuals are able to solve problems using a trial and error method. Adolescents begin to think like scientists by planning and testing various solutions. They develop hypotheses for problems and systematically decide by deductive reasoning, which is the best way to solve the problem. Understanding hypothetical constructs aid the youth in being able to conceptualize ideas like love, religion, values and priorities. During this stage, the adolescent begins to think about the future and future endeavors and successes. During this stage, individuals are excited about what they can be. Adolescent self-centeredness or egocentrism lends to a stage specific self-consciousness which presents as their sense of personal uniqueness and invincibility in operational thought. While being able to see another’s point of view, the adolescent retains a self-centered frame of reference and perceptions that may reflect that propensity.

Students in high school are in their teen years which are considered to be the psychosocial developmental phase of identity versus role confusion. In the years 12 to 20 the individual is concerned with what other think. Adolescents are concerned about uniqueness and sameness simultaneously, and begin gauging others for these qualities (Erikson, 1959). During this stage, a sense of self is beginning to be defined. In light of this information, this seems to be a time in human development when there are many positive factors working in favor of the students. Due to a heightened cognitive
capability that is beginning to deepen, a study of how these students perceive their achievement and connect meaning in their academic lives is most appropriate.

**Academic Achievement and Success**

Academic accountability in the United States and in Pennsylvania has been the focus of major discussions since 2001. The topic of benchmarks for student achievement begins with the NCLB (2001) legislation, and the manner in which Pennsylvania enacted regulations to meet the mandate. The No Child Left Behind legislation is the political embodiment of education reform since 2001. Under President George W. Bush, the federal government took a stand on education accountability for children in every state. Beginning at the federal level, mandates for education systems across America were addressed. This voluminous piece of legislation was handed down from the Federal government and given to interpretation by each state. These regulations, although challenged and reworked by each state, give credence to an accountability system not rivaled in education in this country’s history. Pennsylvania has developed the state standards for benchmark years to outline academic developmental expectations. Assessments, assessment anchors, and eligible content have been developed for Pennsylvania. The above three aspects associated with learning, form the framework for the curriculum of each school district. Each school district’s curriculum is created in accordance with these requisites and delivered through district guidelines along with community expectation.

Through the curriculum of each district and by the instruction of every highly qualified teacher, NCLB legislation brings with it high expectations for every student. The goal or bar set for education is that all students will be academically successful. The
goal itself seems unrealistic in some cases. Pennsylvania disaggregates their Pennsylvania System of School Assessment (PSSA) data out to specific subgroups. The gaps in achievement for some populations of children are devastating. Students presenting more risk factors are at a disadvantage if not supported. These are the same risk factors that impede resiliency in students.

One of the several goals in the NCLB legislation is that each child will be reading, writing, understanding science and applying mathematics at or above grade level by specific benchmark years. Presently, the last benchmarking year before high school is grade 8. Grade 11 students are assessed for final proficiency as well. Without regard to developmental, psychosocial, and cognitive variations, the same expectation is required of all children (Simpson, LaCava & Graner, 2004). At the state level, standards are published for many subject areas for benchmarked grades. Back-loading and front-loading the curriculum for the remaining grades is necessary, and usually done by each school district. The Pennsylvania Department of Education Standards are published on their website, at http://www.pde.state.pa.us/stateboard, and contained in the Standards Aligned System (SAS) since December of 2009.

Pennsylvania provides educators with eligible content for the state assessments, and provides an outline and process by which the assessments will be given. Companies construct workbooks to help students practice the types of assessments, and the entire process is demystified in most cases. At the district level, a curriculum framework is constructed for subjects addressing reading, math, science and writing skills. Teachers continue to shape and mold the instructional practices in each curricular area. Various tools are utilized in both areas. State assessment, standardized assessments, and in some
cases, curriculum based assessments are all utilized to monitor student progress. Many of these curriculum and instructional tools are contained in the SAS data and reference base as well.

The major theme in addressing and sustaining academic achievement over time revolves around the many issues associated with curriculum choice, mapping, alignment, and delivery. The relationship between sustaining academic achievement and curriculum is intricate and convoluted. Davison, Soe, Davenport, Butterbaugh, and Davidson (2004) suggest that not allowing the gaps in achievement to ever emerge in the first place is most important. The question of how to accomplish that has major implications for this work with regard to what occurred at the high school represented in this study. Once the gaps occur, they are difficult to close. The researchers believe that it is not about throwing in extra resources and programs, but is it about the efficiency of the normal school day. Increasing instructional time with the initial resources is the thrust, not just throwing one support program after another.

The belief that successful schooling begins at home is the topic of the Rosenthal, Sawyers and Young (1996) article. They conclude that for years, society has created two separate education worlds that are sometimes adversarial. As a society believing that there is a great difference between education in the home and education in school, major dilemmas have been bred. Developmental studies prove that a whole variety of problems begin in the child’s home environment. Parents complain that what students are learning in school is irrelevant to the real world. In many cases the physical condition in which children begin their schooling is substandard. Nutrition in many cases has been poor, pre-school preparation was below standard, and many beginner
students are in poor cognitive condition. Parents in many cases think that school is simply an introduction to trouble for their child. Often times this is true as well. The connection made between the home and school is critical to the success of the child. The espoused curriculum should be a direct result of a school-community dialogue, and that curriculum should be enriched with school and community beliefs that help children to be successful. For some parents, accessing the school is difficult due to poor school related experiences themselves or a limited ability to do advocate due to poor knowledge. Rosenthal, Sawyer & Young (1996) believe it is the responsibility of the school and the teacher to establish a firm connection between the school and the home. Knowing the students of each family is important and knowing how to access that family is important also. Opening a line of communication with the community in the process of establishing district curricular benchmarks makes the teaching seem like an extension of home. Presented in this 1996 research was an approach that espoused a family and school centered solution to a possible struggle that could rage out control. The closer the beliefs of the two entities, family and school, the better it will be for the students. The consistency established by shared expectations and information in the curriculum make both the family and the school successful in creating a positive environment in which the student can succeed academically.

The best and most interesting curricular concept to keep all children engaged and succeeding in school was an article by Tieso (2001). He stated that the curricula of a school should be like an artist’s work. Teachers should use an empty canvas and apply broad and creative brushstrokes instead of a paint-by-the-numbers mentality. Reflecting on this statement it becomes clear that as each child then takes hold of that curricular
brush, they have the opportunity to take ownership in the curriculum with their creativity. Curriculum should not be a piecemeal set of requirements for a child to accomplish. It should be a performance standard with all the critical elements involved. Creative curriculum experiences should help the student make academic connection from year to year and reduce transition loss.

There is great debate whether curriculum development should include very specific skills and benchmarks rather than broad plans for success. Critical concepts and major processes should be included, but to dictate what and how and at what pace each child must learn is not a measure of deep understanding. The deep understanding, key concepts of big ideas, are the benchmarks needed in a curricular plan that allow for student creativity and differentiation of access making education a creative and personal endeavor. Tieso (2001) believes that curriculum modification should take place removing the unwanted pieces from the plan. The community should be involved in that process connecting school with home. Students themselves should be involved so that they may be engaged in their work and in the decision making regarding their schooling.

Finally, Clark and Clark (2000) discussed the need for school leaders to be skilled in curricular and instructional reform enabling the establishment of a school climate whereby students would be engaged in fully functioning programs tailored to their needs and interests. Aspects of the curriculum should be developmentally appropriate and balance the needs of the students and the requirements of the standards. Balancing being a key word, creating and establishing the perfect stance between core curricular requirements and creative elements, can become a political nightmare. Creating a positive school culture able to incorporate creativity and rigor at the same
time is important. Making sure that the curriculum is developmentally responsive is a way that brings together the core and the creativity, and helps keep the elected Board of School Directors off the bandwagon issue of the week. Proving that an enriched and aligned curriculum is the key to student success keeps the resources flowing and opponents in check. School leaders must be able to create resilient school communities by supporting student needs and promoting protective factors. The PA Department of Education in the Standards Aligned Systems helps to lay the framework for supporting students not only in curricular areas but in all other aspects of education.

In discussing multiple pathways to achievement, “There is a clear need for a descriptive framework and an analytical strategy that capture the interactions among forces acting on children’s development over time” (Benard, 2003, p. 298) This research will hope to accomplish making connections between various aspects of resiliency experiences that will help students to find success and make meaning in their academic life.
Chapter III

Methodology

This study is constructed as a phenomenological analysis of student perception. The perceptions investigated will be of specific former high school students regarding the events of school closure, transition to new schools, belonging to a new social grouping, and the participants’ view of their own success in the past, present, and future. Conversations with the participants will focus on the educational process that existed in the Duquesne City High School its last year, and the dissolution and dispersion processes as well. Also included in the conversations will be a probing of events like various litigation and legislative acts and the transition mechanisms utilized by the sending and receiving school districts. Finally, the educational process each student experienced in the past at Duquesne High School and in the present at their new school, along with students’ ideas of their own success, will be explored.

The dialog regarding these processes will be informed by using the six components of resiliency found in the Pennsylvania Resiliency Framework presented by author Nan Henderson to the Pennsylvania Department of Education in 2007, and adapted from work by Henderson and Milstein (2003) for well over a decade. The questions contained in the PA Resiliency Framework will be rephrased into the semi-structured interview questions for this study and will guide the discourse and be utilized in the final analysis. The aim is to refine the data and to reduce the themes and implications to an existential relationship between the noesis, the intuitive knowing of the participant, and the noema, the perceived experience of resiliency components in the events.
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Out of the negative life event of school closure, the research will attempt to “give voice” from the students’ “inside perspective and give “phenomenological emphasis on the experiential claim” of the participants (Larkin, Watts, & Clifton, 2006, p. 104). The discoveries made in this research will “be a function of the relationship that pertains between researcher…as an inclusive part of the world they (participants) are describing.” The results of the research and analysis can be seen to be dependent on the process of “intellectual construction that shapes the structure of the encounter” (Larkin, Watts, & Clifton, 2006, p. 107). With regard to the experiences and perceptions of the participants which are the object of the study, in the Heideggarian mode, the goal of the phenomenological research will attempt to allow the maximum opportunity for the objects and their meaning to be clearly seen for their relationship to each other and for this study, to aspects of resilience.

The study begins after the transition year to enable student participants to fully reflect on the entire transition year experience. Questions focus on drawing out perceptions and feelings of the process upon reflection. Implications for student resiliency is addressed as possible derived themes after an analysis of resiliency components present in the experience. It is important to draw out perceptions of the life events and then define the relationship of the events to the components of the Resiliency Framework. This chapter provides a framework for analysis and interpretation that will be expanded in Chapters IV and V. Sections regarding setting, participants, instrumentation, procedure, and methods of data analysis will be presented in this chapter.
Setting

In designing a phenomenological research study, determining the limits of the research is the first crucial decision. The limits of the study are discussed in terms of its setting and the participants in the research study. Duquesne High School was a small secondary school in the southeastern section of Allegheny County in western Pennsylvania. The total number of students who attended the Duquesne City School District prior to the dissolution of the high school was 686 students kindergarten through grade twelve. The high school had an enrollment around 200 students.

The community of Duquesne City has experienced a decline in all socio-economic areas since the closure of the steel mills that were considered to be the economic base. At one time an economically viable community, Duquesne City has not seen an economic renaissance similar to other local areas. Tax effort in terms of equalized mills shows Duquesne City has a tax effort that is second out of 501 School Districts in the state of Pennsylvania. The people of the Duquesne City community pay a higher amount of money school taxes than all but one other school district’s residents. A listing of tax effort for the 501 Pennsylvania school districts can be found in Appendix A, Table A:2. The Duquesne City School District, having been under financially distressed as defined by Pennsylvania for six years, even with a high tax effort, could not adequately fund its high school.

Students from the Duquesne High School were “tuitioned out” to two other school districts by legislative decision in the summer of 2007. The East Allegheny School District and the West Mifflin School District were chosen to be the receiving schools. Two thirds of the students were to go to West Mifflin, and one third to East
Allegheny. The West Mifflin School District is contiguous to the Duquesne School District, and East Allegheny is across the Monongahela River from the Duquesne School District. In July of 2007 when the decision was made that these two districts would serve as the receiving districts, both filed suit to stop the process.

For this study, the initial announcement of the study, meetings with students and parents, and the data collection phase of the research will take place at the two receiving school districts. Proposal for the study and permission for the study to take place must come from two entities. The West Mifflin Board of School Directors and the East Allegheny Board of School Directors must grant permission for the study participants to be interviewed in their respective Districts. After permissions are granted, then participants will be recruited from the available population of present 2008-2009 Juniors and Seniors that had at least one year of experience in the Duquesne High School.

**Participants**

Saunders (1982) noted that participants must be able to “give reliable information on the phenomenon to be researched” (p. 356). It would be necessary for students to be willing to discuss the events and be able to convey their feelings and perceptions about the events. The willingness to allow a researcher to study events from the participant’s perspective creates a more positive propensity to share. “The principles of their involvement in the research process, [are to] give consent, engage with the interviewer, and show a willingness to express their experiences and opinions…Only two studies explicitly recruited from a child or adolescent population” (Reid, Flower & Larkin, 2005, p.3). It is believed that the willingness expressed by the participants limits the risks associated with discussing possibly painful events.
Phenomenological analysis “challenges the traditional linear relationship between the number of participants and the value of the research” (Reid, Flower & Larkin, 2005, p.3). In a study by Smith (2003) the argument was posed that there are great advantages to smaller sample sizes in phenomenological analysis. Sample sizes with an average of 10 to 15 participants is suggested. This allows for the exploration of the phenomenon from various points of reference enabling the researcher to develop data in more detail. This creates its own participant specific triangulation (Elliot, Fischer & Rennie, 1999). Furthermore, Saunders (1982) cautioned that more participants involved in this type of research does not mean that the quality or quantity of useable information will be greater. In phenomenological analysis, the researcher engages in in-depth questioning in an existential manner. The existential manner requires open ended questions that will be used, developed, and expanded into deep conversations with the participants (Sanders, 1982). For this study, it would be necessary for students to have experience in both school entities, the former Duquesne City High School, and the receiving school.

The participants in this study are from an urban-like school district in Allegheny County, Western Pennsylvania that has had its high school program dissolved by legislative order. Former Duquesne High School students who were juniors and seniors in the 2008-2009 school year in the receiving schools are the target population. Each would have the experiences necessary for this study. Both male and female students were eligible. The study is completely voluntary and the identity of students will not be revealed. Participants were given all information needed to participate in the study.
Specific vocabulary to be utilized was listed, defined, and explained in print and if necessary in person to the student participants by the researcher.

**Confidentiality**

The proposal for this research study was submitted to the Duquesne University Internal Review Board (IRB) for full board approval in April 2009. It required full board approval because the research participants may not have reached 18 years of age. According to IRB guidelines, informed consent is required of the participants’ parent or guardian, and assent is required from the participants who are below the age of 18. IRB forms and participant forms and the information packet given to each participant and their representative can be found in the Appendix C.

The data collection method included audio taping and observations expanded into transcriptions and resulting descriptive data analysis. Participant information will be secure at all times with no real names attached to any of the materials. Numbers were given in the first phase of data collection and maintained throughout the study. Because the number of participants is small, care was taken to remove all descriptors, names of all persons mentioned and receiving school name. All materials will be kept in a confidential and secure location in a locked cabinet in the researcher’s home office.

**Final Reporting and Information Disclosure**

Throughout the research study, participants were assured of the confidentiality. The method of analysis was shared with participant and the procedure for reporting the information was described. The final study results will be shared with all participants, the sending school, the receiving schools, as well as the District wherein those schools lie. The State Department of Education and the Secretary for Education will also be
afforded a copy of the manuscript highlighting the results. It is imperative for the success of this research that the researcher develops a relationship of trust and caring with the participants. The researcher has 30 years of experience successfully working in urban-like districts. Use of a professional demeanor, engaged style, active listening skills, and relating skills is necessary to develop the relationships with participants. Professional networking in each district will assist in the relationship building and will be useful during the data collection phase.

Meetings were held in both of the receiving schools to explain the study to all possible participants. Information about the study, a list of defined terms, the study’s topics and guiding questions, and consent forms were distributed at this time. Students were instructed to obtain signatures from parents for consent if they wish to participate. The researcher contacted the care giver of each student who wishes to participate further explaining the study and the process. Before the individual interviews, the researcher will began to build the necessary prior relationship by meeting all students in a large group presentation at each of the receiving schools.

**Design**

The second crucial step in a phenomenological analysis is the design; the data collection, its instrumentation, and procedure. The study is designed as a phenomenological analysis of student perceptions. Phenomenological analysis offers a solution that contains a method tailored to the experiences of each individual student. Examining student perceptions and the meaning attached to those perceptions regarding aspects of resiliency may be a key to overall student wellness and perceived feelings of success.
The study data collection and analysis was conducted in the following manner. First is the individual participant interview section of data collection. Individual, audio tape recorded interviews by the researcher occurred with students on site at their present school. These interviews were comprised of semi-structured interview questions that address the three research questions. The list of questions can be found in the instrumentation section (Sanders, 1982). Other probing questions were utilized as well depending on how the conversations proceed. Next is the documentary study. It is comprised of the anecdotal notes of the researcher and will be recorded during each of the participant interviews. Notes were taken while the recorded interview is progressing highlighting and identifying themes and ideas. The documentary study is a way of validating the recorded information and the recorded information enriches the notes of the documentary study. The final area of data collection during the interview was comprised of the participant observation as the researcher recorded specific behaviors and general deportment of the participant. Each participant is considered to be unique in the various behaviors and attitudes displayed during the interview process. The participant observations were recorded during the interview process.

After the data collection, there are four levels of analysis in a phenomenological study using data from the interview, documentary study, and participant observation. First, the descriptive level of analysis, gives each participant a unique identity. In this phase similarities and differences among the participants will be addressed. Second is the analysis of information for the identification of the invariant themes that arise out of the data. Third is the analysis of information for identification of the personal meaning and the noetic/noematic correlates. Finally, the fourth and final step of the phenomenological
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analysis is analyzing information by connecting the correlates to help identify the
essences of the phenomenon (Saunders, 1982). This study is in search of the
participants’ individual perception of resilience through the events, and seeks to identify
each participant’s essences of resilience, and success. Data analysis will define resiliency
components imbedded in the events and identify the essence of resiliency and success for
each individual and trends for the group.

**Instrumentation for Data Collection**

The instrumentation for this study begins with an audio recording device. This
device will make it possible to record and manage all audio files. Students will be
identified by number during the taping and in the data compilation. Audio recording
will permit the transcribing of interviews by the researcher to enable the researcher to
thoroughly review the data. A list of semi-structured interview questions was
consistently asked of each participant. As the conversations developed about each
aspects of resiliency and the experiences of the participants, other questions were entered
into the dialogue. The normal pattern of the interview will be constructed around the
pre-existing questions. The semi-structured interview questions were constructed from
the Resiliency Framework, formulated in advance of the interview, and will act as a
guide for the conversations during the interview. The questions constructed facilitated
the “in-depth probing of a limited number of individuals (Sanders, 1982, p. 356).” Other
areas of conversation will be specific to each participant. A List of the guiding questions
can be found in the Participant Packet in Appendix C.
Together with the audio taping and a transcription of the interviews, anecdotal notes in a data collection grid were utilized during the interview process to collect information. These three items can be found in the Appendix D.

**Instrumentation for Data Analysis**

The first phase of analysis in the phenomenological method is the descriptive phase. Instrumentation for the descriptive phase of data analysis included hard copies of individual interviews and a data grid created in a spreadsheet format. Data analysis will took place after each interview, and after all interviews were completed. Individual interview data were reviewed and coded. A spreadsheet of major themes and pertinent information was constructed and revised after each interview. The information was coded within the spreadsheet for easy identification and use. Recorded interviews were reviewed and major themes noted. The major themes were grouped to determine if there is a frequency that shows a trend in the perceptual data. After all interviews were concluded, coded themes will be sorted in the spreadsheet application and grouped according to their frequency.

Frequency of themes will determine what phenomenological analysis calls invariant themes. The second step in phenomenological analysis is the identification of invariant themes. Information for this begins with the sorted spreadsheet data. Invariant themes will be viewed by gender and grade level. The degree of positive and negative attribute were assigned during this phase. These themes were identified as invariant themes from the group and then reassigned to various participants for the third level of analysis.
The third level of phenomenological analysis looks at the personal meaning assigned to the theme and experience and searches for the noetic/noematic correlates. The correlates are between phenomena, themes and personal experience. Notes entered into a journal were utilized by the researcher to construct the correlates. Explained fully in the following section Method of Analysis, the correlates are what make the experience a personal experience for each individual. Themes can be common or what is called invariant but the correlates make the experience personal again.

The fourth step in phenomenological analysis is to move from the personal experiential meaning or correlates, to identifying the overall essence of the phenomena. As the correlates are documented in a journal, the essences of the phenomena will be described from the correlates and documented in the same journal. The correlates are related to the essences of the phenomena. The phenomena being studied are the perceptions of students. The essences have an implication to the overall existence of each student participant. In each level of analysis, the themes of resiliency will be identified. In the final analysis of essences it will be clear if the experiences are considered to fall within the Knight (2207) model in which resiliency is seen as a state, a condition and a practice.

For phenomenological analysis, triangulation of information occurs between and within the data collected, and is built into the method of analysis. There is internal triangulation within participant data to ensure that the descriptions, invariants, correlates and essences maintain personal participant specific meaning. As the data moves through the levels of analysis, there is also triangulation between participant specific data sets represented as descriptions, invariants, and essences as they are realized for the group.
Triangulation can also occur using external data. This study will utilize documentary interviews with the former Duquesne High School students over a period of two years as recorded by the Consortium for Public Education. The grids utilized in data analysis are found Chapter IV. Examples of raw data compilation are found in Appendix D.

**Procedure**

Permission must be granted by the West Mifflin and East Allegheny School Districts, and the study must pass the full Board IRB at Duquesne University. Letters to the entities asking for permission can be found in the Appendix C. After receiving permissions, the receiving high schools were contacted to set up a large group meeting of possible participants. Prior to the meeting being held, an informational letter were sent to parents informing them that their students is eligible to participate in a research study and will be hearing the presentation by a researcher. The letter to parents can also be found in the Appendix C.

During the first phase of the study, the researcher met with the possible participants and explain the study by use of a presentation. Study information including the slides from the presentation was sent home to parents and guardians with the informed consent papers, assent papers, confidentiality information, participant questions and the definitions of terms to be used. The information packet can be found in the Appendix C. Students were directed to return the informed consent papers and the assent forms to school within three days if they wish to participate. The initial large group meeting endeavored to, 1) inform possible participants of the study, 2) distribute study information, 3) distribute and explain study consent forms and confidentiality, 4) begin to build the necessary relationship of trust between researcher and participant.
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The second phase of the study was comprised of the individual interviews. From the available population wishing to participate, appointments were set with these participants. The interviews took place in the receiving schools. After consent forms are returned and the study participants were identified, contact information was checked with the students in case follow-up questions or clarification of interview data was needed. Each student participant was interviewed in their receiving school in a space which is quiet and private, but that was adjacent to open spaces so the researcher is protected and students are comfortable to interact. Audio taping by the researcher was utilized without real name descriptions.

The participant interviews were completed in the spring of school year 2008-2009, over a full year after the events of dissolution and dispersion. Student participants would have had time to reflect on the events in question. Individual interviews were utilized permitting conversation with one student and single student perceptions and ideas to arise from the semi-structured questions. Saunders (1982) suggests that tape recording and transcribing interviews is necessary. This allows the researcher to interview participants without distraction. It also allows for a purer data set since note taking by the researcher can include inadvertent data “reinterpretation” (Saunders, 1982, p. 357). Regarding the interview questions, phenomenological researchers agree that it is important to use a few questions, and dig deeply into the meaning, content, and connection of the data to the essence of the experience being researched. The exact preliminary and guiding questions were asked to each individual. The State of Pennsylvania developed a Resiliency Framework with guiding questions to be used by educational practitioners. These guiding questions were reformatted and used to gauge
student resiliency in the matter of these life experiences. Subsequent questions produced through conversation were dependent on the participant. Perceptual data was gathered regarding the dissolution decision by the state, the litigation that resulted from the receiving school districts, the process of transition, and the mechanisms used to transition students into the new districts.

Another segment of data collection is the documentary study. Stone (1978) says to begin with collection data from the semi-structured oral interviews, and then move to the second step which is a “documentary study” of the interview by the researcher. This can be done at the same time the interview is occurring. These anecdotal notes are important for use during the analysis phase. The documentary study would include a description of personal information revealed about the participant as well as a description of how the interview proceeded. The third suggested step in the data collection interview process is “participant observation.” The researcher should observe the participants in authentic situations in which the researcher notes can be made on specific behaviors and interactions, participant manner and deportment during the interview phase. The notes can be found in Appendix D. These three steps are all included in the interview process which helps to reveal the students’ experiential frame of reference (Stone, 1978, p.78). The study time line can be found in Table 3.1.
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Pre-study activities</th>
<th>Interview process</th>
<th>Analysis</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>February –April 2009</strong></td>
<td><strong>April – May 2009</strong></td>
<td><strong>June- August 2009</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A. Formulate permission letters and network with sending and receiving entity level personnel who will assist in working with the available population and then with participants</td>
<td>A. Large group meeting</td>
<td>A. Method of analysis has four levels:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B. After IRB approval, schedule the large group meeting and send informational letter home with students to parents</td>
<td>B. Build relationship with receiving schools and participants</td>
<td>1. Descriptive data</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Study notes, letters, packets, and all other information will be color coded to stand out for the students.</em></td>
<td>C. Procedure for data collection</td>
<td>2. Invariant themes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1. Interview data</td>
<td>3. Participant correlates</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2. Documentary data</td>
<td>4. Essences of the phenomena</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>3. Participant observation data</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>* 1-3 above comprise the descriptive data in the first method of analysis</td>
<td>B. Reporting the results</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>C. Discussion of the results and implication for future research</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 3.1: Study Time Line

**Method of Data Analysis**

The next step in the study is the analysis of information gathered during the data collection phase. This is the final step in developing a phenomenological analysis and is the phase of step specific analysis of the compiled data. In this phase there are four levels of analysis. These comprise the qualitative area of this research. Saunders (1982) presents the levels clearly and completely. The first level is the “description” level. Using transcribed data from the interviews, the researcher can review both the interview data and the anecdotal notes made during the interviews, and recognize the “qualities of human experience and consciousness that give that person being studied his or her unique identity and outlook” (Saunders, 1982, p. 357). During the interview phase, the
researcher becomes familiar with each specific participant by actively listening for information about self that the participant includes in the interview. Data is reviewed to define possible similarities of the experiences. In the descriptive analysis phase, the study reviews data in the following groups; age/grade, gender, degree of positive or negative impact of events, evidence of components of the Resiliency Framework, trends for resiliency building, and perceived success. Student specific unique qualities were recorded and checked for similarities. Table 3.2 shows the descriptive analysis process.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Interview data collected and transcribed</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Semi-structured interview data</td>
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<tr>
<td>Documentary data</td>
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<tr>
<td>Participant observation data</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Descriptive level data recorded, reviewed, and analyzed</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Age</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Positive or negative attributes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Evidence of resiliency components</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trends for success</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Individual themes</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Table 3:2: Phase 1 Descriptive Analysis*

The next level in the analysis is the identification of themes or “invariants” that rise out of the data sets. “Themes refer to the commonalities present within and between narratives” (Saunders, 1982, p. 357). These are based not on the rate or frequency at which a theme presents itself, but on the importance of the theme to the research. Themes were coded in a data base and an order given to the themes by frequency. Invariant themes were recorded and compared. Age and gender were utilized a second time in analyzing the invariant themes. All themes from all participant grids were listed in an excel spread sheet and coded for grade level, gender, frequency, and degree of importance as perceived by the participant. The excel spread sheets were sorted by
various means showing invariant themes and important correlations. Invariant themes were utilized for the final phase of analysis.

Descriptive level data recorded, reviewed and analyzed

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Coded by:</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Age</td>
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<tr>
<td>Positive or negative trend</td>
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<tr>
<td>Evidence of resiliency components</td>
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<tr>
<td>Trends for success</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Discovery of Invariant Themes

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Coded by:</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Age</td>
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<tr>
<td>Positive or negative trend</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Evidence of resiliency components</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trends for success</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 3.3: Phase Two of the Analysis

The third level of the analysis involves the personal meaning of the student experiences regarding the research question. Saunders calls it the development of “noetic / noematic correlates” (Saunders, 1982, p. 357). These “correlates represent the individual’s perception of the reality of the phenomenon under investigation” (Saunders, 1982, p. 357). The identified themes must be placed back into the individual experience of each participant. In viewing the unique experience of each participant regarding the themes, correlates can be identified. Out of these correlates eventually come the identification of the essences of the experiences, and the essences of the perceptions of the phenomenon being researched. By reviewing the descriptive data by students and the invariant theme, the correlates will be the precise definition of personal meaning for each student.
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Table 3.4: Phase Three of the Analysis

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Discovery of Invariant Themes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Coded by:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age/Grade</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Positive or negative trend</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Evidence of resiliency components</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trends for success</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Discovery of Correlates</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>As participant specific and related to participants experiences</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The fourth and final step of the phenomenological analysis is connecting the correlates to help identify the essences of the phenomenon. Using intuition and reflection, the researcher will engage in eidetic reduction to describe the essences of the perception, and “why” the phenomenon exists as it does. It is imperative to remember that the phenomena are the lived experience, and if combined with all the other experiences of the individual, it becomes imbedded in the individual’s existence. The singular phenomenon must be extracted from the whole of the experiences, viewed, probed, and placed back into the individual’s existential frame of reference.

Table 3.5: Phase Four of the Analysis

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
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<table>
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<tr>
<th>Discovery of Essences</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>As participant specific and related to participants experiences</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

A data collection and disaggregation framework was constructed, and a data base was utilized to store the information. All information will be kept secure in a locked cabinet and available only to the researcher. Specific explanations from each stage of
the analysis has been included for reader clarity. Researcher intuition and reflection will be documented so the reader may see the logical steps used to arrive at a description of the phenomenon.

The positive or negative trends, and the degree to which the trend is positive or negative as presented in the final phase of the analysis, was correlated with researched components of resiliency as it is defined in the Pennsylvania State Resiliency Framework presented by Nan Henderson to the State Department of Education in 2007. As these perceptions of the events and experiences of student participants were analyzed, data was organized according to implications for the Resiliency Framework, the degree of positive or negative impact on the overall existential frame of reference of the participant, implication for perceived success for the participant, and to test if aspects of resiliency are in keeping with the conclusion by Cecily Knight (2007) that resiliency is a state of existence, a condition of existence, and a practice in life.
Chapter IV
Analysis and Results

The purpose of this study was to gather data regarding student perception of the events that occurred surrounding the closing of Duquesne City High School in western Pennsylvania. An analysis of those perceptions will take place in this chapter using the components of the PA Department of Education Resiliency Framework. This framework is based on the work of Henderson and Milstein (2003) and was delivered in the keynote address at a PA education conference in 2007. The components have become part of the PA Standards Aligned Systems (SAS) which will begin to be addressed by the state in professional development courses in the fall of 2009. The degree to which the data finds evidence that resiliency components were evident in the process, the extent to which resiliency is manifested as a state of being, a condition of existence and a practice for life (Knight, 2007), and how the student participants view their own success will be considered in the research analysis and findings in this chapter. The research questions will be addressed individually. Guiding questions from the interviews will be utilized to help formulate the framework for analysis. Method of analysis is phenomenological analysis.

There are four research questions. What are the perceptions of the former Duquesne City High School students regarding the events of school closure, transition to new schools and belonging to a new social grouping? Did the students perceive the six components (protective factors) of the PA Resiliency Framework (High Expectations, Meaningful Student Engagement, Connectiveness and Bonding, Skills for Life, Clear and Consistent Boundaries, Unconditional Support) in the events of school closure and
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transition? How does each of the participants view their own success in the past, present and in the future? Finally, do the themes and correlations address and support the Knight (2007) proposal that resiliency is a state, a condition and a practice? These questions must be probed by investigating student perception. The researcher must then conduct the phenomenological analysis to find answers.

There are four levels of analysis in a phenomenological study using data from the interview, documentary study, and participant observation. First, the descriptive level of analysis, gives each participant a unique identity. In this phase, similarities and differences among the participants were addressed. Second is the analysis of information for the identification of the themes and invariant themes that arise out of the data. Third is the analysis of information for identification of the personal meaning and the noetic/noematic correlates. Finally, the fourth step of the phenomenological analysis is analyzing information by connecting the correlates to help identify the essences of the phenomenon (Saunders, 1982).

In qualitative methodologies, multiple criteria should be given thoughtful attention throughout the data collection process and analysis phases (Glesne, 2006). Multiple criteria utilized during these phases will help to build a solid foundation of credibility. Increased credibility in this study will be addressed through attention to the specific steps in the method of phenomenological analysis. Credibility can be achieved by a prolonged engagement in the study topic, honesty, triangulation of data, peer review, participant information checking, clarification, and rich description (Glesne, 2006). The researcher was engaged in this study for two years. Rapport established with school districts and study participants was very positive before, during and after the
data collection phase. Triangulation of data encompassed three discussions with the Coalition for Public Schools regarding the two year documentary of the former Duquesne High School students conducted by the Coalition. Peer review occurred as the researcher discussed the study and its preliminary finding with other school leaders and with members of the Pennsylvania Leadership Development Center. Information checking and rich description have been utilized throughout the study. A hallmark of phenomenological analysis is the utilization of rich description for the steps of the method, and for the participants, their perceptions and the findings.

To begin the analysis phase, the process of “bracketing” or epoche’ must be utilized. In a phenomenological analysis, evidence for the research is derived from first person reports of life experiences (Moustakas, 1994, p.84). The researcher is looking for the meaning and essences in the experiences of the participant. Epoche’ is an experience for the researcher, and an opportunity to view and analyze participant experiences without a prior frame of reference. Bracketing or epoche’ eliminates any pre-conceived notion the researcher may have about the experience. It is the ability to suspend meaning and then arrive at a new meaning.

“…Epoche gives us an original vantage point , a clearing of mind, space, and time, a holding in abeyance anything whatever that has been put into our minds by science or society, or government or other people, especially ones parents, teachers, and authorities but also one’s friends and enemies. (Moustakas, 1994, p. 86.)”

The process of achieving epoche does not eliminate everything. It does eliminate
the “knowing of everything in advance. (Husserl, 1931, p.110)” In the process of bracketing, whatever is the focus of analysis, is allowed to disclose itself so it can be addressed in a completely open manner. Moustakas states, “We suspend everything that interferes with fresh vision.” (P.86) it is a return to the beginnings of what truly is. Sallis (1982) believes a phenomenologist is always a beginner. In the phenomenological analysis, the problem is addressed from the beginning of the phenomenon to be analyzed, through an arduous process of keeping the phenomenon pure and focused. “…Presuposssositionless observation is necessary to be able…to lift the gestalt from its background…” (Sallis, 1982, p. 678) That means the world view or the experience must be lifted from its background. The object/experience must be lifted from the landscape and analyzed by itself.

Moustakas suggests the process of epoche’ is exclusively that of the researcher. The researcher performs epoche’ as the pure state of being required to engage in the analysis. It is an ongoing effort to maintain the bracketing, but the researcher must maintain it for proper analysis. Moustakas (1994) stated, “The loneliness of such presence, of such consciousness, enables me to target my energy so that I am attending to just what appears and nothing else (p. 88).” Epoche requires reflective mediation. This process allows information in with conscious reflection by the researcher and then allows the information to be mediated into the pure sense epoche’ requires.

Epoche’ is arduous and time consuming, and “is rarely perfectly achieved (Moustakas, 1994, p.91).” Sustaining epoche for long lengths of time is difficult as human beings process so much information regarding other life experiences or occurrences at the same time research is being conducted. To maintain a state of epoche
is necessary to gain a pure view of the phenomenon. A sustained quiet time alone to intentionally suspend or bracket the phenomenon being studied is required. Practice of epoche in other areas makes arriving at the suspension a way of thinking in life. Some life experiences are so immediate or intense that the emotion of the event makes it difficult or impossible to bracket because they affect so many other life experiences. Trying to get to the pure sense of the phenomenon is very difficult but well worth the endeavor.

**Research Questions**

Through the phenomenological analysis, participant information is analyzed for the essences of the perceptions encompassing the following research questions:

1. What are the perceptions of the former Duquesne City High School students regarding the events of school closure, transition to new schools and belonging to a new social grouping?

2. Did the students perceive the six components (protective factors) of Nan Henderson’s PA Resiliency Framework (High Expectations, Meaningful Student Engagement, Connectiveness and Bonding, Skills for Life, Clear and Consistent Boundaries, Unconditional Support) in the events of school closure and transition?

3. How does each of the participants view their own success in the past, present and in the future?

4. Do the themes and correlations address and support the Knight (2007) proposal that resiliency is a state, a condition and a practice?
**Design and Events**

During the first phase of the study, the researcher met with the participants and explained the study in a brief presentation. Study information included a discussion of the study itself, question and answer period, and a distribution of the forms that would be sent home to parents and guardians. These were an explanation of the study, the informed consent papers, assent papers, and confidentiality information. The information packet can be found in Appendix C. Students were directed to return the informed consent papers and the assent forms to school within three days if they wished to participate. The initial large group meetings at both receiving schools required thirty minutes each and had a positive tone. Students were already beginning to talk about the study, and many stated at the presentation that they wished to participate. Some students who, because they were 18 years of age or older, filled out the information immediately, and turned it in to their school office. School office personnel collected the study papers for the researcher until the time the interviews were set to begin. Office staff also exhibited excitement about the study. They informed the researcher that the students from Duquesne High School are a wonderful group of students who have been a pleasure to assist. A very positive relationship was built with the office staff through phone calls, scheduling and two days of interviews. Table 4:1 references the study phases.
During this first phase of the study, the researcher investigated the least intrusive way to interview students. It was decided that a high intensity digital microphone would be utilized for the interviews. The researcher would only have a packet of definitions and questions to be utilized by the participants, and a note pad for the anecdotal notes and behavioral descriptions. The receiving schools assisted in making the students comfortable by offering a room for the interviews that was familiar to the participants. The researcher ensured students there was no penalty for not participating, but that they were appreciated for participating. Students were gracious and exhibited as very warm and welcoming to the researcher often asking questions about the research and stating how excited they were to participate.

The second phase of the study was comprised of the individual interviews and data collection. From the available population wishing to participate, appointments were scheduled with the twelve participants that were interested. The interviews took place in the receiving schools, on two separate days, after consent forms were returned, and study participants were identified. The student participants were interviewed in their receiving school in a quiet, private and comfortable space adjacent to open offices and hallways. Audio taping by the researcher was utilized and transcriptions were created from the interviews without real name descriptions.
The participant interviews were completed in May and June of 2009 which was twenty-two months after the events of dissolution and dispersion. Student participants would have had time to reflect on the events in question. Individual interviews enabled conversation with one student, and single student perceptions and ideas to arise from the semi-structured questions. Saunders (1982) suggests that tape recording and transcribing interviews is necessary. This allows the researcher to interview participants without distraction. It also allows for a purer data set since note taking by the researcher can include inadvertent data “reinterpretation” (Saunders, 1982, p. 357). The audio taping also allows the researcher to review the audio tape for tone and pauses that are not evident in the transcripts.

The exact preliminary and guiding questions were asked to each individual. The Pennsylvania Department of Education adopted a Resiliency Framework with guiding questions to be used by educational practitioners. These guiding questions were reformatted and used to gauge student resiliency in the matter of these life experiences. Subsequent questions produced through conversation differed with each participant. Perceptual data was gathered according to the research questions and other comments the participants offered.

Another segment of data collection is the documentary study. Stone (1978) says to begin with data collected from the semi-structured oral interviews, and then move to the second step which is a “documentary study” of the interview by the researcher. This can be done at the same time the interview is occurring. These anecdotal notes were used during the analysis phase. The documentary study includes a description of personal information revealed about the participants as well as a description of how the interviews
Beyond Dissolution and Dispersion

The third suggested segment in the data collection interview process is “participant observation.” The researcher observed the participants in the authentic situation of giving information regarding their perceptions. Researcher notes were also taken regarding specific behaviors and attitudes, interactions, participant manner, and deportment during the interview phase. These three segments of data collection, interview, documentary study, and participant observation are all included in the interview process which helps to reveal the students’ experiential frame of reference (Stone, 1978, p.78). These data attributes are reported as the findings in the first level of analysis as the descriptive level of analysis. The qualities will be reported as group qualities to preserve confidentiality.

**Method of Data Analysis**

The third phase of the study is the analysis of information gathered during the data collection phase. This is the final segment or phase in developing a phenomenological analysis and is the phase of step-specific analysis of the compiled data. In this phase there are four levels of analysis. These will comprise the qualitative area of this research. Saunders (1982) presents the levels clearly and completely. The first level is the “description” level. Using transcribed data from the interviews, the researcher can review both the interview data and the anecdotal notes made during the interviews, and recognize the “qualities of human experience and consciousness that give that person being studied his or her unique identity and outlook” (Saunders, 1982, p. 357). During the interview phase, the researcher became familiar with each specific participant by actively listening for information about self that the participant includes in the interview. Data was reviewed to define possible similarities of the experiences. In
the descriptive analysis phase, the study reviewed the data by utilizing the following groups; age, degree of positive or negative impact of events, evidence of components of the Resiliency Framework, trends for resiliency building, and perceived success.

Student specific unique qualities will be recorded and checked for similarities. Table 4:2 shows the descriptive analysis process.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Interview data collected and transcribed</strong></th>
<th><strong>Descriptive level data recorded, reviewed, and analyzed</strong></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Semi-structured interview data</td>
<td>Age</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Documentary data</td>
<td>Positive or negative attributes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participant observation data</td>
<td>Evidence of resiliency components</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Trends for success</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Individual themes</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Table 4:2: Phase 1 Descriptive Analysis*

The next level in the analysis is the identification of themes or “invariants” that rise out of the data sets. “Themes refer to the commonalities present within and between narratives” (Saunders, 1982, p. 357). These are based not on the rate or frequency at which a theme presents itself, but on the importance of the theme to the research.

Themes were reflected upon and organized in a data base and an order given to the themes by subject and importance. Invariant themes were recorded and compared. All themes from all participant grids were coded for frequency and degree of importance as perceived by the participant. The data was sorted by various means showing invariant themes and important correlations. Invariant themes were utilized for the final phase of analysis.
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Table 4.3: Phase II, Themes and Invariant Themes

The third level of the analysis revolves around the personal meaning of the student experiences regarding the research question. Saunders calls it the development of “noetic correlates” (Saunders, 1982, p. 357). These “correlates represent the individual’s perception of the reality of the phenomenon under investigation” (Saunders, 1982, p. 357). Moustakas writes at length about noema and noesis and concludes that each term is complex but their understanding necessary to engage in phenomenological analysis. Moustakas stated that “noesis refers to the act of perceiving – all of which are embedded with meaning. (1997, p.67)” But the meaning he asserts must be “recognized and drawn out.” (Moustakas, 1997, p. 67) Noema is best explained by Husserl. In 1931, Husserl introduced the concept of noema and noesis in Ideas. While noesis referred to the act of perceiving, noema Husserl called the “perceived as such.” (Husserl, 1931, p. 260) The essential question for Husserl was what are the essential features of a perceptual experience that constitute the essence of an entity? What is the meaning brought out by the perception? The identified themes must be placed back into the individual experience of each participant. In viewing the unique experience of each participant regarding the themes, correlates were identified. Out of these correlates eventually come the identification of the essences of the experiences, and the essences of

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Descriptive level data recorded, reviewed and analyzed</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Age</td>
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<tr>
<td>Positive or negative attributes</td>
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<tr>
<td>Evidence of resiliency components</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trends for success</td>
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<tr>
<td>Individual themes</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Discovery of Invariant Themes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Age</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Positive or negative attributes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Evidence of resiliency components</td>
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<tr>
<td>Trends for success</td>
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<tr>
<td>Group themes</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
the perceptions of the phenomenon being researched. By reviewing the descriptive data by students and the invariant theme, the noetic correlates represented as the precise definition of personal meaning for each student.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Discovery of Invariant Themes</th>
<th>Discovery of Correlates</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Age</td>
<td>As participant specific and related to participants experiences</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Positive or negative trend</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Evidence of resiliency components</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Trends for success</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Group themes</td>
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</table>

Table 4.4: Phase III, Noematic Correlates / by Individual and Group

The fourth and final step of the phenomenological analysis is connecting the correlates to help identify the essences of the phenomenon. Using intuition and reflection, the researcher engaged in eidetic reduction to describe the essences of the perception, and “why” the phenomenon exists as it does. It is imperative to remember that the phenomena are the lived experience, and if combined with all the other experiences of the individual, these become imbedded in the individual’s existence. The singular phenomenon was extracted from the whole of the experiences, viewed, probed, and placed back into the individual’s existential frame of reference. Researcher intuition and reflection were documented to highlight the logical steps used to arrive at a description of the phenomenon.
Discovery of Correlates
As participant specific and related to participants experiences

Discovery of Essences
As participant specific and related to the phenomena of perception

*Table 4.5:* Phase IV, Essences of the Phenomenon

The positive or negative trends, and the degree to which the trend is positive or negative as presented in the final phase of the analysis, was correlated with researched components of resiliency as it is defined in the adopted Pennsylvania Department of Education Resiliency Framework presented by Nan Henderson to the Department 2007. As these perceptions of events and experiences of student participants were analyzed, data was organized according to implications for the resiliency Framework, the degree of positive or negative impact on the overall existential frame of reference of the participant, implication for perceived success for the participant, and to test if aspects of resiliency are in keeping with the conclusion by Cecily Knight that resiliency is a state of existence, a condition of existence, and a practice in life.

**Setting and Context**

Duquesne High School was a small secondary school in the southeastern section of Allegheny County in western Pennsylvania. The total number of students who attended the Duquesne City School District prior to the dissolution of the high school was 686 students kindergarten through grade twelve. The high school had an enrollment approximately 200 students. Students from the Duquesne High School were “tuitioned out” to two other school districts by legislative decision in the summer of 2007. The
East Allegheny School District and the West Mifflin School District were chosen to be
the receiving schools. Two thirds of the students were to go to West Mifflin, and one
third to East Allegheny. The West Mifflin School District is contiguous to the Duquesne
School District, and East Allegheny is across the Monongahela River from the Duquesne
School District. In July of 2007 when the decision was made that these two districts
would serve as the receiving districts, both filed suit to stop the process. The initial
announcement of the study, meetings with students and parents, and the data collection
phase of the research was conducted in the two receiving school districts.

Report: Level I Descriptive Level of Analysis

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<tr>
<th>Interview data collected and transcribed</th>
<th>Descriptive level data recorded, reviewed, and analyzed</th>
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</thead>
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<tr>
<td>Semi-structured interview data</td>
<td>Age, Race, Gender</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Documentary data</td>
<td>Position in family</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participant observation data</td>
<td>Positive or negative attributes for deportment and presentation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Residency Information</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 4.6: Report Level I, Descriptive Level of Analysis

The documentary study and participant observation comprise Level I or
descriptive level of the analysis. Interviews in both receiving schools took place on two
separate days ensuring all students who wished to participate were able to do so. The two
days allowed those who were absent a second opportunity to participate. Both receiving
schools were very accommodating to the researcher. At each school there was an area for
the researcher to meet with the participants. Each room had a table and chairs and was
considered by participants to be a comfortable place. In the room was the researcher and
participant, the recording device, notepad for the researcher and information pages for the

99
participants. These pages were familiar to the participant since they were duplicates of the initial information sent home with participant.

Students were greeted in the office areas of the receiving schools by the researcher. The researcher escorted the participants to the interview room after greetings offering appreciation for their participation. Interviews varied in length from thirty-five minutes to fifty-five minutes. All students presented as happy to offer information and were open to the discussion. Twelve total students responded to participate in the study. Four were from East Allegheny and eight were from West Mifflin. The numbers were proportional to the student numbers who finally attended the receiving schools. Two thirds went to West Mifflin and one third went to East Allegheny. All twelve participants were interviewed. Eleven of the data sets will be utilized in the analysis. The outstanding data set was from a student who did not meet all the qualifications. That interview was held for background information and out of respect for the subject’s willingness to participate.

The following Table 4.6 shows descriptive qualities of the participants by participant number, gender, and race, number of siblings and birth order, and age.
Table 4.7: Descriptive Qualities of Participants

There were six male and six female participants. Eleven of the participants were black students and one was white. One participant was sixteen years old but was a junior. Three participants were seventeen years old, five were eighteen, and three were nineteen years old. Nine of the participants considered themselves the middle child in their family. Two participants were the oldest child in their family. The participants presented as relaxed and willing to give information. Both regular education students and special needs students were represented. Students who had excellent self-management and students who had difficulties with self-management were also represented. Data will be analyzed as aggregate data from all participants’ responses. Data will not be disaggregated based on gender, race, or receiving school. The Chart in Appendix III serves as the documentary study and highlights the notes and behaviors of the participant group without jeopardizing confidentiality.
“Organization of data begins when the primary researcher places the transcribed interview before him or her and studies the material through the methods and procedures of phenomenological analysis (Moustakas, 1994, p. 118).” Transcripts of all interviews were created from participant responses. The researcher repeatedly listened to the interviews and created the transcripts from those interviews. The first step in the analysis is to review the interviews as a whole and to draw out the information to include only responses of student perception giving each attention and determining which are of equal value in the analysis. This is called horizontalizing. The guiding questions during the interview helped participants focus responses. It is important to remember this study is an analysis of student perception as related to resiliency. After horizontalizing, the analysis will work through steps of researcher reflection of the data to arrive at the invariant themes, the experiential correlates, and finally the essences of the perceptions.

The transcripts are vast and will only be represented in the Appendix D in the final form for the first step in the analysis by which the invariant themes are identified. This study is in search of the participants’ individual perception of resilience through the events, and seeks to identify essences of resilience, and success. Data analysis will define resiliency components imbedded in the events and identify the essence of the perceptions of resiliency and success.

This first level is the “description” level of analysis. Using transcribed data from the interviews, the researcher reviewed both the interview data and the anecdotal notes made during the interviews, and recognized the “qualities of human experience and consciousness that give that person being studied his or her unique identity and outlook” (Saunders, 1982, p. 357). During the interview phase, the researcher became familiar
with each specific participant by actively listening for information included in the interview. Data was reviewed to define possible similarities of the experiences. In the descriptive analysis phase, the study reviewed data in the following groups; age, degree of positive or negative impact of events, evidence of components of the Resiliency Framework, trends for resiliency building, and perceived success. Student specific unique qualities were recorded and checked for similarities. Table 4 A above shows a summary of some descriptive qualities.

Themes found in each of the interviews were compiled in a numbered spreadsheet for each participant. Themes were recorded and coded for similarity between participants and within individual data. An example of the themes sheet can be found in the Appendix. The themes were both positive and negative. Themes represented both the individual and the group. These arose out of the analysis in the second level.

**Report: Level II Analysis for Invariant Themes**

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Descriptive level data recorded, reviewed and analyzed</th>
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</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
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<td>Coded by:</td>
<td>Age</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Positive or negative trend</td>
<td>Positive or negative trend</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Evidence of resiliency components</td>
<td>Evidence of resiliency components</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trends for success</td>
<td>Trends for success</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Group themes</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Table 4.8: Report Level II, Themes and Invariant Themes*

The next level in the analysis is the identification of themes or “invariants” that rise out of the data sets. “Themes refer to the commonalities present within and between narratives” (Saunders, 1982, p. 357). These are based not on the rate or frequency at
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which a theme presents itself, but on the importance of the theme to the research.

Invariant themes will be recorded and compared. All themes from all participant grids will be listed in an excel spread sheet and identified for frequency, and degree of importance as perceived by the participant. The data will be sorted showing invariant themes and important correlations. Invariant themes will be utilized for the final phase of analysis and are listed below as positive and negative for both group and individual.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Positive Group</th>
<th>Negative Group</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Family</td>
<td>Sadness for other’s perceptions of them</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Underdog Syndrome</td>
<td>Sadness for the closing of their school</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Service</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mentoring</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Success</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Positive Individual</td>
<td>Negative Individual</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Personal Power</td>
<td>Loss</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Self-Efficacy</td>
<td>Confusion</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Success</td>
<td>Why?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Phoenix Syndrome</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 4.9: Positive and Negative Trend of Invariant Themes

Report: Level III Analysis for Noematic Correlates

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Discovery of Invariant Themes</th>
<th>Discovery of Correlates</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Age</td>
<td>As participant specific and related to participants experiences</td>
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<tr>
<td>Positive or negative trend</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Evidence of resiliency components</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Trends for success</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Group themes</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 4.10: Level III, Noematic Correlates / by Individual and Group

The third level of the analysis revolves around the personal and group meaning of the student experiences regarding the research question. Saunders calls it the
development of “noematic correlates” (Saunders, 1982, p. 357). These “correlates represent the individual’s perception of the reality of the phenomenon under investigation” (Saunders, 1982, p. 357). These experiential correlates, or identified themes, must be placed back into the individual experience of each participant. In viewing the unique experience of each participant regarding the themes, it can be concluded as to what the interaction actually is between the themes of the perception of the experience and the experience. Out of these correlates eventually come the identification of the essences of the experiences, and the essences of the perceptions of the phenomenon being researched. By reviewing the descriptive data by students and the invariant theme, the correlates will represent the precise definition of personal meaning for each student.

The correlates represent an individual experience which can then be expanded to group experiences. In the chart below, the correlates chosen as examples of individual correlates were stronger for “individual” based on the strength and importance of the correlates. From the data, the researcher has chosen an experiential correlate for each of the invariant themes. These are discussed by positive or negative impact, individual or group impact, and organized by invariant theme. The table below is a guide to the narrative to follow.
### Table 4.11: Themes and Correlates

**Experiential Correlate Positive for Individuals – 4 Correlates**

**EC1- Personal Power** – Participants relayed information about feeling confident and powerful in the decision making. Overcoming the loss of their school and realizing success in their new school also added to the personal power.

**EC2- Self-Efficacy** – With the personal power, self-confidence arose as a descriptor. Confidence in adolescence is important in signifying overall self-worth. Participants believed they were in control of their own success.

**EC3 – Success** - Throughout the interviews, success was a constant. Participants realized success in the past, present and future. Participants relayed feeling more confident about their success with increased academic opportunity.

**EC4- Phoenix Syndrome** – The ability to rise up out of despair was relayed in participant discussion about the dissolution and dispersion phases of their experiences. As students they made great strides in being able to focus on the positive aspects of the negative experience of school closure.

**Experiential Correlates Negative for individuals – 3 Correlates**
EC5- Loss – Participants made reference to always remembering the loss of their high school. They stated it would be a loss that would impact them for the rest of their lives, but that moving on to success was nevertheless, an important area of focus.

EC6- Confusion – Participants relayed having a hard time sorting through all the social and political issues surrounding the closing of their high school. They knew it was all negative and much of what was going on was driven by anger. Their confusion forced them to sort out the important aspects on the experience and focus on the positive.

EC7- Why Just Us? – Students were concerned that the events of school closure were happening to just them when in fact other schools may be in the same situation. They relayed feeling very alone in the process and “singled out” in which the negative press had an even greater impact.

Experiential Correlates Positive for Group – 5 Correlates

EC8- Family – The support of family was mentioned by each participant. Regardless of family structure, for these participants it remained a very important aspect in their protective factors.

EC9- Underdog – Even though the participants felt like they were always the underdogs, preparing to deal with school closure was made easier by exercising protective factors gained by being the underdogs over a period of time. Participants spoke of a hard shell or hard exterior to help in the “fight.”

EC10- Service – Many participants spoke of doing service for the community, or for their family. The service component was very clear in information relayed from participants.
EC11- Mentoring - Along with service, mentoring younger students was a very clear experience for many participants. Students relayed information from mentoring at home, in sports, and in clubs.

EC12- Success – As a group of participants, they pull on the success of themselves and each other. They have to be successful as an individual, but in disclaiming the myths about the Duquesne High School students as a group, they desire to be successful as a group. This success they feel has implication for the future students who will attend the receiving schools.

Experiential Correlates Negative for Group – 2 Correlates

EC13 – Sadness for Other’s Perception - The group of participants relayed and exhibited though behavior and presentation a true sadness for the bad perception other people have of them. It denigrated them as individuals, as a school district, as a community. The sadness permeated their experience and description of the experience. The worry is that the perception will continue on no matter what they as a group accomplish and regardless of time that will pass. The sadness manifested as a true hopelessness that these perceptions will ever change.

EC14- Sadness for Closing – A true loss of the school, in concept and entity, the participants relayed that the closing was just not a closing of a school but the removal of one more pillar of stability in the community. They have experienced urban blight which many participants try to help to eradicate the further decline of their community. The school campus is still there. The high school no has other functions, but within its walls there is no more future for the community.
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Report: Level IV Analysis for Synthesis and Discovery of Essences of the Phenomena

Table 4.12: Level IV, Essences of the Phenomenon

The fourth and final step of the phenomenological analysis is connecting the correlates to help identify the essences of the phenomenon. Using intuition and reflection, the researcher will engage in eidetic reduction to describe the essences of the perception, and “why” the phenomenon exists as it does. It is imperative to remember that the phenomenon is the lived experience, and if combined with all the other experiences of the individual, it becomes imbedded in the individual’s existence. The singular phenomenon must be extracted from the whole of the experiences, viewed, probed, and placed back into the individual’s existential frame of reference.

Discovery of essences, also called intuitive integration, seeks to take the information from the themes, invariant themes, and experiential correlates to arrive at an essence of the experience of the phenomenon. Husserl (1931) stated that arriving at the essences of the phenomenon under investigation is the guiding direction of phenomenology. For Husserl, essence means that which is common or universal to the whole of the experiences. Sartre (1965) explains essences to be that which appears after the experience is removed from the individual appearances and is opened into a series of
universal statements for the phenomenon. The essences of experiences can continually change. The essence is only representative of a particular time and place, from the vantage point of an individual researcher after the exhausting work of the full phenomenological analysis. The essences are apt to change in another instant of changed perception, in another time or place.

Eidetic Reduction, a technique in Husserlian phenomenology is used to identify the essential components of a given phenomenon and can also be used by the researcher. The researcher searches for the unique and essential components that make the phenomenon distinguishable from all other kinds of phenomena or experiences. After reflective analysis of the data through intuitive integration, and eidetic reduction, the researcher arrives at an identification of probable and possible essences for the data. The data is derived from the perceptions of that group of participants with those exact experiences during that specific temporal space. Below is a listing of the essences of the phenomena after analysis. The researcher checked the data through four times to arrive at these essences. Once again it is critical to remember that the phenomena are the lived experience, and if combined with all the other experiences of the individual, it becomes imbedded in the individual’s existence. The singular phenomenon must be extracted from the whole of the experiences, viewed, probed, and placed back into the individual’s existential frame of reference.
Table 4.13: Essences of Perceptions

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Essences of the Perceptions – 4 Essences</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Hope over despair</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Belief in self over loss of interest</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Power and leadership over indifference</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Success over failure</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Essential question:** Do each of these essences, after being extracted from the whole of the experiences, and being viewed, probed, and placed back into the individual’s existential frame of reference, coincide with the group experience, and the experience and perception for each participant?

**Answer:** For this research, the answer is yes they do coincide.

**Table 4.13: Essences of Perceptions**

*Hope over despair* – This essence is based predominantly on the resiliency components of Skills for Life and Connectedness and Bonding. Under the circumstances of their school closure, participant relayed great hope over what could have been a very negative experience. Participants spoke about their connectedness with each other, their families, and their school. Those connections permitted the participants to continually be hopeful for the future in light of the great loss. The skills for life that were demonstrated like learning to adjust and cope were utilized in the closing of their school and transition. Social skills of acceptance and patience were utilized in moving to the new social group.

*Belief in self over loss of interest* - Based predominantly on the resiliency component of Clear and Consistent Boundaries, the participants were able to realize “Sky’s the limit” thinking. This meant that the boundaries of what they felt they could handle or were able to accept were identifiable to the participants. Boundaries of high goals and boundaries of knowing how to limit personal exposure in a new group were set by participants. The definition of clear and consistent boundaries was the most defined.
yet changeable definition of all resiliency components among the participants. The boundaries were set broad, high and protective yet self-set or self accepted. In all cases, Clear and Consistent Boundaries aided a firm belief in self and helped participants to stay interested and connected to a potentially negative experience.

*Power and Leadership over indifference – Based predominantly in Meaningful Student Engagement* the essence of personal power and leadership was very strong. The commitment evidenced in the interviews from the participants yielded not one of “whatever” or “I don’t care.” It was the commitment of truly caring for the future. The engagement of the participants as students, community members, victims, and children created for them a committed existence. The participants were determined to be heard, understood, well educated, choosers and actors in their existence. If at first they were going to be invisible, it was only to find a niche or a plan of action aimed at acceptance and success. Each participant chose action over indifference. Each participant would like to share that feeling of personal power and success with others.

*Success over Failure- Based in High Expectations and Unconditional Support,* the essence of success was woven from individual through group and back to individual. Very difficult decisions were made by the participants is making success a priority. For these participants, success was not an option and it was a result of their positive actions toward a possibly negative experience. The participants were encouraged by many people. They were supported by many. The strength that is evident in the data clearly points to these participants being able to create success for themselves in their own existence and for the group.
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The following chapter will address the information found in this chapter in exact and expanded form. Phenomenological analysis goes between analysis, reflection, and synthesis and results time and again in the full analysis of one set of perceptual data. The following chapter also contains implications for educational practice and future research in education.
Chapter V

Results and Discussion

The events that surrounded the closure of Duquesne High School and the transition of the students to two receiving schools occurred in the summer of 2007. Students perceived these events, reflected, and, for the interviews, remembered what they were thinking and feeling during the events. Participants openly discussed their experiences and feelings with the researcher. The recorded perceptions became the data that indicates implications for how the process of dissolution and dispersion affected the high schools students in the Duquesne City School District, and what the future may look like for these students. The results and discussion section give an enlightened view of how these participants have fared during the past two years, and how they feel about their future. A discussion of the results is organized by research question followed by other professional topics salient for the study.

Research Question 1

What are the perceptions of the former Duquesne City High School students regarding the events of school closure, transition to new schools and belonging to a new social grouping?

In Phenomenology, perceptions are regarded as a primary source for information. (Mostakas, 1994, p.54) Perceptions allow a person to scan the horizon on which experiential themes or entities appear. Horizontalization to which Husserl (1931) first referred allows every perception to add to the total experience. Each perception and theme must be addressed separately. The perceptions find their own place in the horizon and create the landscape for each participant. The total of the perceptions
formulates the totality of the experience. The experience is manifested as and exists at its perceptions, themes, its correlates, and finally the essences of the perception. Each perception is considered alone, with other perceptions in context, then finally in totality with other perceptions. The perception is reflected upon to yield themes and correlates until the essence of the phenomena is derived.

Phenomenological analysis of perception allows the process of data analysis to recognize the newness of each perception and celebrate it as a fresh perspective. Each perception brings new knowledge. As perceptions join one with another, knowledge deepens until real meaning can be drawn. Perception is regarded by Kockelmans(1994) as “the most original act of consciousness (p.27).” What a person knows is important, but what one perceives creates reality. Perceptions join together to create the knowledge gained from the experience.

Regarding school closure, the Duquesne High School students who participated in this study all stated the school closing initiated feelings of sadness and loss and in some cases, anger and confusion. They mentioned “emptiness” and “I really couldn’t believe it was gone.” They perceived the event to be a sad event because their school community at the high school level was being dissolved. Their school “family,” to which many participants referred, was dissolved and the members dispersed to other schools. The support systems students were accustomed to in their high school were about to change. This was all occurring in formative years where transition is never easy (Dwyer & Looker, 1998). The school closing event was also one which initiated uncertainty and fear about a variety of issues. Both male and female participants spoke of fear that manifested from the unknown and became evident in the acts of social self-removal,
isolation and anger. Students perceived the new schools to be “up there” or “over there” and Duquesne High School was referred to as “down here.” Geographically the directional indicators are correct, but it was interesting the manner in which each participant used the same terminology and tone when referring to “down here.”

All participants perceived that the receiving schools did not want them to attend their particular schools. The participants had concerns about being viewed not only as bad students, but as bad people. The media was mentioned by participants as contributing to the spin of negative opinions, and their own parents and teachers at times seemed to fuel student concerns. There was media coverage of the legal suits, and at the community meetings, unkind statements were being made and placed in the media. The participants felt that “the other’s” view of them was based not on fact but on fear of change. For the participants, it still translated to a negative opinion of them as a group. Each wanted to take care not to add to that image in the transition. They simply wanted to have the chance for a good education. People’s opinions were perceived by the participants to be unkind and mean. One participant stated, “The media was just reporting what the people were saying. It did not make us feel very good or wanted by anyone.”

Regarding the process of transition, the participants did not mention at all about a transition to their new schools. Transition mechanisms are important at all levels to ensure a smooth integration of social and academic skills (Morgan & Hertzog, 2001). Three participants stated they neither perceived nor participated in transition activities aimed at moving them to new schools. Two stated that a move-up day or registration day occurred, but that was the extent of the transition. Participants spoke only of
transition in terms of how they engaged in the act of moving from one school to another. Transition activities were discussed and documented and did in fact take place. In spite of the reality of transition attempts, the participants did not perceive the transition mechanism. Research participants felt it would have been a good idea to do exchange days that could have occurred if the decision for closure was made during the prior school year.

The receiving schools were referred to in all cases as “up here” or “over here.” The references to “up here” held a particularly isolated feel for those participants. Even after two years, the participants felt oddly on the outside of school social mechanisms since they did not live in the town of the receiving schools. For one student, it took forty-five minutes on the bus to get to the receiving school. One student could not believe how an individual can be part of a class and still be on the outside just because “you aren’t from their town.” “You’d think they would have done some work with the communities that were taking us…letting them know we are just kids…that we aren’t all bad and criminals.” One participant stated, “We will never really belong because that is not the town where we live. We will always be those kids, not our kids.”

Transition necessitated belonging to a new social group. Perceptions for these students belonging to a new social grouping in 9 out of 11 data sets began with trepidation and isolation. Many students tried to purposely stay to themselves and attempted to isolate themselves just to fit in. “I wanted to become part of the background, but I am not a background person. They eventually saw me for who I am.” Participants reported up to six months of isolation. “I just asked for a piece of gum. They didn’t even act like they heard the question.” All participants mentioned initial
struggles with moving to a new high school. Many left best friends to go to another school, and many left family members in the lower grade levels. The two participants who were less isolated had many experiences of moving to various places, and had friends already in the receiving high schools. The nine participants utilized their social maturity in waiting to belong. Participants related experiences of trying to find the “right time to fit in by finding the right thing to say.” At the age of seventeen or eighteen, social groupings are often tightly assembled, and trying to have an outsider enter the group at this age is difficult.

Resiliency components were embedded into the fabric of each experience during school closure, transition to new schools, and belonging to a new social grouping. The components are a result of external and internal mechanism working together to foster resiliency. Although identifiable by each participant, the definitions of the resiliency components differed in substance, strength, origin, and degree of usefulness to each participant.

**Research Question 2**

*Did the students perceive the six components (protective factors) of the PA Resiliency Framework (High Expectations, Meaningful Student Engagement, Connectiveness and Bonding, Skills for Life, Clear and Consistent Boundaries, Unconditional Support) in the events of school closure, and transition?*

As mentioned, participant descriptions of the events of school closure, transition and belonging to a new school were rich with information regarding how they felt about the events and how they dealt with what was happening in their lives. From the descriptions it is also clear the components of resiliency were evident in all their
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experiences as define by the participants in varying forms. The components were not only found within the events, but were found to be embedded into the fabric of their everyday lives.

The student participants did not perceive transition activities to their new school, but did perceive their own transitioning. The participants perceived the event of school closure and surrounding events, and the aspects of belonging to a new social grouping. In all events they can define perceptions and can relay information regarding protective factors. The participants were able to speak at length about the components of resiliency that were evident in the former high school and in their new high school. The very issues that brought the dissolution of Duquesne High School were what became part of its resiliency building strength. For example, students believed they were cared for both socially and academically at Duquesne, yet, they also believe they were unable, with the few academic courses available, to achieve great things. They had cognition of the limitations, yet the limitations were the very aspects that brought them together to work as one, closely knit group. The participants also believed the media did not assist in fostering protective factors but did foster in creating a firm resolve in them that permeated the events and seemed to further foster the protective factors. Table 5.1 shows the guiding questions regarding resiliency components related to participant’s immediate perception of the question. Following the chart is a discussion of examples which will illuminate these claims. Eleven of the 12 data set were used. One participant did not meet the requisite time in attending the sending school.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Study Questions for High Expectations</th>
<th>11/11</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Do you believe that any positive goal/aspiration can be accomplished?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Do you encourage yourself and others to do the best possible?</td>
<td>10/11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Is the curriculum supplemented and enriched with art, music, outdoor</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>exploration and projects? <em>Answer was for new school</em></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Study Questions for Meaningful Student Engagement</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Do you believe that your voice and choice is heard in classroom/school</td>
<td>5 yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>discussions? *Some did not wish to be heard. Others made sure they were</td>
<td>6 no</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>heard. We were always heard in Duquesne.*</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Are you empowered in decision-making?</td>
<td>10/11</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Study Questions for Connectiveness and Bonding</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Do you connect to at least, one of the caring adults, in the school?</td>
<td>11/11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Are you involved in school activities?</td>
<td>8/11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Are there caring relationships among staff?</td>
<td>9/11</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Study Questions for Skills for Life</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Do you receive ongoing instruction on life-skills appropriate to your</td>
<td>10/11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>developmental level?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Have you integrated and practiced assertiveness, refusal skills, healthy</td>
<td>11/11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>conflict resolution, good decision making and problem solving, and</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>healthy stress management? *(Underlined descriptors were rarely</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>addressed)*</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Do you understand and abide by policies and rules?</td>
<td>11/11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Do teachers accept no excuses for letting students fail?</td>
<td>9/11</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Study Questions for Clear and Consistent Boundaries</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Is discipline designed to keep students feeling connected? *(Difficult</td>
<td>2/11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Question. Became, is discipline consistent?*)</td>
<td>11/11</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Study Questions for Unconditional Support</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Do you feel that the school is a caring place?</td>
<td>10/11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Do you experience school/classroom as a community?</td>
<td>9/11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Are you and others recognized and rewarded, and their work displayed?</td>
<td>7/11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Did you see the aspects of resiliency more in your old school or your</td>
<td>4 old</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>new school?</td>
<td>4 new</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 both</td>
<td></td>
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</table>

*Table 5.1: Resiliency Components - Frequency in Perception by Participant Total Components Apparent During School Closure*
Components Apparent During School Closure

Resiliency components readily apparent during the tumultuous time of school closure were Connectedness and Bonding and Meaningful Student Engagement. Participants realized they could be strong together. They realized the closure was happening to them as a group but it would not change who they were individually. They realized they were just changing schools not losing their homes and families. Each also understood the opportunity to have a fuller and more meaningful education was a result of their loss. Connectedness and Bonding made them strong and was evident in the connectedness of each participant to the community. Participants relayed information that they were connected to family, friends, teachers, the school community in general, clubs, teams and many other organizations of which they would remain a part. They would be moving “up” or “over” and would not permit themselves to be considered less than acceptable persons. Connectedness and Bonding gave them a true cohesiveness in the midst of a rough experience, and realizing they had an opportunity for more Meaningful Student Engagement in their new schools made them hopeful that the future would be a positive rising out of the negative experience of school closure.

Furthermore, each participant believed they were empowered in their decision making. From being able to choose a particular receiving school to choosing a schedule from a great variety of curricular offerings, the participants felt empowered and strong in their decision making. Family input was important in the choices and the participants felt very much supported by their families. Even for participants that were credit deficient, their choice to do on-line courses, summer school, or repeat a grade presented
as an empowered decision. One participant wanted to “get it right” and repeat a full grade realizing all the courses and the enrichment that could be afforded.

Vast and varied conversations ensued about being “heard” in the school communities. Nine out of ten participants agreed that they were heard in Duquesne but that the conversations may not always have been the right conversations for school. In Duquesne High School students felt they were heard because there were so few students to hear. Many participants were concerned about the size of their new schools and that staff should make it a practice to actively listen to all students. Of those that believed their voice was heard at the new school, they understood the mechanisms for being heard and the process of making a proposal and bringing the ideas to the Board of School Directors. Finally, all participants felt their families were the core of their connectedness even at school.

Components Apparent During Transitioning

Resiliency components readily apparent in the transition period, a period that exhibited itself as more of a personal transition period than any formally created by either the sending or receiving schools, were High Expectations and Skills for Life. Each of the participants perceived High Expectations to be a part of their sending and receiving schools but to varying degrees and manifested in a variety of ways. “When you’re the underdog, you learn how to overcome that by setting high goals for yourself.” All participants engaged in healthy and realistic goal setting. Each participant could identify realistic steps to reach their goals. High expectations came from their families, teachers, the community, but mostly from within themselves. It was an intrinsic quality that manifested itself in self-confidence and a positive attitude for each participant. Family
members’ input, love and support, were the factors that kept the participants “on track.”
The family members mentioned, who were the ones responsible for keeping the participants on track, were predominantly female. Having High Expectations of self and others was a major theme of the concluding statements for 9 out of the 11 participants in the end of the interviews. Participants desiring to help others identify their own goals were made clear in their closing statements. Mentoring younger children and service to the community were also mentioned in 9 out of 11 concluding comments.

The participants were a positive group of students who did not present with any type of current anger for their school closing. Many stated that at first they were angry, but after one year, they understood the reasons for the closing. Each believed that they could reach any goal or aspiration. In many of the participant’s summaries at the end of the interview they continued to encourage others to set goals and do whatever can be done to choose what’s “right” and be successful. One participant kept thoughts of success private and did not share ideas of goals and aspirations with others. The participant did not feel comfortable sharing these thoughts with peers. This participant, although realizing the benefits of the closure of Duquesne High School, was having a hard time finding a niche in the present school community. Each participant believes that the transfer to other schools was the very best thing for the Duquesne High School students in retrospect. They believe their opportunities are greater for overall success and they believe all students should be afforded the best curricular opportunities.

Skills for Life were mentioned and found to be manifested in participants’ families, the sending and receiving schools. Participants all felt their families initiated and nurtured their Skills for Life. “It all starts at home where you know people gonna
love you. That’s where you learn respect of self and others. That is the most important skill.” Participants discussed being able to identify skills for life, and what and how they learned these skills at home and in Duquesne High School. One participant made this point clear by stating, “The closeness of the students helped you learn many skills that big schools could not teach.” The students didn’t permit the familiarity in the Duquesne High School to breed unrest. Just because they were small they had to learn respect and social space. They also learned how to be safe and secure in what participants consider a very challenging neighborhood. “That’s a skill you need anywhere.” How to resolve conflict and “avoid the drama” is another skill many participants felt they learned at Duquesne High School.

Other skills came from the receiving schools. Skills like how to interview and apply for a job, how to advocate or “take up” for yourself, and how to get by when you knew few people. They mentioned the skills of collaboration and sharing came from the receiving schools, and that the skill of acceptance was learned while being the object of rejection. “I thought they would all be racist. I found there are all kinds of people up here. It’s kinda nice and it makes me happy to know I can get along.”

The most interesting conversations during the interviews revolved around the topic of Skills for Life. Out of this research arises a tribute to the sending school, the receiving schools and to the families. These were truly incredible findings, rich in directing the field of education toward promoting what the participants defined as Skills for Life. Their definition encompassed many areas of skills they utilized every day and various areas of their lives. Participants discussed social skills, coping skills, behavioral self-management, academic skills, and that their success and resiliency is a function of
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the interaction of all of them. This student derived realization of Skills for Life indicates that educators should foster support for these aspects of Skills for Life and assist students in making them work in their own world. Helping students to come to a personal realization of these skills builds resiliency and fosters success.

Components Apparent in the Transition of Belonging to a New Social Group

Pulling from research data it was evident that the resiliency components readily apparent in trying to belong to a new social group were Unconditional Support and Clear and Consistent Boundaries. Student participants exercised support of others and themselves, but stated that being patient was most important factor in all areas as the events unfolded. They found support from their families, teachers, school communities and from each other. The students of Duquesne High School were a very cohesive group who understood differences in people and realized in some cases they were going to be the only ones who would understand each other’s emotion from the experiences. Students did not get lost in the wash of emotion during the events of school closure, transition and belonging to a new social group, but utilized the support network to find the positive attributes in the events. They emptied their landscape of the negative attributes and placed positive ones in their horizon. Participants seemed to take conscious control of their existence in stark contrast to the out of control atmosphere in which they found themselves existing.

Participants could find examples of unconditional support all around them. They discussed support from their families, from their old school and their new school. None mentioned support from their friends. Each participant really presented like an island in a rough sea. Each was comfortable with their isolation because they were away from the
“drama” of what used to be. They did not worry about belonging; they just wanted to be perceived for the good students and people they really are.

Clear and Consistent Boundaries sometimes meant no boundaries at all and “sky’s the limit” thinking to be able to overcome the oppression of the events. The boundaries of good academic structure were appreciated in the receiving schools. The consistency of the same small group of friends was appreciated in the sending school. Boundaries seem to form both negative and positive experiences. The boundaries in the sending school manifested negatively in oppression of dreams and capability. Boundaries in the receiving school manifested negatively in the social belonging aspects. Positive attribute of Clear and Consistent Boundaries in the sending school was a fostering of a true belief in self. Positive attributes of Clear and Consistent Boundaries in the receiving school was that opportunities were viewed as unending, setting no clear upper boundary on success.

Participants wanted clear and consistent structures for behavioral and self-management. Many perceived the rules of the receiving schools to be a positive structure for their existence. The rules were considered tough and unyielding, but were also perceived to give a comfortable framework for school life. Boundaries for self management were the only ones in which participants saw a clear delineation of limit. While students perceived the receiving schools had clearer limits in the area of self management than the sending school, students also perceived no boundaries for the high expectations they saw for themselves and others academically at the receiving schools.
Research Question 3

*How does each of the participants view their own success in the past, present and in the future?*

Every participant had a positive view of their own success. The success manifested from both internal and external components. All participants were self-confident in their abilities especially with their new school and its offerings. Duquesne High School built a strong foundation for the students in terms of thinking about success. Also successes were celebrated in the community and success is revered as a personal, family and community goal. Many stated that when you become successful it is important to give back to the community. The participants felt they would be successful all along, no matter what happened, but that their new course offerings and opportunities would make success easier or earlier. Each participant felt good about being able to reflect on the events of the past two years, relax in the reflection, and respond in the affirmative for their success. Not one participant was unsure about past or present success. Not one participant was pensive about future success. One participant stated, “I’ll be a success no matter what. I am patient enough with myself and trust myself enough to make sure that happens.”

The community and the families of Duquesne invest in student success by speaking with one message. There was consistency in expectations, and as the participants stated, failure in life is never an option for the community of Duquesne. Each participant felt positive about success in the past, present and in the future. They also did not perceive their school closing to be any fault of theirs. They knew that their
school closing was a function of a variety of issues, and that they would be successful in the end of it all. “I’m good now. In the future, I’ll be amazing.”

Table 5.2 outlines the participants’ view of success in the past, present, and future with descriptors derived from the research data. Internal and external descriptors strongly focus of family as an integral part of success in the past, present, and future.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Participant’s View of Success</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Past</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Internal Descriptors:</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not easily defined. Based on simple descriptions of how their family and experiences had an effect on each.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>External Descriptors:</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Family and community set the definitions of success.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Table 5.2: Participants View of Success*

Participants were able to define what it means to be and feel successful. There were both internal descriptors that were a result of their own personal lives, and external descriptors that were a result of others people and experiences working in their lives. Each of the participants perceived they were successful at all times in their lives. Even though there were difficult events and experiences, success was never in question.

Success in the past was characterized for the participants as the ability to exist in their specific neighborhood. The community of Duquesne has its own particular social challenges that each participant perceived were surmountable with a strong emphasis on associating with the correct people and staying out of the wrong community places. Success in the past was also described as an expectation for family members. Some
expectations grew out of positive aspects of existence for families, and some expectations of success grew out of negative events that required the participant to do better than another family member.

Success in the present, after enduring almost two years of a difficult transition at the time of the data collection, meant that each of the participants was “still standing.” Each participant either found or was in the process of finding a comfortable social integration either with a group or with just one other person. Academic skills were being reinforced for the research participants and care was being by the receiving schools to their academic achievement. Some of the participant relayed that they felt more accomplished academically with the new course offerings and their studies in general. Success in the present was manifested in a relief, and overall, contentment with the present and a resolve about the past.

Success in the future manifested itself in discussions with many smiles form the participants. As the emotion of the interview moved from recounting sad or difficult experiences, each participant was happy and hopeful about the future. Participants took their past and present successes and used a kind of a forecasting prediction that will not only build on the strength they learned from these events, they would share their experiences with others and be successful people in the future. All participants had a firm belief that they would be successful in the future no matter what the circumstances. They knew they were taking steps to formulate their future. They knew they were being given excellent opportunities to learn.
Research Question 4

Do the themes and correlations address and support the Knight (2007) proposal that resiliency is a state, a condition and a practice?

In the themes, correlates and essences, there is evidence that resiliency is a state of being, a condition of existence, and a practice for life. Table 5.3 divides these themes, correlates and essences into these three groups.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Essences of the Perceptions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Hope over despair – <strong>State of Being</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Belief in self over loss of interest – <strong>State of Being</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Power and leadership over indifference – <strong>Condition of Existence</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Success over failure – <strong>Practice in Life</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Do each of these essences, after being extracted from the whole of the experiences, and being viewed, probed, and placed back into the individual’s existential frame of reference, coincide with the group experience, and the experience and perception for each participant?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>State of Being</th>
<th>Condition of Existence</th>
<th>Practice for Life</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Invariant Themes</strong></td>
<td><strong>Invariant Themes</strong></td>
<td><strong>Invariant Themes</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Personal Power</td>
<td>Underdog Syndrome</td>
<td>Mentoring</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Self Confident</td>
<td>Family Ties</td>
<td>Service</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Success</td>
<td>Success</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Phoenix Syndrome</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Experiential Correlates</strong></td>
<td><strong>Experiential Correlates</strong></td>
<td><strong>Experiential Correlates</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EC1</td>
<td>EC8</td>
<td>EC9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EC2</td>
<td>EC9</td>
<td>EC10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EC3</td>
<td>EC12</td>
<td>EC12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EC4</td>
<td>EC3</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Table 5.3: Essences and Correlates and Knight’s Framework**

**Resiliency as a State of Being:**
“I am resilient.” “I am strong.” “I will be successful.” These are all statements made by the participants during the interview process. “I am” statements are indicative of a focus on individual being. Martin Heidegger’s entire treatise, *Being and Time* (1962), was dedicated to the study of being. His name for being was Dasein. In Division Two, Part II of the text, Heidegger takes the reader through a logical explanation of “Dasein’s Attestation of an Authentic Potentiality-for-Being and Resoluteness (Heidegger, 1967, p. 312-341).” It is in the attestation of the participant that they are resilient, strong and will be successful, that they have made a choice in their being. The everyday interpretation of this attestation is the “voice of conscious” from their being. The participants being conscious of being resilient, strong and successful permits their being to authenticate this as part of their being and incorporate it into their existence as experiential attributes. Students can be educated in how to keep the self strong and durable, and then each must pick that up and incorporate it into the fabric of their being.

*Resiliency as a Condition of Existence*

“I know I am resilient because I make sure to set myself up for success and make goals all along the way.” I know I am resilient because look how far I’ve come.” “I know I am resilient because I feel strong and sure in my decision making every time.” In Division Two, Part IV, “Temporality and Everydayness,” Heidegger (p. 383-400, 1967) discusses the basic content of Dasein’s existential constitution and the interpretation of this content in relation to events in time. For Being to be able to exist in a resilient manner the being would have to be able to know resilience as a concept, a state of mind, a fulfillment of being, and be able to engage in discourse about it on some level, not necessarily defined by similar terms. The participants in this study, after reviewing the
words and concepts of the research, were able to talk about their feeling resilient and describe what that felt like. The conversations left the researcher knowing they understand resilience as a state of existence in that the strength of being, the resoluteness of their grasping the concept permeated their conversations.

**Resiliency as a Practice for Life**

“I can keep myself resilient by taking one day at a time.” “I can continue to be resilient by staying positive with what is going on in my life.” “I can keep being resilient by allowing other people to help me.” Once an existential attribute is incorporated into one’s Being, it must be continually called upon to have a connection between that being and the length of the existence. There is an essential connection between time and being. Once an attribute is incorporated, it must be given time to continue to manifest. In Division Two, Part VI, Heidegger states, “In its … existence any Dasein either ‘has the time’ or ‘does not have the time’… (Heidegger 1967, 446)” to incorporate an essential element. It is a conscious choice as to what the attribute can do for the being within-the-world. The research has shown that resiliency has positive and strength building attributes for the individual. Practicing resiliency, allowing time for it to manifest and to work within existence is a choice the participants have made due to their existential background. The hardships they have endured, presently endure, or will endure, will be mitigated by the aspects of resiliency. It is a conscious choice to be positive, empowered, and strong. For the participants, they have chosen resiliency as a way of and practice in life. Their need to share their knowledge through mentoring and through service assists the Participants in remaining resilient.
From the previous discussion of the Knight (2007) findings, it is clear from the outcomes of this research in terms of the themes, invariant themes, experiential correlates and essences, that resiliency can be considered all three, a state, a condition, and a practice. Referring again to Table 5.4, as the aspects and items in the research are reviewed, it is possible for the reader to imagine a reconstruction of the incredible conversations born from the interview process.

**Resiliency and the Standards Aligned Systems**

The Pennsylvania Department of Education (PDE) has been working on the construction of the Standards Aligned Systems (SAS) for approximately two years. Information on the SAS can be found at [http://www.portal.state.pa.us/portal/server.pt/community/sas/9024](http://www.portal.state.pa.us/portal/server.pt/community/sas/9024), and also at [www.pdesas.org](http://www.pdesas.org). In conjunction with the SAS, the resiliency model was introduced at the state level in 2007 and is included to be part of the SAS. The vision of the SAS is espoused by Secretary for Education Gerald Zahorchak. He states, “Our VISION: Every child by name reaching core academic proficiency in core academic disciplines regardless of zip code, economic status, race, ethnicity or disability.” Although it states on the website that educators should endeavor to know about this system, the deep information until lately has been sparse. Professional development was to begin in the fall of 2009 to roll out SAS. The first week of December marked a milestone for the Pennsylvania Department of Education as the SAS portal was unveiled. In December, SAS was introduced to some school leaders, many distinguished education practitioners and to curriculum coordinators and district teams at a conference. The conference was far overbooked and some district could not be represented. In March of 2010 PDE will
begin training educational leaders toward a firm understanding of SAS to be able to move that knowledge out to all the school districts in the Commonwealth to build capacity for what will become the portal of best practice. Figure 5.1 and Table 5.4 are representations of the aspects of SAS and explanation of those components.

![Figure 5.1: Six Components of SAS](image)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Six Components of the Standards Aligned Systems (SAS)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. <strong>Clear Standards</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. <strong>Fair Assessments</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. <strong>Curriculum Framework</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. <strong>Instruction</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. <strong>Materials and Resources</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. <strong>Interventions</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>G. <strong>Student Achievement</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Table 5.4: The Standards Aligned System*
The PA Resiliency Framework is included within the interventions section as supports for student success. The interventions section of SAS is to be unveiled in the summer of 2010. It is clear that professional development and educational practice must be provided for incorporating resiliency components into everyday educational life for both educators and students. This research will be able to help formulate the professional development of educators to imbed resiliency information, philosophy, and practice first to school district leaders and then to instructors and support personnel. To build a resilient school community, educational practitioners must work collaboratively with community members to establish protective factors and support structures for all students.

**Implications for Educational Leadership Development, Practice and Philosophy**

For this section, all information is derived from the PIL website at [http://www.paleadership-region2.org/](http://www.paleadership-region2.org/) Underpinning educational leadership practice in the Commonwealth is the Pennsylvania Inspired Leadership (PIL) initiative. Since 2004, The PIL program has provided a “standards based leadership development and support system for school leaders at all levels…” The program is designed “to build capacity in school leaders by focusing on what they need to know and be able to do in order to provide the guidance and direction of sustained instructional improvement leading to higher student achievement.” In 2004 PIL was conceived by a working group of school leaders from all levels given the task to explore “relevant research on school leadership in order to develop a coherent framework for school leaders…and then design strategies to deliver the content and experiences identified in the framework which support good practices.” The group was chaired by Stinson Stroup, severing at the time as the executive director of PASA (Pennsylvania Association of School Administrators)
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and Terry Barnaby of PSEA (Pennsylvania State Education Association). The outcome of their work was a designation of common standards for educational leadership. The three Core Standards and the six Corollary Standards are listed in Table 5.5.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Core Standards</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Both the Grow and Support Components of the PA Inspired Leadership Initiative are designed to address the following three “core” leadership Standards:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. The leader has the knowledge and skill to think and plan strategically creating and organizational vision around personalized student success.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. The leader is grounded in standards-based systems theory and design and is able to transfer that knowledge to his/her job as the architect of standards-based reform in the school.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. The leader knows how to access and use appropriate data to inform decision making at all levels of the system.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Corollary Standards</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The Corollary Standards component of the PA Inspired Leadership Initiative also addresses the following six statewide “COROLLARY” leadership standards. The curriculum will include Units 5-11 the National Institute for School Leadership (NISL) courses.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. The leader creates a culture of teaching and learning with an emphasis on learning.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. The leader manages resources for effective results.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. The leader collaborates, communicates, engages, and empowers others inside and outside of the organization to pursue excellence in learning.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. The leader operates in a fair and equitable manner with personal and professional dignity.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. The leader advocates for children and public education in the larger political, social, economic, legal and cultural context.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. The leader supports professional growth of self and others though practice and inquiry.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 5.5: Pennsylvania Inspired Leadership Core and Corollary Standards

Core Standard One refers to helping students to personalize their education to help make it meaningful. Resiliency is the personal attribute that helps students find meaning in their existence. Core Standard Two ensures the Standards Aligned Systems is used. Resiliency is part of the SAS in Pennsylvania, and addressing the six Resiliency components is therefore a required skill for school leaders in the Commonwealth. Corollary Standards Four and Five each address the leadership attributes necessary to
help build resiliency into schools and communities. These attributes specifically are Ethics and Advocacy.

**Practicing Ethics and Advocacy Aimed Toward Resiliency**

As the Core and Corollary Standards of PIL address ethics and advocacy in educational leadership as important attributes, professional development programs supported by PIL and developed through the Pennsylvania Leadership Development Center (PLDC) have been constructed to help educational leaders understand these concepts. Corollary Standard Four specifically addresses ethics and the leadership aspects of ethical action. The program developer, Dr. James Henderson, constructed the course to address ethics in four units. After laying the foundation for an exploration of the philosophy of ethics and ethical decision making in the first two units, Dr. Henderson used Unit Three to address “The leader explaining, advocating, documenting, and “living” the professional code of ethical conduct.” Modeling proper deportment and fairness as well as “right” decisions is important in educational leadership as students incorporate the tone and quality of relationships around them into their educational life. An ethical educational leader nurtures ethical qualities in the institution by modeling ethical decision making and ethical behavior.

Unit Four is the leader advocating for equity, diversity, and social justice. Human compassion and respect of all persons is at the core of the leader advocating. The educational leader must know and advocate for what is “best” for the school and its students as described by a continual conversation with the community served. The good of the institution and its members must remain the focus of the educational leader’s ethical decision screen. Concepts of equity must be addressed, diversity must be
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encouraged and celebrated, and at all times all stakeholders must be respected in their life and experiences.

Pennsylvania also views advocacy as a leadership quality for the twenty first century. As the fifth of six corollary standards according to the PIL program, professional development on advocacy was developed by this researcher. Viewing educational leadership as advocacy for the twenty-first century and building resilient school communities and resilient students in a standard aligned educational system is the key to success for all children in the Commonwealth. Educational success yields to life success as students are prepared in their schools to take their place in the workforce and in society. Educational leaders must see themselves as stewards for the total communities they serve. Educational leadership can no longer stop with aligning simply educational systems. Social systems, political systems, and community support systems must all be aligned to consistently support all students and the entire community. To reach the students who may not have strong protective factors leading to resiliency, efforts must be focused and aimed toward creating and enhancing the protective factors advocacy can help to address.

The neighborhood and the school community must be able to speak with one voice, and this occurs through their statements about common goals and expectations for the students and for the society in general. Often these statements are listed the school district’s Strategic Plan. Academic achievement and positive self-management must be the major tenants of the community’s view of the future. Advocacy is a movement with and for students to heighten awareness that taking a positive stand for a better future is the responsibility of the school leader, but also an attribute to be nurtured in the school
community including the students. The school leaders must firsts have a firm understanding of the developing practice of advocacy and be familiar with the work and philosophy of the cultural leader and social advocate. The school leaders must be able to explain and document advocacy to all stakeholders attempting to build capacity for educational advocacy throughout the institution. Active advocacy is a display of passion and belief and can build capacity if it is infused in all areas of the institution.

Both the and Ethics and Advocacy professional development programs address these attributes in what Charles J. Schwahn and William G. Spady call the Cultural Leader. In their book, Total Leaders (1998), the Cultural Leader embodies a set of skills which Schwahn and Spady call the critical performance roles (Schwahn and Spady, 1998, p. 75). For the cultural leader, one of the roles is to involve everyone in the institution in productive change. This means being sensitive to the cultural attributes that do exists, and the leader would focus the work of the institution toward cultural capacity and excellence using those attributes. It is taking the best of the cultural attributes and enhancing them in the community. The second critical performance role is that the cultural leader develops a “change-friendly culture of innovation, healthy relationships, quality and success.” Resiliency is fostered according to the six components of resiliency to a large extent in this performance goal. The third is the cultural leader tries to create meaning for everyone by connecting people within the organization to meaningful outcomes and sharing responsibility with great outcomes expected. The cultural leaders, while working within a specific culture, looks for the next higher plane of operation and existence as the organization takes forward steps connecting each member of the organization along the way (Schwahn and Spady, 1998, p. 80-82). Students and staff
must feel connected to the main goal. Students and staff must co-foster each other’s growth. In the relationships which foster connectedness, and bonding, protective factors arise that attribute to resiliency in students the school community.

It is the character and content of the leader which helps propel institutions forward. Even in the greatest adversity, with the right leadership, forward momentum is sustained. Building resiliency in schools and communities requires a number of different leadership attributes. In the recent book published by Schwahn, and Spady (2010) the authors state that leadership is defined as facilitating the constant change in our world by helping students to identify the consistent strengths within themselves. The three attributes of strong leadership, the ability to be a change-agent, and good character are integrally joined. In Chapter Three, the authors believe the central theme of leadership to be empowerment. To be able to empower people and institutions, leaders must combine personal and leadership attributes with the passion to do the work, the skills to move institutions toward positive change, and the ability to maintain a character that can care for and nurture the people who make up that institutions. These traits, processes, and practices help the people who make up the institution build capacity, and through that capacity, build resiliency for their future.

**Triangulation of Data with the Coalition for Public Education Documentary**

The Coalition for Public Education ([www.tcfpe.org](http://www.tcfpe.org)), formerly the Mon-Valley Education Consortium, had been working with the Duquesne High School students for years before the dissolution of their school and has followed the students into their sending schools. The area of involvement for the Duquesne High School students is a Coalition’s program called The Future Is Mine, TFIM ([http://thefutureismine.ning.com/](http://thefutureismine.ning.com/)).
The purpose of TFIM is, “The Future Is Mine empowers you to find your passion in life and begin discovering how to build your future.”

Duquesne High School students were involved in this program as one of the final program left in their district. Participants felt that belonging to TFIM was a positive in many aspects. An executive Summary of the evaluation of TFIM program showed the impact of the program to overwhelmingly positive (Swauger, 2009). Belonging helped students network in areas of interest. It also was able to help build skills for the future by exposing students to a variety of job scenarios, an annual conference, and events during the year that built school to work connections.

“Contributions of young people often are ignored or young people feel apathetic about participating in community. School and community engagement helps students prepare for their roles in a democratic society. Through projects that emphasize social responsibility, TFIM helps students learn more about their own values; value perspectives different from their own and take initiative and action in solving school or community problems. In so doing, they connect with adults in the community, expand their social networks, and learn to express themselves; they develop a sense of purpose and belonging. They also gain job-related skills and knowledge, including how organizations, schools, and communities are run; how to take into account the needs and perspectives of other stakeholders and how to solve problems… When students are engaged in their schools and communities they are more likely to become contributing, self-sufficient adults (Swauger, 2009, p.7).
Steve Selig (sselig@tfim.org) works with the coalition and has produced hours of footage which will be compiled into a documentary of the past two years highlighting the experiences of the former Duquesne High School students. Selig and colleagues have followed the students and interviewed them for twenty-four months on a number of issues. Initiation interviews of adults associated with the dissolution and dispersion relayed information about the proposed events, especially of transition, which were incongruent with participant perceptions. What participants perceived to have occurred is not the information proposed by adults interviewed and documented in video by the Coalition. The researcher will be assisting Selig in areas of student perception, success, and overall resiliency, in the Duquesne High School

**Summary: Implications for Future Studies and Professional Development Proposal**

As research holds that seventy percent of all students will be resilient no matter what life events come their way, there are still thirty percent of students who will need assistance removing the obstacles from their landscape, or at least requiring assistance in organizing the obstacles so a clear path to success can be perceived. (Benard, 1991) As the Pennsylvania Department of Education begins to provide professional development on the tenants of the Standard Aligned System, it will be necessary from a leadership standpoint to ensure all teachers have a basic understanding of resiliency in theory and practice and that classrooms are organized to address the components. Students must also be permitted through a refined process and practice of academic and behavioral self-management to become the driving force in their education, its plan, and components. If presented with the data, students begin to understand their hand in the work of education.
Addressing the six components of Resiliency as presented by Henderson should have a practical and theoretical underpinning that can be easily explained to the youngest of students, grasped at all levels and enriched with developmental capacity and age. The theory must be accompanied by a vocabulary and a practice that is easy to understand. The vocabulary and practice must be utilized in schools, homes, and communities. The vocabulary must represent concepts which are clear and universal in all areas of life. These concepts must be a part of all instruction as well as become part of the fabric of daily life. Parent and community education becomes necessary as the formal process of education for all children becomes a highly supportive framework for life driven with high interest and impeccable instructional rigor to serve all students. Seventy percent of all children will be resilient even when faced with the worst experiences. The remaining thirty percent of children deserve support. With resiliency education manifested initially in the early grades, more students will be enabled to find personal power, self-efficacy, and a good quality of life. Resiliency should become a state of being, a condition of existence and a practice in life for all.

It is the responsibility of school leaders across the country to build peaceful and resilient communities with an intense passion to do the work. Defining, instructing, and supporting students in finding their own inner strength manifests when a school and community in concert decides to make the commitment to viewing each child as an individual, addressing each child as an individual, and working to replace areas of need with self identified and institutionally supported areas of strength. As students move through a highly supported, connected education system, their personal resiliency begins to take hold and grow. Life challenges become everyday tasks as the student is
able to, time and again, rise out of the hardship to find a resolution and peace. Resiliency building in students must be accompanied by the tools of character education, anti-bullying education, self assessment, academic data review, Student Assistance Programs, outside agency involvement, and the training of pre-service practitioners in these areas working collaboratively to create the culture of academic excellence and student resiliency. As education systems begin to view the individual students, this resiliency building will occur one student at a time. It is clear that students must be intimately involved in their educational experience. Each experience helps students to formulate the perceptions by which they view the world. If perception is the root to understanding all experience, then it would be wise as educators if we listened to what the students are saying more often and help them to form positive perceptions of the system by which they are educated.

Educational leadership today must be an intense combination of daily ethical choices, fulfilling mandates, working through political pressures, and attending most importantly to practicing the art of leadership. Leadership calls upon the practitioner to constantly remain passionate about the work, continue to utilize an ethical decision screen, and to continue to advocate for the right of all children to have the opportunity to an outstanding and engaging education. The enduring question of education equity goes far beyond what is able to be provided in a child’s academic education. Equity speaks to what can be build into the fabric of society with teaching resiliency, giving the tools to students and communities to begin to support sound convictions and advocate for an outstanding future.
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for Students, 10 November, at the Center for Leadership in School Reform, Louisville, KY.


Appendix A

Table A:1 Chart of First Wave of Western PA School Consolidations
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>AUN</th>
<th>School District</th>
<th>County</th>
<th>2007-08 MV/PI Aid Ratio 6-26-07</th>
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Appendix B

Benard Matrix of Personal Strength
Beyond Dissolution and Dispersion

Matrix of Personal Strengths

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FOOTNOTES FOR APPENDIX A: MATRIX OF PERSONAL STRENGTHS


Appendix C

IRB Submission and Participant Packet
Beyond Dissolution and Dispersion

April 14, 2009

Ms. Fran Serenka
3414 Pinewood Drive
West Homestead PA 15120

Re: Beyond dissolution and dispersion: a phenomenological analysis of student perceptions as related to resiliency (Protocol # 09-18)

Dear Ms. Serenka:

Thank you for submitting the research proposal and revisions to the IRB.

After review by IRB members, Dr. David Delmonico and Dr. Rick Myer, along with the entire Board, the study is approved under the federal Common Rule, specifically 45-Federal Code of Regulations #46.101 and 46.111. In addition, the study meets requirements set forth in subpart D, 46.404 (research with minors not involving greater than minimal risk).

The parental permission, consent and assent forms are stamped with IRB approval and one year expiration date. You should use the stamped forms as originals for copies that you distribute or display.

This approval will be renewed in one year as part of the IRB’s continuing review. You will need to submit a progress report to the IRB at the address shown above. The report will involve supplying answers to a number of questions that will be sent to you. In addition, if you are still using assent/permission forms, you will need to obtain renewed approvals. In correspondence about this study, please refer to the protocol number shown after the title above.

If, prior to the annual review, you propose any changes in your procedure or consent process, you must inform the IRB Chair of those changes and wait for approval before implementing them. In addition, if any unanticipated problems or adverse effects on subjects are discovered before the annual review, they immediately must be reported to the IRB Chair before proceeding with the study.

When the study is complete, please provide the IRB with a summary, approximately one page. Often the completed study’s Abstract suffices. Keep a copy of your research records, other than those you have agreed to destroy for confidentiality, over a period of five years after the study’s completion.
If you have any questions, feel free to contact me at any time.

Sincerely yours,

[Signature]

Paul Richer, Ph.D.

C: Dr. David Delmonico
   Dr. Rick Myer
   Dr. James Henderson
   IRB Records
The East Allegheny School District

Research Title: Beyond Dissolution and Dispersion: A Phenomenological Analysis of Student Perceptions as Related to Resiliency

School District Permission to Conduct a Research Study.

The East Allegheny School District gives permission for Fran Serenka to conduct her research study commencing the last week of April 2009. Student interviews will be completed by the end of the school year 2008-2009. The study will require the researcher to:

1. Meet with possible participants briefly to explain the study (1, 30 minute meeting)
2. Interview 5 – 8 students in each District (1, 1 hour interview per participant)

Superintendent ____________________________
Date 4-21-09

Board President ____________________________
Date 4-21-09

Please return mail to the researcher in the envelope provided.
The West Mifflin Area School District

Research Title: Beyond Dissolution and Dispersion: A Phenomenological Analysis of Student Perceptions as Related to Resiliency

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Superintendent _______________________________
Date 4/21/09

Board President ______________________________
Date 4/21/09

Please return mail to the researcher in the envelope provided.
Title of Study:

*Beyond Dissolution and Dispersion: A Phenomenological Analysis of Student Perceptions as Related to Resiliency*

Investigator:  Fran Serenka

School/Department:

School of Education / Duquesne University
Department of Foundations and Leadership Interdisciplinary Doctoral Program for Educational Leaders (IDPEL)
For student participants:

3414 Pinewood Drive  
West Homestead, PA  15120  
serenkafis@aol.com

May 1, 2009

Dear Students,

Hello!

I hope you enjoy reading the enclosed materials about my research study.

I am currently a doctoral student in the Interdisciplinary Doctoral Program for Educational Leaders (IDPEL) at Duquesne University. I am interested in conducting research with 10-15 high school students who were students of the Duquesne City High School. From both West Mifflin and East Allegheny High Schools, five to eight randomly selected participants will be chosen for the study. I firmly believe that my research topic will be interesting to the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania as we possibly move into a second wave of school consolidations. Other students may at some time experience the similar events.

Through interviewing students, I hope to be able to understand student feelings and opinions about the circumstances that resulted in closing the Duquesne City High School. I also want to find out how students feel about their move to new schools, and how they feel about success in general. The underlying theme of my study is “resiliency.” To be resilient means to be able to overcome negative events in your life.

I look forward to meeting with you if you decide to participate in my research. Enclosed is a List of Vocabulary Words you will hear, the Kinds of Questions I will be asking that will guide our interview, and a card with a list of Resiliency Components.

Sincerely,
Fran Serenka
Doctoral Student

Revised: September, 2008
List of Vocabulary Words you may encounter in our discussion:
You will not need to know these and may ask at any time during the interview for clarification of the terms.

1. Resiliency— the ability to recover from or adjust easily to misfortune or change (http://www.merriam-webster.com).

2. Transition / Transitioning— In this study it means moving from one school to another.

3. Perception— In this study it means an awareness of the things around you.


5. High Expectations— In this study, it means setting high standards for your success.

6. Meaningful Student Engagement— Give students, their families, and staff a lot of responsibility for what goes on in school, providing opportunities for problem solving, decision making, planning, goal setting, and helping others (Henderson, 2004, p. 14).

7. Connectiveness and Bonding— Increasing the connection between individuals and events around them.

8. Skills for Life— These skills should include cooperation, conflict resolution, resistance and assertiveness skills, communication skills, problem-solving and decision-making skills, and health stress management (Henderson, 2004, p.13).

9. Clear and Consistent Boundaries— The development and consistent implementation of school policies and procedures including clear expectations of behavior (Henderson, 2004, p.12).

Kinds of Questions I will ask that will guide our conversation: (You may answer with references to Duquesne High School and/or your present school.)

☐ Can you describe your perceptions, ideas, and feelings about the 1.) closing of your high school, 2.) the manner in which the transition to your new school took place, and 3.) what it was like starting off with a new group of students at school? (Take this question one section at a time.)

☐ In the closing of your high school, transition to your new school and belonging to your new school, were these aspects of resiliency evident to you?

☐ Do you believe that any positive goal/aspiration can be accomplished?

☐ Do you encourage yourself and others to do the best possible?

☐ Is the curriculum supplemented and enriched with art, music, outdoor exploration and projects?

☐ Do you believe that your voice and choice is heard in classroom/school discussions?

☐ Are you empowered in decision-making?

☐ Do you connect to at least, one of the caring adults, in the school?

☐ Are you involved in school activities?

☐ Are there caring relationships among staff?

☐ Do you receive ongoing instruction on life-skills appropriate to their developmental level?

☐ Have you integrated and practiced assertiveness, refusal skills, healthy conflict resolution, good decision making and problem solving, and healthy stress management?

☐ Do you understand and abide by policies and rules?

☐ Do teachers accept no excuses for letting students fail?

☐ Is discipline designed to keep students feeling connected?

☐ Do you feel that the school is a caring place?

☐ Do you experience school/classroom as a community?

☐ Are you and others recognized and rewarded, and their work displayed?

☐ Did you see the aspects of resiliency more in your old school or your new school?

☐ How do you view your own success in the past, present and in the future? Give examples.

☐ Does that success have anything to do with the 6 components of resiliency listed on your card?

☐ What does it mean to you to be resilient?

☐ How does it feel or would to feel to be resilient?

☐ Can you give me an example of how you keep yourself resilient?

Revised: September, 2008
Students will be able to hold this card for reference.

- High Expectations
- Meaningful Student Engagement
- Connectiveness and Bonding,
- Skills for Life,
- Clear & Consistent Boundaries
- Unconditional Support

Resiliency Components Card
Beyond Dissolution and Dispersion: A Phenomenological Analysis of Student Perceptions as Related to Resiliency

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IDPEL Program Director
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studies that show high degrees of resiliency for high school age students even in the toughest times. In light of that fact, gaining specific information from student perceptions will help the Commonwealth to make better decisions about consolidating schools in the future, or supporting various learning opportunities for high school age students. Before research can begin, the researcher will have the properly signed consent and/or assent forms. From both West Mifflin and East Allegheny High Schools, five to eight randomly selected participants will be selected for the study. An interview will be the only request made of the participant. The researcher will work with the school and student participant to determine the best time during the school day for the interview to take place. The interview should take about an hour. Participant observation will also take place during the interview as the researcher records how the participant presents.

RISKS AND BENEFITS:

There are no risks greater than those encountered in everyday life. A possible benefit would be providing information to professional educators about student perceptions to be used as a reference point in their professional decision making.

COMPENSATION:

The project will require no monetary cost to you. There will be no compensation to the participant.

CONFIDENTIALITY:

Student responses will be kept confidential. For students participating in the individual interviews, the audio-recordings will be transcribed. Pseudonyms will be used for the student and any references to students or other school personnel will be removed. After identifiers are removed, portions of the transcript may be used for direct quotation for discussion in the final dissertation report. All written materials, consent forms, and audiotapes will be stored in a locked file in the researcher’s home and retained for five years after study completion. At that time, all materials will be destroyed. Responses will only appear in descriptive data summaries.

RIGHT TO WITHDRAW:

Your student is under no obligation to participate in this study. The student is free to withdraw your consent to participate at any time without risk or consequence. It is important to emphasize that this study is completely unrelated to the school and that the student’s grades will not be affected should the student or the parent choose not to participate.

SUMMARY OF RESULTS:

A summary of the results of this research will be supplied to you, at no cost, upon request.

VOLUNTARY CONSENT:

I have read the above statements and understand what is being requested of me. I also understand that participation is voluntary and that I am free to withdraw my consent at any time, for any reason. On these terms, I certify that I am willing to give consent to participate in this research project. I understand that should I have any further questions about my participation in this study, I may call

Revised: September, 2008
Fran Serenka (see above for contact information), Dr. James Henderson (see above for contact information) and/or Dr. Paul Richer, Chair of the Duquesne University Institutional Review Board 412-396-6226).

By signing below, you are agreeing to allow your student to participate in the interview process for data collection about their perceptions.

Parent’s Signature

Date

Participant’s Signature (Additional Agreement needed for Participant)

Date

Researcher’s Signature

Date

Revised: September, 2008

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Beyond Dissolution and Dispersion: A Phenomenological Analysis of Student Perceptions as Related to Resiliency

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questions about my participation in this study, I may call Fran Serenka (see above for contact information), Dr. James Henderson (see above for contact information) and/or Dr. Paul Richer, Chair of the Duquesne University Institutional Review Board 412-396-6326).

By signing below, you are agreeing to participate in the interview process for data collection about your perceptions.

Participant's Signature ___________________________ Date __________

Researcher's Signature ___________________________ Date __________

Revised: September, 2008
Beyond Dissolution and Dispersion

Beyond Dissolution and Dispersion: A Phenomenological Analysis of Student Perceptions as Related to Resiliency

INVESTIGATOR:
Fran Serenska
3414 Pinewood Drive
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412.680.5654
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ADVISOR:
Dr. James E. Henderson
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## Guiding Questions Anecdotal Notes Behavioral Descriptors

**Guiding question for Research question 1:**

Can you describe your perceptions, ideas, and feelings about the 1.) closing of your high school, 2.) the manner in which the transition to your new school took place, and 3.) what it was like starting off with a new group of students at school? (Take this question one piece at a time.)

- Students all made note that it was a very sad thing. Some experience anger but most just loss.
- Most stated there were really no transition activities to speak of.
- All the students felt isolated in their new schools but related that the isolation did not last longer than half the first year.

- All participants were comfortable with the vocabulary and were able to define and use the terms according to their frame of reference. The researcher assisted in a few cases with redefining terms to another format.

- Term was easily defined. Participants defined it in terms for themselves and for their school communities for the past, present and in the future.

- Students were very willing to speak to the researcher.
- Each had a positive and welcoming attitude.
- Students sat attentive and leaned forward during the interview to give emphasis and to convey belief in the information being relayed.
- Students smiled. Participants became introspective
- Showed no indifference.
- Students were helpful
- Eye contact in 10 out of 12 interviews was maintained for the entire interview.
- In final statements, participants smiled and presented as having made an accomplishment in interviewing.

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**Guiding Questions for Research Question 2:**

In the closing of your high school, transition to your new school and belonging to your new school, were these aspects of resiliency evident to you?

The next set of questions will help to move to a deeper understanding of the previous question.

- Students all made note that it was a very sad thing. Some experience anger but most just loss.
- Most stated there were really no transition activities to speak of.
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Do you believe that any positive goal/ aspiration can be accomplished?  
Do you encourage yourself and others to do the best possible?  
Is the curriculum supplemented and enriched with art, music, outdoor exploration and projects?  
Study Questions for Meaningful Student Engagement  
Do you believe that your voice and choice is heard in classroom/school discussions?  
Are you empowered in decision-making?  
Study Questions for Connectiveness and Bonding  
Do you connect to at least, one of the caring adults, in the school?  
Are you involved in school activities?  
Are there caring relationships among staff?  
Study Questions for Skills for life  
Do you receive ongoing instruction on life-skills appropriate to their developmental level?  
Have you integrated and practiced assertiveness, refusal skills, healthy conflict resolution, good decision making and problem solving, and healthy stress management?  
Study Questions for Clear | CAB was difficult to describe  
Students thanked the researcher for interviewing them | |

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(Adapted from Henderson, N. & Milstein, M. Resiliency in Schools: Making it Happen for Students and Educators (Corwin Press, 2003)

Benard, B. Resiliency: What Have We Learned (WestEd, 2004).

Guiding Questions for Research Question 3: How do you view your own success in the past, present and in the future? Tell of examples of your success. Does that success have anything to do with the 6 components of resiliency listed on your card? (High
Guiding Questions | Anecdotal Notes | Behavioral Descriptors
---|---|---
Expectations, Meaningful Student Engagement, Connectiveness and Bonding, Skills for Life, Clear and Consistent Boundaries, Unconditional Support) Guiding Questions for Research Question #4: Can the information and themes derived from the participants show that resiliency is a three stage process according to Knight (2007)? What does it mean to you to be resilient? How does it feel or would to feel to be resilient? Can you give me an example of how you keep yourself resilient? | Table D.1 Researcher’s Anecdotal Notes
Raw Interview 1 Data (without descriptors)

18 years old / senior

Penn State McKeesport for Multimedia

6 brothers only girl

I am the middle, the baby, and the oldest all at once.

I kinda get spoiled because I’m the only girl

I get picked on

Bigger brothers pick on me

Not really girly

A lot of boyish qualities

Preschool three through the closing

Came to Wm as a junior

“It’s kind of cool here actually”

The closing was scary.

I had never been to a school board meeting in my life. I was at every one

I was so afraid to come here.

I use to view this school as snobs. I wasn’t sure.

We have now opportunities.

Parents were saying, “We don’t want these kids coming to our school.”

You’re judging us, we’re judging you

It is like the book “The outsiders”

It was very different. I am normally outgoing but I was kind of restrained.

People were surprised I came from Duquesne.

Metal detectors were necessary because of the Duquesne kids.

See as for as transitioning goes there really wasn’t one.
Close to the end of the school year we just made our schedule
There were cliques. My friends were all separated.
It was hard. You know when you go to lunch there are no common experiences to talk about
It makes you kind of sad.
"I'm no longer in the middle of everything. I am on the outside."
I started talking to random people to try to belong
I try to chat them up.
I made acquaintances and then some became friends
At Duquesne we were all really close. Four or five people were my friends
We were like a family. The school was really small.
Confrontations were solved in like two days
Most of us were kind of related in some way.
I kind of miss that.
My boyfriend and my best friend came here.
Some of the other girls went to other schools.
In terms of High Expectations, at Duquesne, our teachers were very close knit with us. We grew up with the teachers. The teachers knew when you were slacking off.
It was really No Child Left behind in that school.
My one teachers was really tough. I slacked off and I had a progress report with a low "C", but my report card had an 88, and I had to earn that grade by working hard and making up all the work.
As far as Meaningful Student Engagement, at Duquesne I think I belonged. I was probably one of the top kids there. You always had that one on one. They call on you. It was even how they called on you.
Connectedness and Bonding at Duquesne my friend had a rough situation at home. She was gone for a really long time and we were worried about her. You can see on our faces that something was wrong. Over the 3 days something was wrong. We must have all looked the same. Our friend ended up being ok
We were connected friends and family.
Skills for Life The situation with that teacher was a learning situation
Another Duquesne teacher taught me how not to be a complainer and too talkative. She taught me how to voice my opinion but that it is not always needed.

I can’t stand a hypocrite.

Think twice. Say once.

Clear and Consistent Boundaries at Duquesne there were not social boundaries. Academic boundaries were set high.

They evaluated what you can do.

Were going to challenge you more.

What ever your level, that was your boundary. You were to exceed your boundary.

We were always taking tests to move you forward.

They worked individually with each student.

Discipline was enforced. No back talk. As we get older it got stricter.

In my high school career there was only about 5 fights.

It was always resolved.

They use ISS instead of out of school and they made you do work.

High Expectations for this school- It is no longer on a one on one level. The teachers expect more of you- the whole district expects more.

You can get the help you need but it is hard.

There are different learning levels. You are not getting one on one attention, if it is not moving at the right pace, too bad.

They move on the pace of the majority rather than the individual.

Meaningful student engagement is here too, more so here that at Duquesne. There are so many activities. There are all these programs to earn community service but to how to take care of your whole community and to take care of you.

Connectedness and Bonding up here is greater. At Duquesne there were no AP courses. The classes here are leveled. I see my boyfriend. I can of see my Duquesne friends. There is a comfort that the friends are around.

When I feel alienated, at least I know there are other people feeling that way too.
In terms of skills for life, this school added on what I learned at Duquesne. Hard work, dedication, and perseverance.

I took physics without trig. because I had to take double gyms

The first course I ever failed. Physics. You have to earn it up front and I bombed the course. I am taking it again this year.

Pre-knowledge was not what it should have been. I begged for the course. I am reluctant to ask for help. If I don't know how to do it I try to figure it out by myself.

The teacher taught everything but I couldn't utilize it.

This was my first bad grade.

Mom said, "You need to fix this."

My mom was so disappointed in me. It was the first class I ever failed.

The other students in the class were doing so good. I felt weird not throwing myself into it. I didn't want to slow them all down.

I am taking trig. now and taking the physics course over.

I am putting the work in.

I learned you really have to be dedicated and put in the time

"You are kind of facing real life. You need to be able to multi-task and be tough."

Clear and Consistent Boundaries here means there is no favoritism at all. Flat out even. You're doing bad, there is tutoring. Find it.

As far as behavior it is not tolerated. Electronics. You need to have your phone off in your locker.

Parents are so busy to deal with it.

Fighting, is just not tolerated.

As for Unconditional Support, at Duquesne, it was if you were slacking off, everyone had your back. Here they have your back, but there are so many others for them to deal with.

I am involved in student council and the Future is Mine.

There are still Duquesne people I am in touch with if I need more help.

I believe I can do anything. I always challenge myself and other to set goals and to meet them.

I tell my friends I want to do better. You set realistic goals you can meet, a reasonable goal you can set.
One step at a time baby steps and I'll get there my Mom says.

Built in there, Manifested in Duquesne and built on here.

The curriculum is much richer. I love their art program

Voice and choice as far as the voices you were heard in Duquesne.

Here, if you want your voice to be heard you have to go through Quest or go to the Board.

It is a matter of whether you want your voice to be heard.

I have the power to make my own decisions.

I connected with more people in Duquesne. I connect here but it is not at the same level. Open yourself up to tell them all about you.

I am involved in Future is Mine, student council, volleyball.

At Duquesne, all the pictures on the desk are of their staff. The teachers have their own class. They all respect each other and these groups like each other. There are small rivalries. You hear it.

At Duquesne they kind of take care of each other

My Skills for Life were more developed in Duquesne.

Classroom with personal life must be meshed together

Refusal skills is hard for family and friends is easy. For people I don't know it is harder.

I have a hard time trying to say to others their idea is bad.

Conflict and collaboration skills are good

I abide by the rules.

No excuses for failure. The teacher did not let me fall, I did that. He was available to help.

I feel connected and safe through discipline.

There is caring both places but it is not on the same level.

I experience the school here as there is select group of kids who are really involved and then there is the rest of the students.

The select group get everything. The Duquesne kids are not in that group. They all blend together because they grew up together.
For the freshman who came, they will have the opportunity to belong here as High School students. They will have the opportunity to be in that select group, or maybe not.

It is strange to come in as a junior.

Life lessons, no excuses. You can't rely on anyone else to get you there. We are rewarded for our work in both places. It is more in Duquesne. It is not such a big thing here.

HE=DJ, MSE=here.CAB+DU, SKL=Split, CACB=Split, US=DJ

Success for me, I want to be successful. I feel scared because of the bad economy, the news is horrible, I'm going to college. I am not from a wealthy family. How am I going to get there.

I chose to commute. I was afraid to take that leap. I want to be where there is laundry and food. / Family

My success will be due to following the rules. Voice your opinion without violating people. As far as support, it is not so much there. High Expectations taught me to challenge me and for you to challenge me.

Meaningful Student Engagement I'll use for ever. I will not let it happen to me. "Instead of it happening to me, let me happen to the world."

I'll believe you'll respect you. Or I'll learn from your mess ups.

Tough point in your life.

I overcame this, so, I feel comfortable. I found my place.

My mother keeps me resilient, teachers, mom, my grandma, and school community, my community and my family.

They all blend together.

No matter what, don't give up.

Not to judge. When we found out about the closure, The other school's student and parents were judging us. When I came here, those people became my best friends.

**Table D.2** Data Example
### Data 1 Themes

<p>| | |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>18 years old / senior</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>6 brothers only girl</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>I am the middle, the baby, and the oldest all at once.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>A lot of boyish qualities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Duquesne preschool three through the closing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Came here as a junior</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>&quot;It's kind of cool here actually&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>The closing was scary.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>I had never been to a school board meeting in my life.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>I was at every one</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>I was so afraid to come here.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>I used to view this school as snobs.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>I now have opportunities.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>Parents were saying, &quot;We don't want these kids coming to our school.&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>You're judging us, we're judging you</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16</td>
<td>It is like the book &quot;The Outsiders&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17</td>
<td>It was very different.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18</td>
<td>I am normally outgoing but I was kind of restrained.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19</td>
<td>People were surprised I came from Duquesne.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20</td>
<td>Metal detectors were necessary because of the Duquesne kids.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21</td>
<td>See as far as transitioning goes there really wasn't one.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22</td>
<td>Close to the end of the school year we just made our schedule</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>23</td>
<td>There were cliques.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>24</td>
<td>My friends were all separated.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25</td>
<td>It was hard.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>26</td>
<td>You know when you go to lunch there are no common experiences to talk about</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>27</td>
<td>It makes you kind of sad.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>28</td>
<td>&quot;I'm no longer in the middle of everything. I am on the outside.&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>29</td>
<td>I started talking to random people to try to belong</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30</td>
<td>I made acquaintances and then some became friends</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>31</td>
<td>At Duquesne we were all really close.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>32</td>
<td>Four or five people were my friends</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>33</td>
<td>We were like a family. The school was really small.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>34</td>
<td>Confrontations were solved in like two days</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>35</td>
<td>Most of us were kind of related in some way.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>36</td>
<td>I kind of miss that.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>37</td>
<td>My boyfriend and my best friend came here.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>38</td>
<td>Some of the other girls went to other schools.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>39</td>
<td>In terms of High Expectations, at Duquesne, our teachers were very close knit with us.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>40</td>
<td>We grew up with the teachers.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>41</td>
<td>The teachers knew when you were slacking off.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>42</td>
<td>It was really No Child Left behind in that school.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>43</td>
<td>I slacked off and I had a progress report with a low &quot;C&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>44</td>
<td>My report card had an 88, and I had to earn that grade</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>45</td>
<td>by working hard and making up all the work.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>46</td>
<td>As far as Meaningful Student Engagement, at Duquesne I think I belonged.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## Data 1 Themes

<p>| | |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>47</td>
<td>I was probably one of the top kids there.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>48</td>
<td>You always had that one on one.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>49</td>
<td>Connectedness and Bonding at Duquesne The teachers just knew</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>50</td>
<td>We were connected friends and family.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>51</td>
<td>Skills for Life The situation with that teacher was a learning situation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>52</td>
<td>Another Duquesne teacher taught me how not to be a complainer and too talkative.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>53</td>
<td>She taught me how to voice my opinion but that it is not always needed.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>54</td>
<td>Think twice. Say once.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>55</td>
<td>Clear and Consistent Boundaries at Duquesne there were no social boundaries.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>56</td>
<td>Academic boundaries were set high.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>57</td>
<td>They evaluated what you can do.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>58</td>
<td>We’re going to challenge you more.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>59</td>
<td>Whatever your level, that was your boundary.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>60</td>
<td>You were to exceed your boundary.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>61</td>
<td>We were always taking tests to move you forward.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>62</td>
<td>They worked individually with each student</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>63</td>
<td>Discipline was enforced. No back talk.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>64</td>
<td>As we got older it got stricter.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>65</td>
<td>In my high school career there was only about 5 fights.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>66</td>
<td>It was always resolved.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>67</td>
<td>They use ISS instead of out of school and they made you do work.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>68</td>
<td>High Expectations for this school- It is no longer on a one on one level.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>69</td>
<td>The teachers expect more of you- the whole district expects more.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>70</td>
<td>You can get the help you need but it is hard.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>71</td>
<td>There are different learning levels.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>72</td>
<td>You are not getting one on one attention</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>73</td>
<td>If it is not moving at the right pace, too bad</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>74</td>
<td>They move on the pace of the majority rather than the individual</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>75</td>
<td>Meaningful student engagement is here too, more so here that at Duquesne.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>76</td>
<td>There are so many activities.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>77</td>
<td>There are all these programs to earn community service</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>78</td>
<td>To learn how to take care of your whole community and to take care of you.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>79</td>
<td>Connectedness and Bonding up here is greater.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>80</td>
<td>At Duquesne there were no AP courses.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>81</td>
<td>The classes here are leveled.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>82</td>
<td>I can see my Duquesne friends. There is a comfort that the friends are around.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>83</td>
<td>When I feel alienated, at least I know there are other people feeling that way too.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>84</td>
<td>In terms of skills for life, this school added on what I learned at Duquesne.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>85</td>
<td>You need hard work, dedication, and perseverance.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>86</td>
<td>I took physics without trig, because I had to take double gym</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>87</td>
<td>The first course I ever failed. Physics.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>88</td>
<td>You have to earn it up front and I bombed the course.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>89</td>
<td>Pre-knowledge was not what it should have been.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>90</td>
<td>I begged for the course. I am reluctant to ask for help.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>91</td>
<td>If I don’t know how to do it I try to figure it out by myself.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>92</td>
<td>The teacher taught everything but I couldn’t utilize it.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Data 1 Themes

|   |   
|---|---
| 93 | This was my first bad grade.  
| 94 | Mom said, "You need to fix this."  
| 95 | My mom was so disappointed in me. It was the first class I ever failed.  
| 96 | I didn't want to slow the other students down.  
| 97 | I am taking trig. now and taking the physics course over.  
| 98 | I am putting the work in.  
| 99 | I learned you really have to be dedicated and put in the time  
| 100 | "You are kind of facing real life. You need to be able to multi-task and be tough."  
| 101 | Clear and Consistent Boundaries here means there is no favoritism at all.  
| 102 | You're doing bad, there is tutoring. Find it.  
| 103 | As far as behavior it is not tolerated.  
| 104 | Fighting, is just not tolerated.  
| 105 | As for Unconditional Support, at Duquesne, it was if you were slacking off, everyone had your back.  
| 106 | Here they have your back, but there are so many others for them to deal with.  
| 107 | I am involved in student council and the Future is Mine.  
| 108 | There are still Duquesne people I am in touch with if I need more help.  
| 109 | I believe I can do anything.  
| 110 | I always challenge myself and other to set goals and to meet them.  
| 111 | I tell my friends I want to do better.  
| 112 | You set realistic goals you can meet, a reasonable goal you can set.  
| 113 | One step at a time baby steps and I'll get there my Mom says.  
| 114 | Skills for life were manifested in Duquesne and built on here.  
| 115 | The curriculum is much richer. I love their art program  
| 116 | Voice and choice as far as the voices you were heard in Duquesne.  
| 117 | Here, if you want your voice to be heard you have to go through Quest or go to the Board.  
| 118 | It is a matter of whether you want your voice to be heard.  
| 119 | I have the power to make my own decisions.  
| 120 | I connected with more people in Duquesne.  
| 121 | I connect here but it is not at the same level.  
| 122 | Open yourself up to tell them all about you.  
| 123 | I am involved in Future is Mine, student council, volleyball,  
| 124 | At Duquesne, all the pictures on the desk are of their staff.  
| 125 | The teachers have their own class.  
| 126 | They all respect each other and these groups like each other.  
| 127 | My Skills for Life were more developed in Duquesne.  
| 128 | Classroom with personal life must be meshed together  
| 129 | Refusal skills is hard for family and friends is easy. For people I don't know it is harder.  
| 130 | Conflict and collaboration skills are good  
| 131 | I abide by the rules.  
| 132 | No excuses for failure. The teacher did not let me fail, I did that.  
| 133 | I feel connected and safe through discipline.  
| 134 | There is caring both places but it is not on the same level.  
| 135 | I experience the school here as there is select group of kids who are really involved  
| 136 | The select group get everything. The Duquesne kids are not in that group.  
| 137 | They all blend together because they grew up together.  
| 138 | For the freshman who came, they will have the opportunity to belong here as High School students.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>A</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>139 They will have the opportunity to be in that select group, or maybe not.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>140 It is strange to come in as a junior.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>141 Life lessons, no excuses.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>142 You can’t rely on anyone else to get you there.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>143 We are rewarded for our work in both places.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>144 It is more in Duquesne. It is not such a big thing here.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>145 HE=DU</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>146 MSE=here</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>147 CAR=DI</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>148 SKL=Split</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>149 CACB=Split</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>150 US=DU</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>151 Success for me, I want to be successful.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>152 I feel scared because of the bad economy, the news is horrible</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>153 I’m going to college. I am not from a wealthy family.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>154 How am I going to get there.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>155 I chose to commute. I was afraid to take that leap.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>156 I want to be where there is laundry and food. / Family</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>157 My success will be due to following the rules.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>158 Voice your opinion without violating people.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>159 High Expectations taught me to challenge me and for you to challenge me.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>160 Meaningful Student Engagement I’ll use forever.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>161 “instead of it happening to me, let it happen to the world.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>162 I’ll believe you, I’ll respect you, or I’ll learn from your mess ups.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>163 I overcame this, so, I feel comfortable.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>164 I found my place.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>165 My mother keeps me resilient</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>166 Also teachers, my grandma, and school community, my community and my family.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>167 No matter what, don’t give up.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>168 It is very important not to judge.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>169 When we found out about the closure, The other school’s student and parents were judging us.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>170 When I came here those people became my best friends.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table D.3 Data Themes
Appendix E

Summary of the Analysis

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Guiding questions related to components of resiliency</th>
<th>Horizontalization and Invariant Themes Noema</th>
<th>Mediated Reflection and Experiential (noetic)Correlates</th>
<th>Eidetic Reduction and Essences of the Perceptions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>High Expectations = HE</td>
<td>Self Schools Families</td>
<td>9 out of 11 participants 11 out of 11</td>
<td>Personal Power Self-Efficacy as a State Condition Practice Loss – v- Knowing Dichotomy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Meaningful Student Engagement = MSE</td>
<td>Opportunities Academic Service/ Social</td>
<td>11 out of 11</td>
<td>Service</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unconditional Support= US</td>
<td>Family Duquesne HS as Family</td>
<td>10 out of 11</td>
<td>Confidence</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Connectedness and Bonding= CAB</td>
<td>Family Duquesne HS and community Receiving Schools</td>
<td>10 out of 11 11 out of 11</td>
<td>Care Respect and Gratitude</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clear and Consistent Boundaries= CACB</td>
<td>Academic Self-management</td>
<td>7 out of 11 11 out of 11</td>
<td>Structure</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Skills for Life= SFL</td>
<td>Social=Duquesne HS Academic = Receiving Schools</td>
<td>9 out of 11 11 out of 11</td>
<td>Phoenix Syndrome</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table E.1 Summary of the Analysis